THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Centre for Student Involvement & Careers

NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards 2023- 2024 Information Sheet for Faculty/School/Department Coordinators

Coordinator's Role

- Act as the main liaison between your Faculty/School/Department's faculty supervisors, students, and the Centre for Student Involvement & Careers (CSI&C)
- Promote this program within your Faculty/School/Department and ensure that all faculty supervisors and students who apply meet the program eligibility criteria, (also see FAQ and the summary of eligibility requirements below)
- Determine how the awards will be distributed within your Faculty/School/Department based on the quota distribution
- Ensure that student/supervisor pairs complete the electronic NSERC USRA application (On-line System Login).
- Determine the A&B list of recommended applicants
  - A-list applicants are forwarded to NSERC by the UBC Liaison Officer in accordance with the University's quota
  - B-list applicants are eligible alternates in the event that an A-list applicant is no longer able to hold the award or is not eligible.
- Forward your A&B List of Recommended Applicants and student appointments (Hire BPs via Workday) to the CSI&C office by the deadline dates provided.

Eligibility for Supervisors

It is the Faculty Supervisor's responsibility to ensure they meet the NSERC USRA's eligibility criteria to supervise a USRA student.

Faculty Supervisors must:
- Be faculty members who are authorized to independently supervise students deemed by their home institution
  - As part of UBC's requirement, eligible faculty will need to continue holding an active NSERC grant from the Research Grant List. Faculties/Schools have the ability to endorse non-NSERC grant holders to apply for the award, on the approval of the Associate Dean or appropriate designate.
- Ensure that the proposed research is in an area of natural sciences or engineering supported by NSERC. The eligibility guidelines in the Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency document have been updated to provide greater clarity in determining the eligibility of applicants' proposed research. As an additional reference, an Addendum

to the Guidelines for the Eligibility of Applications Related to Health contains examples of eligible and ineligible research topics.

- Institutions are required to supplement the award and should comply with their provincial employment standards (BC Employment Standards Act).
    o The institution will be responsible for supplements to the weekly value and fringe benefits (if applicable).
- Remote work will continue to be acceptable going into 2023/24 with supervision expected on a frequent basis.
- The full value ($6,000) of the USRA award will be honored once the application is approved by NSERC.
    o Please note that the program makes no provision for sick or vacation leave, or for other types of interruptions. In the case of early termination of your student who is holding an approved USRA award, the supervisor may be required to pay the student the full value of the award.
- Resource: Supervisor Info-sheet

Eligibility for Students

Detailed student eligibility is outlined on the Student NSERC USRA website.

- The USRA research is a **full-time activity. Students should not receive academic credits for the work done during the term of the USRA**.
- For the duration of the award, **USRA recipients will be employees of the host institution** and **employed full time in eligible research and development activities in the natural sciences and/or engineering.**
    o The activities will be governed by the terms and conditions of employment of employees engaged in similar work.
- Award holders may take a **maximum of two (2) courses during the tenure of award.**
    o If the course(s) is during normal working hours, special arrangements with the supervisor must be made for the student to make up the time spent on the course.
- USRA holders are **not permitted to do thesis research during the term of the award.**
- In addition, the USRA program makes no provision for sick leave or other interruptions of awards. **Please inform the UBC Liaison Officer immediately should a work term be interrupted or terminated early for any reason.**
- Students need to be registered (i.e. registered in courses) as of the deadline date for applications at the university in a bachelor's degree program to be eligible to apply. UBC's deadline for applications is in Winter Term 2 (Jan - Apr). Therefore, students **need to be registered in courses in Winter Term 2** in order to be eligible to apply.
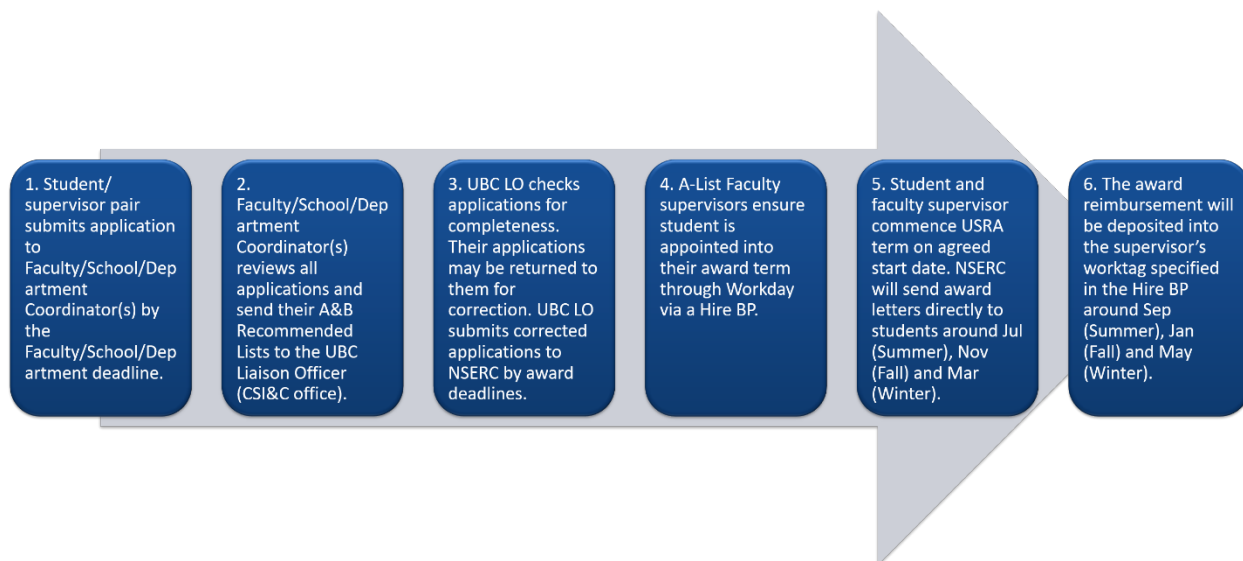
- Students graduating this May are eligible to apply for the NSERC USRA provided they are registered in courses in **Winter Term 2 (Jan – Apr 2023) and meet all the other eligibility requirements stated at our NSERC USRA** [website](). For students graduating this May, they can hold the award in Summer (May 1 to Aug 31) or Fall (Sep 1 to Dec 31) terms, as long as they have not started a graduate studies program.
- Students studying at a foreign institution who are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada may be eligible for USRA provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.
- In accordance to [UBC HR hybrid work guidelines](), NSERC USRA students are required to work in British Columbia, Canada. Remote and on-campus work are subject to the same regulatory and statutory obligations.
- First year students are eligible to apply for the NSERC USRA provided they meet the eligibility requirements stated at UBC's [NSERC USRA website](). NSERC requires first year students to have completed all the course requirements of at least the first year of university study (or two academic terms) of your bachelor's degree before they can hold the award. For this requirement, first year students will need to include the registered courses in Winter Term 2 under their transcript when they submit their application in order to be eligible.
  - First year students who are successful in the competition will be asked to provide updated transcripts that show they have successfully completed one year, or two academic terms, of study.
- Resource: [Student Info-sheet]()

To encourage Indigenous students and Black students to pursue graduate studies and research careers in the natural sciences and engineering, awards to Indigenous students and Black students are considered *in addition to* UBC's quota.

Procedures

1. Student/ supervisor pair submits application to Faculty/School/Dep artment Coordinator(s) by the Faculty/School/Dep artment deadline.	2. Faculty/School/Dep artment Coordinator(s) reviews all applications and send their A&B Recommended Lists to the UBC Liaison Officer (CSI&C office).	3. UBC LO checks applications for completeness. Their applications may be returned to them for correction. UBC LO submits corrected applications to NSERC by award deadlines.	4. A-List Faculty supervisors ensure student is appointed into their award term through Workday via a Hire BP.	5. Student and faculty supervisor commence USRA term on agreed start date. NSERC will send award letters directly to students around Jul (Summer), Nov (Fall) and Mar (Winter).	6. The award reimbursement will be deposited into the supervisor's worktag specified in the Hire BP around Sep (Summer), Jan (Fall) and May (Winter).

The NSERC USRA is administered and coordinated through the Faculty/School/department USRA Coordinators. Each Faculty/School/department establishes procedures for identifying and ranking applicants and setting deadlines. For resources on the NSERC USRA application process at UBC, please visit our webpage. The following Selection criteria and indicators for USRA applications contains suggestions for evaluating the three selection criteria when reviewing supervisor/student applicants:

- **Academic excellence** - As demonstrated by past academic results, transcripts, awards and distinctions:
    - o Academic record
    - o Scholarships and awards held
    - o Duration of previous/current studies
    - o Type of program and courses pursued
    - o Course load
    - o Relative standing in program (if available)
- **Research potential** - As demonstrated by the applicant's research history, and their interest in discovery.
- **Expected quality of the training and mentorship to be received** - As demonstrated by the proposed supervisor's plan for the student described in Form 202 Part II:
    - o Exposure to research team
    - o Training in research techniques, skills
    - o Expected contributions to research output
    - o Proposed supervisor's past supervisory experience
    - o Etc.

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Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

NSERC has provided the following guidelines on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

- NSERC believes that diverse selection committee membership results in higher-quality review.
- In selecting members for the USRA selection committees, institutions are encouraged to ensure the diversity of the members.
- Refer to the Guidelines governing membership of selection committees for more information.
- NSERC has shared the following resources:
  - The Bias in Peer Review training modules developed by the Tri-agency
  - The Sex and Gender Training Modules developed by CIHR

As per NSERC's recommendations, institutions are encouraged to consider the above evaluation methods and guidelines when determining A-List/B-List candidates.

1. Promote the program within your Faculty/School/Department, advise students and potential supervisors of the application process, and collect and review NSERC USRA application forms (copies of Form 202 part I and II).

   Form 202 Parts I and II
   - Both project supervisors and students must complete and submit an online NSERC USRA application Form 202 part I (student) and Part II (supervisor) by clicking on *"System Login"* or, if you are a first time user, *"Register"*.
   - Instructions on how to complete the forms can be found on the NSERC USRA website.
   - In addition to Form 202, students must upload a copy of their official transcripts with their application, including the legend on the back.
   - Once both parts of Form 202 are completed online, the applicants will need to save and submit a copy of the forms to you for review. You can choose to receive the copies either by hardcopy or softcopy.
     - All application forms have to be submitted **by March 24, 2023.**

2. Determine how the awards will be allocated within your Faculty/School/Department based on the quota distribution. You will probably receive more NSERC USRA applications than quota spaces.
   - If this is the case, you must rank the eligible applications and create a priority list (A-list) and contingency list (B-list) of applications. In past years, a number of A-

list students and/or faculty supervisors withdrew their applications and were replaced by B-list applications.

Supplementary Quota – NSERC may release a small number of supplementary quotas if finances permit, for each of the Fall and Winter terms. These awards will be in addition to our regular quota spaces UBC has received for fiscal year 2023 - 2024 and can be used only in the fall or winter term. NSERC will inform us if there are additional funds available for the Fall term in mid-August, and in December for the Winter term.

As such, please kindly indicate which candidates on your 'B' list are also eligible and willing to hold a NSERC USRA in the Fall (September – December 2023) or Winter (January – April 2024) terms.

Note: The Careers job posting site ([CareersOnline](#)) is a great resource for posting employment opportunities and recruiting qualified students. Please contact the UBC Liaison Officer at nserc.usra@ubc.ca for more information.

3. Ensure that both students and supervisors **meet all eligibility criteria and that all the forms are completed <u>correctly and submitted electronically</u>.** NSERC will NOT accept hardcopy forms, so the official application must be completed and submitted electronically.
   - See *[NSERC USRA Form 202 Common Errors](#)* for more information on form completion.

Note: It is usually the case that students will start work on their USRA before awards are actually confirmed by NSERC. If eligibility criteria are not met and the student starts their award tenure, the student would still be expected to finish their award and be paid the full amount, although a reimbursement will not be issued and the supervisor will be responsible for the students' full wages. Award letters will be issued directly to students for the summer term in July, and one month after the university term starts in the Fall and Winter.

4. Submit the A-list and B-list of candidates to the UBC Liaison Officer (nserc.usra@ubc.ca) using the [template](#).
   - Clearly indicate which applicants are A-List and which are on the B-List (for <u>ALL</u> terms – Summer 2023/Fall 2023/Winter 2024), and which B-List candidates are able to hold the award in the Fall/Winter term should NSERC release any supplementary quotas.

- UBC holds one annual competition a year - applications for <u>ALL</u> terms should be considered during this period.

5. The UBC Liaison Officer will review and confirm all applications via NSERC's online portal for Summer USRAs in April, Fall USRAs in August, and Winter USRAs in December. If there are any errors/omissions or the application is incomplete, the UBC Liaison Officer will **RETURN** the application to the supervisor to allow the student and/or supervisor make changes.

    - If a student and/or supervisor are found to be ineligible for the NSERC USRA competition, the UBC Liaison Officer will contact the Faculty Coordinator
    - If the application is returned, the faculty supervisor will receive two e-mails:
        - A generic e-mail notification from NSERC informing them that their application has been returned
        - An e-mail from the CSI&C office with details about the error or missing information, steps on how to make edits to their application and how to re-submit online
    - See *[NSERC USRA Form 202 Common Errors](#)* for more information on form completion

6. Supervisors must submit the appropriate hire BP through Workday. Please refer to the *NSERC USRA Appointing Students 2023-24* information sheet for detailed instructions to submit NSERC USRA hire BPs on Workday – **this will be updated in March 2023.**

7. The CSI&C office will arrange to reimburse supervisor accounts (grant) in the amount of $6,000 per student. These funds will be transferred to the Worktag that is used to pay the student's salary in Workday.

Questions?

UBC NSERC USRA Liaison Officer | UBC Centre for Student Involvement & Careers: nserc.usra@ubc.ca

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Important Dates – 2023/24 USRA Competition

	Deadline
List of A&B Recommended Applicants • A template will be provided by the UBC Liasion Officer • Clearly indicate which applicants are A-List and which are on the B-List • UBC holds one annual competition a year for ALL terms (Summer 2023/Fall 2023/Winter 2024); applications for all terms should be considered during this period	March 24, 2023
Student Appointments Please refer to the *2023-24 Information Sheet for Appointing Students* on the [Faculty and Staff NSERC USRA webpage](#). • All appointments must be submitted as a hire BP on Workday • Please contact your [payroll rep](#) or [UBC IRP](#) should you have any questions about submitting a hire BP on Workday • The student's official start/end dates should match the dates on the appointment. The latest a student can start working on their award to meet the minimum 16-week requirement: **Summer 2023** (May 1 – August 31) – May 12, 2023 **Fall 2023** (September 1 – December 31) – September 5, 2023 **Winter 2024** (January 1 – April 30) – January 9, 2024	<u>Latest Start Date:</u> <u>Summer 2023:</u> May 12, 2023 <u>Fall 2023:</u> September 5, 2023 <u>Winter 2024:</u> January 9, 2024

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