



## NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards 2024- 2025 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 UBC Career Centre
- 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 Form 202](#) ([On-line System Login](#)) by the Faculty/School/Department deadline. *We've observed an increase in incomplete and missing Form 202, and that makes it hard for UBC Career Centre to get back to you in a timely manner whether the forms are ready to submit to NSERC.*
- Determine the A&B list of recommended applicants
  - 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.
  - 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. Please note that these applications will not be sent to NSERC and they do not receive the award. The UBC Career Centre will confirm through email if their application is being forwarded to NSERC in the event of an A-list applicant not being able to hold the award.
- Forward your A&B List of Recommended Applicants and student appointments (Hire BPs via Workday) to the UBC Career Centre office by the deadline dates provided.
- For Indigenous and Black students applying to NSERC USRA, students are required to self-identify in Form 202 in order to be considered above the Faculty/School/Department's NSERC USRA application limit.



## 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 supported by the Federal Granting Agency they are applying to.. 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.
  - **General Guidelines for the Eligibility of Subject Matter at NSERC-**
    - The program of research must be primarily in the natural sciences and engineering, other than the health sciences (i.e., aligned with NSERC's function legislated in the [NSERC Act](#)); and
    - The intended objective(s) of the research must primarily be to advance knowledge in one or more of the natural science or engineering disciplines.
  - **General Guidelines for the Eligibility of Subject Matter at SSHRC -**
    - The program of research must be primarily in the social sciences and humanities (i.e., aligned with the SSHRC [legislated mandate](#))
  - **General Guidelines for Eligibility of Subject Matter at CIHR -**
    - The intended outcomes of the research must, as stated in CIHR's mandate, primarily improve or have an impact on health and/or produce more effective health services and products and/or strengthen the Canadian health care system.
  - **At the present time, SSHRC and CIHR USRAs are exclusively for Black student researchers.**
- Institutions are required to supplement the award and should comply with their provincial employment standards ([BC Employment Standards Act](#)).
  - 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 2024/25 with supervision expected on a frequent basis.
- Shortened award term (less than 14 weeks) will have to obtain exception approval from NSERC prior to submission. Exceptions will be made for shortened work terms only in exceptional cases where the situation is beyond the control of the award recipient, and where the appropriately justified request is received before the beginning of the work term.
- The full value (\$6,000) of the USRA award will be honored once the application is approved by NSERC.
  - 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. Please check the [USRA Supervisor Guide](#) for more details on how to support your student employee if you have concerns about their wellbeing.
- Resource: [Supervisor Info-sheet](#)

## Eligibility for Students

Detailed student eligibility is outlined on the [Student 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.
  - 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**.
  - 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.
  - Award holders are permitted to take only one course in each summer term. Students wishing to take more than two courses must first discuss the matter with their supervisor and obtain approval. The supervisor then makes a formal request to [nserc.usra@ubc.ca](mailto:nserc.usra@ubc.ca), outlining the reasons they require an exception, and including links to the courses, if possible. UBC Career Centre will then forward the request to NSERC for approval.

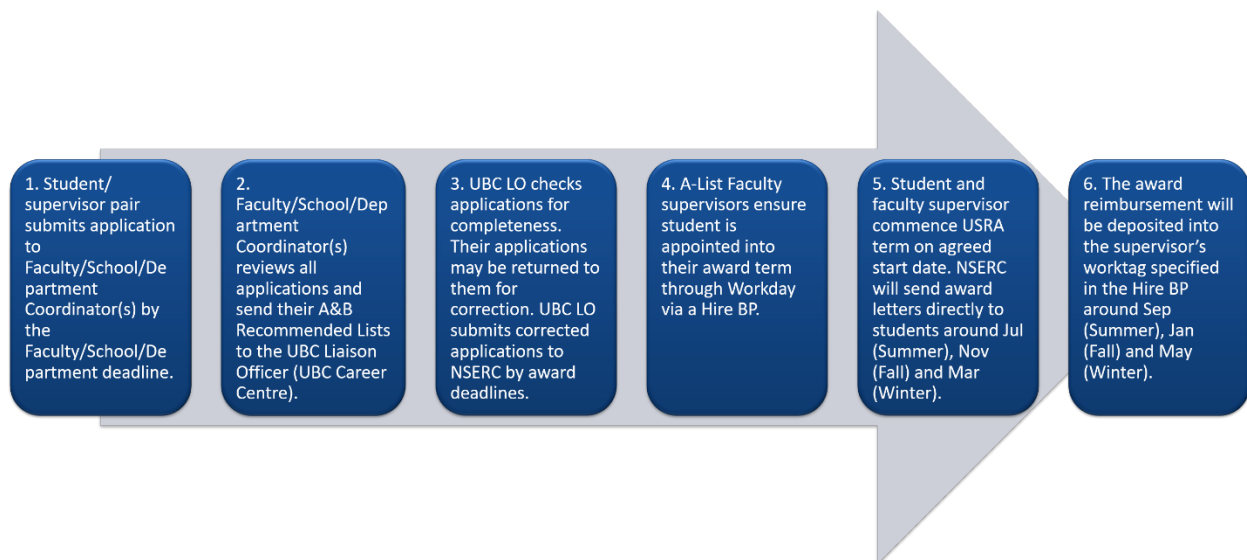


- USRA holders are **not permitted to do thesis research during the term of the award.**
- In addition, the USRA program makes no provision for sick leave or other interruptions of awards. **Please inform the UBC Liaison Officer immediately should a work term be interrupted or terminated early for any 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 USRA provided they are registered in courses in **Winter Term 2 (Jan - Apr 2024) and meet all the other eligibility requirements stated at our 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](#), 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 USRA provided they meet the eligibility requirements stated at UBC's [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



The 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 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:
  - Academic record
  - Scholarships and awards held
  - Duration of previous/current studies
  - Type of program and courses pursued
  - Course load
  - 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:
  - Exposure to research team
  - Training in research techniques, skills
  - Expected contributions to research output
  - Proposed supervisor's past supervisory experience
  - Etc.

### 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 Form 202 have to be submitted **by the Faculty/School/Department deadline**. *It is the Faculty Supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the Form 202 are submitted by the deadline.*
- 2. Determine how the awards will be allocated within your Faculty/School/Department based on the quota distribution. You will probably receive more 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 2024 - 2025 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 2024) or Winter (January – April 2025) 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](mailto: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 correctly and submitted electronically**. **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 to students for the summer term in July, and one month after the university term starts in the Fall and Winter. For NSERC and SSHRC award holders, the award letters will be available on NSERC's SharePoint whereas CIHR award holders will receive their award letters by email. (Please note that emails from NSERC may go to your junk email folder.)

4. Submit the A-list and B-list of candidates to the UBC Liaison Officer ([nserc.usra@ubc.ca](mailto:nserc.usra@ubc.ca)) using the [template](#).
  - Clearly indicate which applicants are A-List and which are on the B-List (for ALL terms – Summer 2024/Fall 2024/Winter 2025), 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 ALL 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 UBC Career Centre 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 2024-25* information sheet for detailed instructions to submit NSERC USRA hire BPs on Workday – **this will be updated in March 2024.**





7. The UBC Career Centre 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 Career Centre : [nserc.usra@ubc.ca](mailto:nserc.usra@ubc.ca)

## Important Dates – 2024/25 USRA Competition

	Deadline
<b>List of A&amp;B Recommended Applicants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A template will be provided by the UBC Liaison Officer</li><li>• Clearly indicate which applicants are A-List and which are on the B-List</li><li>• UBC holds one annual competition a year for ALL terms (Summer 2024/Fall 2024/Winter 2025); applications for all terms should be considered during this period</li></ul>	March 22, 2024
<b>Student Appointments</b> <p>Please refer to the <i>2024-25 Information Sheet for Appointing Students</i> on the <a href="#">Faculty and Staff NSERC USRA webpage</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All appointments must be submitted as a hire BP on Workday</li><li>• Please contact your <a href="#">payroll rep</a> or <a href="#">UBC IRP</a> should you have any questions about submitting a hire BP on Workday</li></ul>	<b><u>Latest Start Date:</u></b>  <u>Summer 2024:</u> May 13, 2024  <u>Fall 2024:</u> September 4, 2024  <u>Winter 2025:</u> January 9, 2025



- The student's official start/end dates should match the dates on the appointment. The deadlines to submit Hire BP's on Workday:

**Summer 2024** (May 1 – August 31) – May 10, 2024

**Fall 2024** (September 1 – December 31) – September 13, 2024

**Winter 2025** (January 1 – April 30) – December 6, 2024