



# Undergraduate Student Research Awards (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC) 2025 - 2026 Information for Students

## Eligibility

### FOR SUPERVISORS

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 supervising NSERC USRA 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.
  - Faculty supervising CIHR USRA or SSHRC USRA (currently only available to Black students) may not need to hold an active NSERC grant. Please confirm with the Faculties/Schools Associate Dean or appropriate designate.
- Ensure that the proposed research is in an area supported by the Federal Granting Agency you 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 2025/26 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.

## FOR STUDENTS

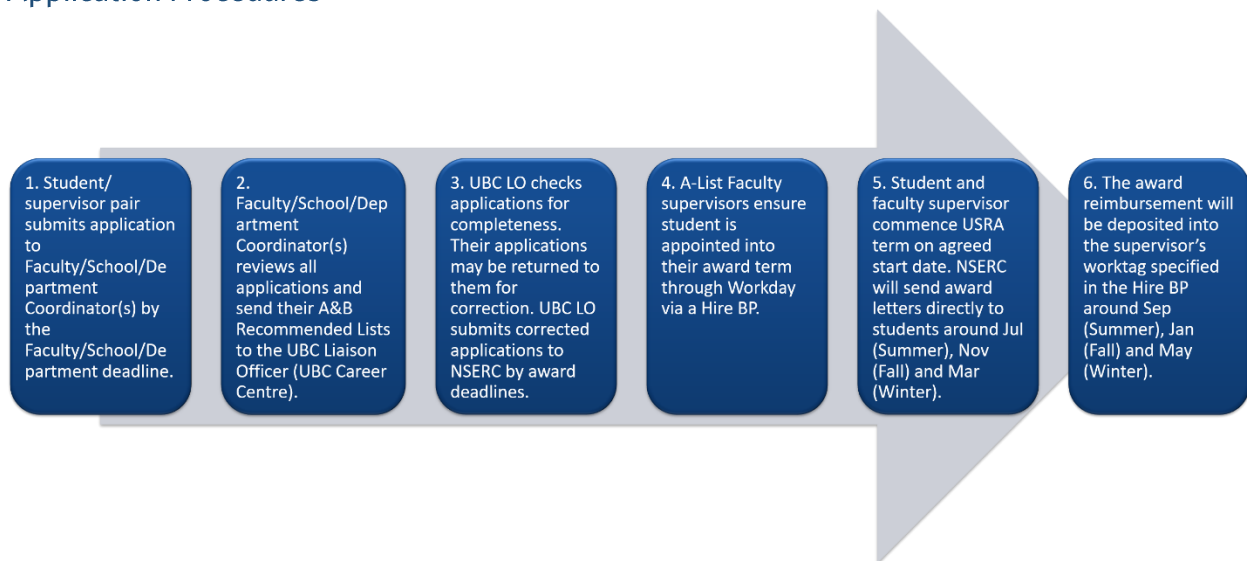
Detailed student eligibility and FAQ is outlined on the [Student USRA website](#).

- 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**.
  - 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 2025) 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, 2025) or Fall (Sep 1 to Dec 31, 2025) 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.

## Application 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.

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

1. To apply, both the faculty supervisor and student 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](#). You can also refer to an [NSERC USRA Video Tutorial](#) for how to submit your application.
    - Please also review the [NSERC USRA Form 202 Common Errors](#) for guidance on form completion.
  - If you already have a faculty member you would like to work with, please share with them your **reference number** in order to link your applications together
  - Students also need to upload, with their application form, a copy of their official, up to date transcripts from ALL post-secondary institutions attended (including transcript legend(s)). Please go to the [Enrolment Services Ordering a Transcript webpage](#) for details on how to order your official UBC transcript.
    - These need to be attached in a **single** PDF.
    - ALL post-secondary institutions attended must be cited in the student's Academic Background.
  - Applicants who identify as Indigenous or Black student researchers are required to follow the steps given in this [document](#) to self-identify on Form 202 Part I.
  - **NSERC will not accept hardcopy forms so the official application must be completed and submitted electronically.**



2. Once completed online, a copy of the forms (Part I and Part II, as well as the student's transcripts) have to be submitted to your Faculty/School/department USRA Coordinator for review. All application forms have to be submitted by the **Faculty/Department/School application deadlines**. If the Form 202 is not in the system by the deadline, the application will not be considered.
3. The UBC Liaison Officer checks the supervisor and student USRA application forms before they are submitted to NSERC. The 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 Liaison Officer will **RETURN** the application and send an email with details about the error or missing information, steps on how to make edits to their application and how to re-submit online.
4. Your faculty supervisor will be notified by the UBC Liaison Officer that their application has been submitted to NSERC, and the faculty supervisor must submit an appointment to Workday by the deadline. Students must give all applicable documentation to the supervisor.
5. Students and supervisors will begin their USRA term as per the agreed start date.
  - **Note:** It's usually the case that students will start work on their USRA before awards are actually confirmed by NSERC.
  - Award letters for the summer term will be issued to students in July. Award letters will be issued directly to students one month after the university term starts in 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 the junk email folder.)

## Questions?

You are encouraged to contact your faculty supervisor and/or your [Faculty/School/department USRA Coordinator](#) in case you have any further questions. As a second resource you can also contact:

**UBC USRA Liaison Officer** | UBC Career Centre: [nserc.usra@ubc.ca](mailto:nserc.usra@ubc.ca)