

## **NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards April 2023 to March 2024**

### **Sponsor**

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)

### **Program**

Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)

### **For More Information**

Please visit [NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards](#) [1]website, [University of Guelph Student Financial Services - USRA](#) [2]website and the [NSERC On-line Services](#) [3] website for the information below:

- Student eligibility
- Supervisor eligibility
- [University of Guelph Student Financial Services - USRA How to Apply](#) [4] – Copy of student's official transcript required at application stage; free official transcripts are available for USRA applicants
- Application Forms

### **Description**

Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRA) are meant to nurture student's interest and fully develop their potential for a research career in the natural sciences and engineering. They are also meant to encourage students to undertake graduate studies in these fields. If students would like to gain research work experience that complements their studies in an academic setting, these awards can provide them with financial support through their host university. NSERC encourages qualified self-identified Indigenous and Black students to apply for this award.

USRA applicants are required to submit a scanned copy of their official transcript with their application. More detailed information on eligibility, how to apply, and operational principles for researchers and department administrators can be found on the [University of Guelph Student Financial Services - USRA Eligibility](#) [5] website.

To be considered eligible for the NSERC USRA program, the proposed research project must

clearly lie within the natural sciences and engineering (NSE). Refer to [NSERC's Eligibility Criteria for Students and Fellows](#) [6] for additional information.

- Institutions through the student supervisor are required to supplement the award and should **comply with their provincial employment standards**.
- Full value (\$6,000) of the USRA award will be honoured once application is approved by NSERC.
- Remote work is acceptable with supervision expected on a frequent basis via phone or video calls.
- A maximum of two (2) courses are allowed during the tenure of award. Exceptions to the course limit can be reviewed by NSERC on a case-by-case basis.
- 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.
- Selection criteria adjusted:
  - Academic excellence;
  - Research potential;
  - Expected quality of the training and mentorship to be received (see attachment).
- Award holders are not required to be registered during their work term.

## Eligibility

### To be eligible to apply, applicants must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada as of the deadline date for applications at the University.
- Be registered, at the time they apply, in a bachelor's degree program at an eligible university.
- Have obtained, over the previous years of study, a cumulative average of at least B standing (70% average) or greater.
- Have been registered in at least one of the two terms immediately before holding the award in a bachelor's degree program at an eligible university. Note: students registered in co-op placements over these terms are eligible.

**Regarding co-op students:** USRAs may be held during co-op placements. Co-op students are eligible to concurrently hold a co-op placement and a USRA provided that the co-op credit does not count towards the academic requirements of the bachelor's degree program.

**Regarding time commitment:** The USRA is a full-time activity. Award holders may take a maximum of two (2) courses in addition to their USRA with the agreement of their supervisor. If the courses are during normal working hours, special arrangements with the supervisor must be made for the student to make up the time spent on the courses. Students should not receive academic credits for the work done during the term of a USRA. In particular, USRA holders are not permitted to do thesis research during the term of the award.

**Regarding allocation of available awards:** Institutions are given a set quota of awards to distribute to eligible department students. Applications submitted by self-identified Indigenous

and Black applicants are above and beyond the institutional allocation (USRA+). The application process and other eligibility criteria are the same for both USRA and USRA+.

## In addition:

- If an applicant already holds a bachelor's degree and is studying toward a second bachelor's degree, they may still apply for this award.
- An applicant cannot have not held a previous USRA in this fiscal year (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024).
- An applicant may hold a maximum of three (3) university USRAs throughout an undergraduate university career.

## To hold an award, the student must:

- Have completed all the course requirements of at least the first year of university study (or two academic terms) of their bachelor's degree.
- Have been registered in at least one of the two terms immediately before holding the award in a bachelor's degree program at an eligible university.
- Not have started a program of graduate studies in the natural sciences or engineering at any time.
- Be engaged on a full-time basis (35 hours week) in research and development activities in the natural sciences or engineering during the tenure of the award.
- Have a project start date after April 1, 2023.

## Funding Availability

The value of the USRA award from NSERC is \$6,000. The supervisor is responsible for the remaining pay.

## Maximum Project Value

Rate of pay must be at least minimum wage (\$15.50/hr) plus 4.0% vacation pay and **11.0%** mandatory benefits (CPP, EI etc.). The rate of pay can be higher if supplemented by the supervisor.

- The minimum amount **paid** to the student must be \$9,027.00 made up of:
  - $\$15.50/\text{hr} \times 35 \text{ hrs/wk} \times 16 \text{ wks} = \$8,680$
  - $\$8,680 \times 4.0\% \text{ vacation pay} = \$347$
  - $(\$8,680 + \$347) \times 11\% \text{ benefits} = \$993$
- Accounting for the NSERC reimbursement of \$6,000, the minimum contribution paid by the supervisor per USRA student is **\$4,020** (\$10,020 – \$6,000). **Supervisor/department is required to provide top up to comply with the provincial employment standards and mandatory benefits.**
- NSERC will honour the full value of the award regardless of the length of the work term.

## Indirect Costs

0%

## Project Duration

Work term is 14 to 16 weeks on a full-time basis (35 hours/week) beginning after April 1, 2023.

## Special Notes

NSERC no longer requires supervisors to hold an active grant when applying to supervise a USRA student. NSERC considers anyone who is authorized by their university to independently supervise students to be an eligible supervisor. The suitability of the supervision will be evaluated by the college/department as part of their quota distribution and award selection process.

Form 202 Part II was updated to include a section titled “Expected Quality of the Training to be Received.” This section must now be completed before the form can be submitted.

Academic supervisors must ensure that permits and certifications are in place prior to conducting research, particularly research involving human participants, animals or hazardous materials required under [UG Responsible Conduct of Research Policy and Procedures](#) [7]

## Deadlines

**If College-level review is required, your College will communicate its earlier internal deadlines.**

Type	Date	Notes
<b>Internal Deadline</b>	Tuesday, March 21, 2023 - 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please contact Research Services Office (RSO) (<a href="mailto:research.services@uoguelph.ca">research.services@uoguelph.ca</a> [8]) if an extension is required to fill a position, you are unable to fill a quota, or if a position will be deferred to the <i>Fall</i> or <i>Winter</i> semester.</li><li>• If a student has self-identified as an Indigenous or Black</li></ul>

Type	Date	Notes
		<p>(NSERC ONLY) student, these USRA+ applications are above and beyond the institutional quota. Thus, the department may send another application in addition to this one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>NOTE:</b> Departments will send RSO a list of USRA faculty supervisors and their USRA students as the applications are verified by supervisors in the NSERC Portal (email: <a href="mailto:research.services@uoguelph.ca">research.services@uoguelph.ca</a> [8]).</li><li>• Please ensure the applications are <b>complete and SUBMITTED</b> on the NSERC portal before forwarding the list of USRA applications.</li><li>• Please note that OR-5's are not required.</li></ul>

## How to Apply

**Student:** [University of Guelph Student Financial Services - URSA How to Apply](#) [9]

**Supervisor:** [University of Guelph Student Financial Services - URSA Operational Principles](#) [10]

Once the job is offered and accepted, the *supervisor* then completes Form 202 Part II (obtains reference number from student on Part I) and verifies, saves and “submits to LO” on NSERC website.

**For the Summer Competition:** The start date for the USRA must be after April 1, 2023. Please ensure that the **correct start date** is entered on Form 202 Part II.

**For Supervisor Form 2 Part II:** Grant application number can be left blank.


Form 202 Part II was updated to include a section titled “Expected Quality of the Training to be Received”. This section must now be completed before the form can be submitted.

[NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards](#) [11]

[NSERC On-line Services](#) [12]

[University of Guelph Student Financial Services – USRA](#) [13]

## Attachment(s)

Attachment	Size
 <a href="#">Selection criteria and indicators for USRA applications</a> [14]	129.27 KB

For Questions, please contact  
[usra-brpc@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:usra-brpc@nserc-crsng.gc.ca) [15]

## Office of Research

Ornella McCarron, Grants Officer

Research Services Office

519-824-4120 x52832

[omccarro@uoguelph.ca](mailto:omccarro@uoguelph.ca) [16]

Alert Classifications **Category:**

Funding Opportunities and Sponsor News

## Disciplines:

Health and Life Sciences

Information and Communications Technology

Physical Sciences and Engineering

Social Sciences

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## Source

**URL:** <https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/alerts/content/nserc-undergraduate-student-research-awards-april-2023-march-2024>

## Links

[1] [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/students-etudiants/ug-pc/usra-brpc\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/students-etudiants/ug-pc/usra-brpc_eng.asp)

[2] <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/usra/index>

[3] [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Index\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Index_eng.asp)

[4] <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/usra/apply>

[5] <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/usra/eligibility>

[6] [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Eligibility-Admissibilite/students-etudiants\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Eligibility-Admissibilite/students-etudiants_eng.asp)

[7] <https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/system/files/UoG%20Responsible%20Conduct%20of%20>

Research%20Policy%20and%20Procedures.pdf

[8] <mailto:research.services@uoguelph.ca>

[9] <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/usra/apply>

[10] <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/usra/principles>

[11] [http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/UG-PC/USRA-BRPC\\_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/UG-PC/USRA-BRPC_eng.asp)

[12] [http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Index\\_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Index_eng.asp)

[13] <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/usra/index>

[14] <https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/alerts/sites/default/files/attachments/Selection%20criteria%20and%20indicators%20for%20USRA%20applications-INDEX-ENG%20%282%29%20%282%29%20%281%29.pdf>

[15] <mailto:usra-brpc@nserc-crsng.gc.ca>

[16] <mailto:omccarro@uoguelph.ca>