

NSERC/SSHRC/CIHR Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)

Guidelines

PURPOSE

Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRAs) are meant to nurture interest and develop potential for a research career in health, natural sciences, engineering, social sciences or humanities, depending on the Tri-Agency Research Council providing the award. These awards are also meant to encourage students to undertake graduate studies by providing research work experience that complements their studies in an academic setting. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) encourages all qualified applicants including self-identifying Indigenous and Black students, to apply for this award, while the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) USRAs are available exclusively to qualified self-identifying Black students at this time.

ELIGIBILITY

To **apply** for this award students must:

1. Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.
2. Be registered in a bachelor's degree program as of the MacEwan application deadline date (March 3, 2025).
3. Have a cumulative GPA of 2.7 or higher.
4. Be able to work full-time for 14-16 weeks (May to August, September to December or, January to April) in research and development activities in an appropriate discipline.
5. Not currently be enrolled in an undergraduate professional degree program in the health sciences (e.g., MD, DDS, BScN). (Note this does not apply to CIHR USRAs).
6. Not have started a program of graduate studies in the same field of study at any time.
7. Complete all requirements per the MacEwan University USRA application form.

To hold this award students must:

1. Have completed a minimum of 30 credits towards a bachelor's degree at the time of application.
2. Have been registered in a bachelor's degree program in at least one of the two terms immediately before holding the award.
3. Be enrolled in no more than two courses during the term of the USRA Award.
4. Conduct full-time work in eligible research activities in an appropriate discipline during tenure of the award.
5. Not conduct thesis research during the term of the award.
6. Not hold another USRA in the given competition year (April 1 – March 31).
7. Not previously have held more than 2 USRAs (maximum of 3 USRAs from any Tri-Agency research council during your undergraduate career).
8. Not be registered in or hold graduate degrees in any discipline.

HOW TO APPLY

1. **Read** the USRA program description and eligibility requirements http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/UG-PC/USRA-BRPC_eng.asp.
2. **Identify** a faculty supervisor. Your supervisor must be able to provide a minimum financial contribution of **\$3,200**. They should have current research funding in a MacEwan account at the time of application and/or have a plan to obtain this funding. See <https://www.macewan.ca/about-macewan/research/opportunities/nserc-usra-grant/> for eligible faculty supervisors.
3. **Discuss** your research project with your potential faculty supervisor.
4. **Register** and/or login (if you have previously applied to NSERC) at the NSERC online system https://ebiz.nserc.ca/nserc_web/nserc_login_e.htm.
5. **Complete** and verify **NSERC Form 202 Part I** under Forms – Student. If you have applied to this program before, update the existing form. For instructions on completing Form 202, see: <https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/instructions/202/e.asp> For a video-format NSERC USRA program application tutorial, see: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/Videos-Videos/usra-brpct_eng.asp
6. **Provide** a copy of your **NSERC Form 202 Part I** with your **reference number** to your proposed supervisor.
7. **Ask** your proposed supervisor to complete **NSERC Form 202 Part II**.
8. **Complete** the MacEwan University USRA **Application Form**.

9. **Arrange** for a person who has supervised or taught you, to write a **letter of reference** and have them send it via email to your proposed supervisor. The letter should comment on your research experience and potential, work ethic, problem-solving skills, communication skills, lab skills, etc. Your proposed supervisor can write the letter if they have supervised you before.
10. **Obtain** official post-secondary transcripts (should include all pages and the legend).
11. **Send** your application package (MacEwan application form, NSERC Form 202 Part I, and official transcripts) as a **single PDF** to your proposed supervisor.
12. **Your proposed supervisor will then submit the full application package** (your MacEwan application package plus NSERC Form 202 Part II and letter of reference) to the MacEwan online application portal (PeopleSoft) by **11:59 pm of the application deadline, March 3, 2025**.

SELECTION OF USRA RECIPIENTS

- The USRA selection committee consists of faculty representatives from NSERC-eligible disciplines within MacEwan University. An ad hoc committee will be established to evaluate CIHR and SSRHC if necessary. The committee is trained in unbiased adjudication.
- Recipients are selected based upon their **academic excellence (30%)**, **research potential (40%)**, and **expected quality of the training and mentorship to be received (30%)**.
- The MacEwan University USRA Application Form (including the letter of reference and personal statement), and the NSERC Form 202 will be used to assess research potential.
- Students completing the first year of their bachelor's degree will generally be given the lowest priority.
- Applicants should be notified of outcomes within 6 weeks of the application deadline.
- Applicants will receive feedback from the adjudication committee.