

NSERC USRA Guidelines

The Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRA) is meant to stimulate student interest in research in the natural sciences and engineering. They are also meant to encourage students to undertake graduate studies and pursue a research career in these fields.

A) Students must:

- ❖ Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident;
- ❖ Have a minimum B average (3.0 GPA);
- ❖ Have completed a minimum of 30 credit hours at the time of application;
- ❖ Be registered full-time;
- ❖ Submit an **official** transcript, plus a signed memo from current course instructors indicating the average course mark (letter grade) obtained on work completed to date;
- ❖ Identify a primary supervisor to guide their research project (must hold NSERC funding). For further information on when naming an alternative supervisor is needed, please see point C) below;
- ❖ Work a full 16 weeks, normally May 1 – August 31. Students and their supervisor are to devise a work plan that is suitable for the research project;
- ❖ Provide a maximum 250 word statement describing how the NSERC USRA will benefit their career/future and an idea of future plans. If the student previously held a NSERC USRA they must describe what they learned, outcomes/update of the project they were working on, what their role in the previous project was;
- ❖ Provide a reference letter from their faculty supervisor which should comment on the students research potential and experience;
- ❖ Provide a reference letter from someone other than their faculty supervisor. This reference letter should comment on skills such as work ethic, organizational skills, practical skills, analytical thinking skills, and communication skills.
- ❖ As per NSERC regulations, a student may only hold three NSERC USRAs throughout their academic career.

B) Applications from students registered at other universities will be accepted, but priority will be given to current University of Winnipeg students.

C) The faculty supervisor must hold a NSERC research grant (PI or Co-app) by May 1st. If the primary supervisor has an NSERC renewal or application pending, a letter from an alternate supervisor (also NSERC funded) is required stating that they are willing to supervise and fund the student should the original faculty supervisor not be awarded a grant.

D) Salary: \$4500 is provided by NSERC, and a *minimum* 25% of the NSERC portion (\$1125) is provided by the faculty supervisor. A typical third year undergraduate research assistant working full time between May and September earns approximately \$6500 (AESES – Human Resources). As the USRAs are a prestigious, we strongly suggest funding above this amount. Faculty members are eligible to apply for internal funding to help supplement salaries.

E) Students who receive the NSERC USRA will be encouraged to present their research at institutional workshops, poster competitions and conferences. They will also be invited to a special awards luncheon in their honour and are eligible for numerous prizes. The luncheon is typically held in early February.

Please Note: NSERC reviews the university USRA submissions during June and July, well after the student has commenced the summer research project. The committee will do their utmost to ensure that only students meeting NSERC's eligibility requirements are put forward. In the rare case where NSERC deems a student is ineligible to participate in the NSERC USRA program, the Research Office and faculty supervisor will together address the issue.

NSERC and The University of Winnipeg strongly encourage qualified Aboriginal students to apply.