

BROCK UNIVERSITY

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)

APPLICANT AND SUPERVISOR GUIDELINES

2022–2023 Competition

DEADLINE: Friday, February 18, 2022, 5.00 p.m.

Please note new information from NSERC.

The objective of the NSERC USRA program is to nurture your interest and fully develop your potential for a research career in the **natural sciences and engineering (NSE)**. It is also meant to encourage you to undertake graduate studies in these fields. The awards provide a research work experience that complements your undergraduate studies in an academic setting. NSERC and Brock University encourage qualified Indigenous students to apply for this award.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply, you must:

- be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident of Canada or a Protected Person under subsection 95(2) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada), as of the deadline date for applications at the institution;
- be registered, as of the deadline date for applications at the institution, in a bachelor's degree program at an eligible institution
- have obtained, over previous years of study, a cumulative average of at least second class (B or B–) as defined by the university. Brock University students must have a minimum overall academic average of 70%.

In addition:

- If you already hold a bachelor's degree and are studying toward a second, you may apply for the award.
- You may hold only one (1) university USRA per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31).
- You may hold a maximum of three (3) university USRAs throughout your undergraduate university career.
- 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.

To hold an award, you must:

- have completed course requirements for at least the first year (two academic terms) of university study of your 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 employed full time (14 to 16 weeks) in eligible research and development activities in the NSE during the tenure of the award

You are not eligible for a USRA if:

- you are currently enrolled in an undergraduate professional degree program in the health sciences.
- you have started a program of graduate studies in the NSE at any time
- you have completed all your degree requirements and are no longer registered in a bachelor's degree program at an institution.

VALUE AND DURATION OF AWARDS

- **(NEW 2021)** The value of the NSERC portion of the award is \$6,000.
- **(NEW 2022)** Supervisors are required to supplement the award and should comply with their provincial and/or federal employment standards. The supervisor will be responsible for supplements to the weekly value and fringe benefits (if applicable).
- The duration of the award is 14 to 16 weeks on a full-time basis.

- Remote supervision of projects will be permitted due to COVID-19. Supervisors must hold regular meetings with USRA holders via phone or video calls.

CANADIAN FOREST SECTOR WORKFORCE DIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE SUPPLEMENTS (NEW 2021)

In partnership with Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Service (NRCan – CFS), NSERC is providing a new supplement to the USRA program. The supplement has a value of \$5,000, in addition to the USRA. This amount will be given to the student as a top-up. For full information see: https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/UG-PC/Forest-Forest_eng.asp

HOW TO APPLY

- 1) Identify a faculty supervisor. Any faculty member in NSE deemed an eligible supervisor under Brock policies may serve as a supervisor for a USRA application.
- 2) Discuss your research project with your (potential) faculty supervisor. Under the terms of this NSERC program, Your project must be in the natural sciences or engineering area, **not health or the social sciences**.
- 3) Supervisors must have an active research account from which the student can be paid. That account will be reimbursed when confirmation is received from the supervisor that the employment period was completed.
- 4) Read carefully the [NSERC USRA Program web page](#)¹ and the [instructions for completing an application—Form 202](#).² Also consult the [Frequently Asked Questions for Applicants and Proposed Research Supervisors](#).³
- 5) Register and/or log onto the NSERC On-line system⁴ and select Form 202 Part 1 under *For Students and Fellows*. Note that you can create only one of these forms, so if you have applied to this program in the past, please update the form you created previously. (Please use your official name as it appears on Government-issued ID) Complete all the modules on the left side of the screen.
- 6) **Transcript(s)**. Order your official transcript from Registrar’s office. The transcript must be up-to-date as of January 2022 and must include marks for Fall 2021. Upload a copy of your transcript to the NSERC website.
- 7) Provide a copy of your **Form 202 Part 1** with your reference number to your proposed supervisor. They will complete Form 202 Part 2.
- 8) Complete **Brock’s USRA application form Part A**. Submit it **by email** to ors-submissions@brocku.ca with required attachments to the USRA Liaison Officer (LO) by the deadline. Your proposed supervisor will complete Part B of the form.
- 9) **Proof of academic record (including Fall 2021)**. If you are a Brock student, access your “Program Status, UG1” from BrockDB; this will show your current academic average. Save as a PDF (or get a screenshot) and include it with your application. If you are NOT a Brock student or if you have attended other post-secondary institution(s) besides Brock, an unofficial transcript will be acceptable, or have your most recent transcript(s) from each institution attended sent **by email** to ors-submissions@brocku.ca.
- 10) **Letter of Reference**. Ask your potential supervisor or another person who has supervised you to write a letter of reference. This letter should speak to your research aptitude and experience, work ethic, problem-solving skills, communication skills, lab skills, etc. (See the description of research aptitude below.) The letter writer should address the letter to the **USRA Selection Committee** and send it directly to the USRA Liaison Officer by email (ors-submissions@brocku.ca).
- 11) **Instructions for Application Submission to LO (NEW 2021)**

The LO will only accept application materials by email to ORS-Submissions (ors-submissions@brocku.ca). To ensure your application is received accurately, please follow the instructions below.

¹ http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/UG-PC/USRA-BRPC_eng.asp

² <http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/instructions/202/e.asp>

³ http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/UG-PC/USRAFAQ-BRPCFAQ_eng.asp

⁴ http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Index_eng.asp

Attachments;

- Ideally PDF or Microsoft Word (Please do not send a hyperlink to download your documents stored on a cloud server.)
- Please name your documents according to the following format: USRA2022_document title_student's full name and supervisor's last name (e.g., USRA2022_PartA_Susan,Jones and SMITH)

Email subject line. Please include the competition name (e.g., NSERC USRA 2022), and student and supervisor's names.

SELECTION OF AWARDEES

The USRA Selection Committee comprises natural sciences and engineering researchers from Applied Health Sciences (Health Sciences, Kinesiology), Mathematics and Science (all departments), and Social Sciences (Geography and Tourism Studies, Psychology).

Although a faculty member may support more than one USRA applicant, normally only one of these will be selected. Under exceptional circumstances (as determined by the USRA Selection Committee), an award for a second applicant may be recommended.

Selection criteria:

- Academic excellence
- Research potential
- Expected quality of the training and mentorship to be received (NEW in 2020 competition)

Research potential is evaluated on the basis of the letter of reference and the applicant's responses to the questions on Brock's application form. Applicants at all undergraduate levels will be considered.

Examples of characteristics that may be considered in evaluating **research aptitude** include: enthusiasm for pursuing a research career in the natural sciences or engineering; written and oral communication skills; critical thinking; problem-solving skills; ability to work in a collaborative environment; relevant academic and work experience; organizational skills; curiosity; attention to detail; creativity; initiative; persistence.

The Selection Committee will meet in March to rank the applications. Decisions will be communicated to applicants by email before the end of March. Recommended awardees must confirm acceptance within one week of notification. Any declined award will be offered to one of the alternates. NSERC will send an official award letter after confirmation of eligibility of the awardee, supervisor, and research topic.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You should not receive academic credits for the work done during your award term. You cannot be enrolled in your Honours Thesis course during the work term. **You may hold an award during co-op placements.**

Supplemental quota. A small supplemental quota (1–2 awards) may be available for Fall 2022 and/or Winter 2023. Should we receive additional awards, we hold a new mini-competition.

DEADLINE: Friday, February 18, 2022, 5 p.m. No late applications will be accepted

For questions about the NSERC USRA 2022–2023 Competition, please contact:

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