



## NSERC, SSHRC & CIHR USRA Program – Summer 2023

### Applications due: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

*Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRAs) are meant to nurture undergraduate student interest and fully develop student potential for a research career in health, natural sciences, engineering, social sciences or humanities. These awards are also meant to encourage you to undertake graduate studies by providing research work experience that complements your studies in an academic setting.*

*Acadia's current quota for regular NSERC USRAs is 11 awards. Additional (above quota) NSERC summer awards are available for both NSERC Indigenous scholars and, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, NSERC Black scholars.*

*In addition, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) have implemented new Black student researcher awards. Acadia has been awarded a quota of 1 CIHR Black USRA and 1 SSHRC Black USRA. These extra awards are intended to help address the disproportionate underfunding of Black scholars at the undergraduate level; will contribute to making Canada's research culture more equitable, diverse and inclusive; and will strengthen Canada's innovation potential.*

**Duration:** Awards are for 14 to 16 consecutive weeks (May-August) and are considered full-time employment.

**Value:** The USRA award includes \$6000 from the government. These funds must be coupled with a salary supplement (~\$1400 for 14wks, \$2000 for 15wks and \$2500 for 16wks, at 35 hours per week) from the faculty supervisor. The combined funding covers both student salary (~min wage plus 4% vacation pay) and mandatory employment-related costs of 8.5% (EI, CPP, WC). The funding is considered employment income and is taxable.

Eligible, self-identified Indigenous and Black students are encouraged to apply for an award; these awards are in addition to Acadia's current quota of 11 NSERC USRA awards. To further advance **equity, diversity and inclusion** in awards at Acadia, a number of the USRA awards within Acadia's regular annual allocation will support other under-represented or under-served groups, as done in prior years. All applicants will be contacted after the application submission due date with a link to a form to voluntarily and confidentially self-ID.

#### **STEP 1: Students eligible to apply,** must at the time of application submission:

- be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada or a Protected Person under subsection 95 (2) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada).
- be registered in coursework towards a bachelor's degree and have completed all the course requirements of at least the first year of university study (or two academic terms). You may already hold a bachelor's degree and be studying toward a second bachelor's degree. A USRA may also be held during a co-op placement.
- have obtained, for courses completed, a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of at least 3.00 (B average).
- not currently registered or have been previously registered, at any time, in a graduate program in the same field of study.
- cannot have completed all your degree requirements. But, if you already hold a bachelor's degree and are studying toward a second bachelor's degree, you may still apply for this award.
- you may hold only **one** USRA per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) but may hold a maximum of **three USRAs** throughout your undergraduate career (regardless of the granting agency).
- award holders are not permitted to receive course credit for research conducted during the summer term of their award. However, it is permitted to use research data generated during a USRA term as the basis of a thesis, so long as registration in the thesis course starts after the USRA is held.

- awardees may undertake a maximum of 2 non-thesis courses during the tenure of an award.

### STEP 2: The application process (submit by 28 February 2023)

There are 3 Parts to the USRA application. To complete the required online USRA application sections (Parts I and II), follow the instructions at [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)

- **Form 202, Part I** – Application for an Undergraduate Student Research Award (Student to complete);  
Regardless of the granting agency, **students must create their application using the NSERC online system** and must select the agency whose mandate (NSERC, CIHR or SSHRC) aligns best with their field of research (health, natural sciences and engineering, social sciences and humanities). CIHR and SSHRC USRAs are, at the present time, exclusively for Black student researchers. To be considered, you must self-identify as Black (see the Black student researchers section for more details).
- **Form 202, Part II** – Application for an Undergraduate Student Research Award (Proposed Research Supervisor to complete)
  - Please read all online instructions carefully. If not already in the NSERC system, register as New User.
  - **NOTE:** Applicants must upload official, up-to-date transcripts of ALL university records (including Acadia transcript) with the on-line application.
  - Ensure transcripts are scanned as a black and white printed document and, whenever possible, in portrait style, clear, and include a copy of the grade scale information (usually found on the back of the document).
- **Form Part III: Research Aptitude/Potential** section needs to be completed by both student and supervisor; locate form at [https://research.acadiau.ca/Undergraduate\\_Student\\_Honours\\_Research.html](https://research.acadiau.ca/Undergraduate_Student_Honours_Research.html)

### STEP 3: Internal adjudication

- USRAs are competitive. Only 11 NSERC USRAs are available at Acadia, and these are in addition to NSERC Indigenous USRAs and NSERC BLACK USRAs. For the first time, there are 2 non-NSERC summer awards - 1 CIHR Black USRA and 1 SSHRC Black USRA.
- Applications are adjudicated by a committee of Acadia faculty, chaired by the Associate Vice-President Research or designate.
- When confirmed as eligible, the primary assessment criteria, as requested by NSERC, are student academic excellence (Cumulative GPA, relevant experience), research aptitude/potential, and the expected quality of the training and mentorship to be received. Equity, diversity and inclusion will also be a consideration in award decisions.
- Notification of decisions will be in mid to late March.

Please refer to the guidelines at [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) for more details on the USRA program. The USRA program liaison staff member in the Research Office at Acadia is Jessica Bradley ([Jessica.Bradley@acadiau.ca](mailto:Jessica.Bradley@acadiau.ca) or [researchoffice@acadiau.ca](mailto:researchoffice@acadiau.ca)).