Undergraduate Student Research Awards

Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRAs) are just some of the many ways students can gain research experience. These awards are an excellent opportunity to get relevant work experience, learn more about research to determine whether you want to go to grad school, or see if you’re interested in working in research and development.

Please note that in order to qualify for these awards, the student must reside in Canada for the entirety of the term due to regulations and restrictions set out by UBC regarding work safety, privacy, and payroll.

A. How to find a professor:

Not sure where to start? - There are lots of places where you can find research topics, an ongoing research study, or a researcher to work with:

| Search by researcher: |  
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| o List of researchers who have indicated interest in working with undergraduate students on research projects | https://www.grad.ubc.ca/research/undergraduate |
| o Sort by Faculty and search by research topics | |

| Search by topics being researched on campus: | https://www.grad.ubc.ca/researcher-search |
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Search by list of research supervisors on campus (supervisory directory):

| o You can search by name, program role and keywords. | https://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/research-supervisors |
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NSERC Grant holder list - A list of professors/researchers from Engineering who have received grants from NSERC and have hired students in the past.

W LIURA Researcher list – A list of professors from Engineering who have hired or expressed interest in hiring W LIURA students in the past.

**Please note that you are not limited to only asking these professors, this is simply a starting point. **

Things to look out for -
Professors receive very large volumes of emails so it’s very important to ensure you are explaining why you want to work with them specifically and are consistent with your ask.

- Try asking a professor you already know (e.g. someone who has taught you in the past) so it’s easier to connect and get a response
- Follow-up with them if you don’t initially hear back (send no more than 3 emails in total)
- Take the time to really familiarize yourself with their research so you can speak about why you’re interested
- Don’t be discouraged if you don’t hear back at all, try to find another professor instead!
B. How to reach out:

Send an email:

- Practice good etiquette and be concise:
- Appropriate email address with your name (e.g. g.thakor12@student.ubc.ca vs. cherrybombpepper@hotmail.com)
- Clear subject line – Interested in Research Opportunity
- Greet with a proper salutation in your email – “Hello Dr. Y.” “Hello Prof. X.”
- Introduce yourself and clearly state why you’re reaching out
- Suggest time to meet during office hours (if the professor is holding them)
- Attach your resume
- Proper Closing – Thank you for your time, thank you for taking the time to read my email, etc.
- To be courteous, avoid sending emails later in the evening

Example:

Hello Dr. Ko,

I’m currently a 2nd year Materials Engineering student interested in gaining research experience in Biomaterials and Nanofibre technology. I would like to apply for the NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award and would like to talk with you about possible research opportunities in your lab.

I know you must be very busy but I would greatly appreciate if we can schedule an appointment, or if you hold office hours, I can drop by to discuss further details. I have attached my resume for your perusal, please let me know if there is any other information I can provide.

I look forward hearing from you.

Best,
Gayatri

When you meet:

- Come prepared and know what you are going to say:
  - Articulate your interests, knowledge areas, relevant courses/coursework you’ve done, and lab or volunteer experience as clearly as you can
  - Familiarize yourself with the professor’s research subject by reviewing through their work (recent publications, conference proceedings, etc.) so you can ask informed questions about it. This will show that you are genuinely interested in helping with the research.
- Bring a copy of your resume
- Regardless of whether you get the opportunity or not, thank the professor for their time after you meet with them

C. Additional Information:

If you find a professor who is interested but needs help with next steps, refer them to:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>APSC-specific</th>
<th>NSERC</th>
<th>W LIURA (Ask them to contact <a href="mailto:apsc.pd@ubc.ca">apsc.pd@ubc.ca</a>)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program-wide</td>
<td>NSERC</td>
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