2017 SOCIAL SCIENCES UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD (USRA)
FALL AND SUMMER COMPETITIONS
INFORMATION FOR FACULTY

McMaster Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRAs) are supported by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and International Affairs, the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Office of Experiential Education (EE).

**NEW:** In addition to our summer USRAs, the Faculty of Social Sciences is pleased to offer a Fall USRA competition. Please view details below.

The USRAs are intended to cultivate and support research partnerships between undergraduate students and faculty members. These Awards provide undergraduate Social Sciences students with an opportunity to complete research-based activity either during the academic year, or during the Summer Term. The intent is that the proposed research deepens the student’s learning about a substantive area and enhances the student’s research skills.

**NEW FOR 2016/2017: Fall USRA Competition:**
There are 3 awards of $3500 available to cover part-time, research-based activity during the academic year (November – March). The Fall USRA will take place over 20 weeks where students are expected to complete 12 hours of work per week.

Application deadline: October 7, 2016 before 4:00pm

**Summer USRA Competition:**
There are 12 awards of $7500 available to cover full-time, research-based activity during the Summer Term (May – August). The Summer USRA will take place over 15 weeks where students are expected to complete 35 hours of work per week.

Application deadline: February 1, 2017 before 4:00pm

Students may apply to both competitions within the same academic year. If the student is successful in their Fall USRA application, and wishes to apply for a Summer USRA, the proposal must be for a different project.

All successful student candidates must submit a reflection document and participate in a poster.
session following the completion of the project to both recognize their achievements and to help to promote the opportunity to other students.

Faculty members can support an applicant by agreeing to supervise his/her research. This could be the student’s idea or part of the faculty member’s own project, but a substantial component of the research must be completed independently by the student.

Faculty are encouraged to attend the annual USRA Poster Session, where the 2016 award recipients will showcase their research. The event will take place on Thursday, November 3, 2016 from 2pm – 4pm in MUSC, CIBC Hall. This is a drop in event.

Role of Faculty
Faculty members can assist students by:
- identifying potential applicants and supporting the applicant’s proposed research;
- proposing opportunities related to their own research to a potential applicant; and,
- agreeing to supervise a USRA.

Supervising a USRA Student
The Social Sciences USRA supervisor can be a faculty member in the Faculty of Social Sciences or from another Faculty within McMaster.

Eligible supervisors include: full-time faculty members who are tenure-track, tenured, teaching-track, or permanent teaching professors. Other faculty that are eligible include professors emeriti, adjunct professors, and associate faculty members. CLA professors are also able to supervise USRA students provided their employment contract does not cease throughout the duration of the award.

Sessional instructors are not eligible to supervise USRA students; clinical and/or visiting faculty from areas outside the Social Sciences are also typically not eligible.

Student Eligibility
To apply, students must:
- be a full-time undergraduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Social Sciences in a degree program;
- be eligible to work in Canada;
- have received fewer than two (2) USRAs to this point in their academic studies at McMaster; and,
- normally, have a Term and Cumulative GPA of at least 8.0.

Students who are registered in a Combined Honours degree program in Humanities and Social Sciences will apply to the Faculty in which they are officially registered. Students registered in the Arts and Science Program are not eligible to apply for the Social Sciences USRA.

Students in their graduating year are eligible to apply for a USRA. For graduating students applying to the Summer competition, preference will be given to students who have applied for graduate studies commencing in September 2017.
**Application Process**
Faculty supervisors must sign the application form before it is submitted. By signing this form, supervisors agree that they have discussed the proposed project with the student, including ethical implications, are supportive of the project plan, and agree to supervise the student in completing the proposed research activities during the proposed period.

Complete USRA applications are to be submitted electronically as per the instructions listed on the application form, located at: [http://bit.ly/usraSS](http://bit.ly/usraSS)

Students are advised to not include any additional information (e.g. wording, photos, appendices, brochures, etc.) that exceed the word limit listed on the application form as these will be removed prior to the review process.

Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that applications are complete and that all information is accurate. Any and all information provided in any application to Office of Experiential Education, including supporting documentation, may be subject to clarification and/or verification for authenticity and accuracy.

**Ethics Approval**
Ethics approval is not needed to submit an application. However, if an award is offered and ethics approval is required, a copy of the ethics certificate indicating this approval normally has to be produced before the award can be granted. Students are encouraged to speak with an ethics officer in the McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat while completing their research proposal. The following website provides further information on receiving ethics approval: [http://reo.mcmaster.ca/](http://reo.mcmaster.ca/)

**Evaluation Criteria**
Applications will be evaluated on the overall project description, articulation of potential relevance of the research to a broader audience, and clearly articulated responses to the following criteria:

**Learning Objectives**
- What are your learning objectives for your research project?
- What strategies will you undertake to achieve your learning objectives?
- How will the successful completion of your objectives be assessed?

**Role in the Research**
- What is your overall role in the research project?
- What are your specific tasks in the research project?
- What methods will you use to conduct your research project?

**Connection to Academics**
- What is the connection between your research and your academic studies within the Social Sciences?
Overall Quality of the Research Plan
- Reviewers will also rate the overall feasibility and quality of the proposal.

Context of Research
- What is the broader relevance of your research project?

Academic Record
- Normally students should have a Term and Cumulative GPA of at least 8.0.

Selection Process
USRA applications are reviewed by a committee of faculty members. This group evaluates proposals using the USRA rating form, which can be located at http://bit.ly/ usrass

Students will be notified via email regarding their award status, generally within two weeks of the application deadline date for the Fall USRA and within four weeks for the Summer USRA.

Release of Funding
Upon receiving the award, students must agree to:
- Complete all weeks/hours of research over the term as per their proposal;
- submit a reflection document to the EE office following the completion of the research project; and,
- participate in the annual USRA Poster Session which is held the following academic year after the research has been completed.

Additional details will be provided once the award has been granted.

Additional Information
For more information pertaining to the USRA, contact:
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