

## 2017/2018 SOCIAL SCIENCES UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD (USRA) INFORMATION FOR FACULTY

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

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.

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### USRA Competitions

Fall:

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 6, 2017 before 4:00pm*

Summer:

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: January 31, 2018 before 4:00pm*

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

Successful candidates must submit a reflection paper and participate in a poster session to recognize their achievements and to help to promote the opportunity to other students.

Faculty are encouraged to attend the USRA Poster Session where the 2017 award recipients will showcase their work on October 26, 2017 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/or,
- agreeing to supervise a USRA.

## **Supervising a USRA Student**

The USRA supervisor can be a faculty member in the 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 able to supervise students provided their employment contract does not end 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 a degree program within the Faculty of Social Sciences;
- 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 their supervisor resides. Students registered in the Arts and Science Program are not eligible to apply for the Social Sciences USRA.

Graduating students are eligible to apply for a USRA.

## **Application Process**

Supervisors must sign the application. 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.

Applications are to be submitted electronically as per the instructions listed on the application form, located on the [student USRA webpage](#). Students should not include additional information (e.g. wording, photos, etc.) exceeding the word limit listed 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.

## **Ethics Approval**

NOTE: Projects requiring ethics approval are discouraged for the Fall USRA competition due to the time required to obtain the appropriate clearance and its impact on the research process.

Ethics approval is not needed to submit an application. However, if an award is offered and ethics approval is required, a copy of the certificate indicating this approval must normally be produced before the award is granted. Students are encouraged connect with the [McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat](#) while completing their proposal.

## **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?  
Refer to EE's Guide to Creating Learning Plans and Learning Objectives found on the [student USRA webpage](#).

### *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 using the USRA rating form, located on the [EE USRA webpage for students](#). Students will be notified of their award status via email, generally within two weeks of the application deadline date for the Fall USRA and within four weeks for the Summer USRA.

## **Additional Information**

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