

2026 UTEA and USRA Application Instruction Guide for Students

The University of Toronto Excellence Award (UTEA) and the NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) are two different undergraduate research awards that students can apply for. UTEA is an internal award administered by UofT and the USRA is an external award offered by NSERC. Each award has different requirements in terms of who can be a faculty supervisor and slightly different application processes but we have tried to streamline the process so the applications are similar. The guidelines below show you how to apply to each award.

You can apply to both, but you must submit separate applications for each.

1. University of Toronto Excellence Award (UTEA)

The University of Toronto Excellence Award (UTEA) provides opportunities for research experience at the undergraduate level in the Natural Sciences & Engineering (NSE), Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH), and Health & Life Sciences (HLS). Its purpose is fourfold: (1), to augment the formal research courses offered by the University of Toronto; (2) to provide undergraduate students opportunities to gain direct research experience on a faculty-led project; (3), to help students learn and appreciate the investigative methodologies of areas of particular interest; and (4), to foster interest in and knowledge of careers in research.

UTEA applications are jointly submitted by the student and the faculty member who will supervise and oversee the research project.

Application Procedure:

1. Complete **PART I** of the [**2026 UTEA Application \(Student Profile\)**](#).
2. Have your Proposed Supervisor complete **PART II** of the [**2026 UTEA Application \(Proposed Supervisor and Research Project\)**](#).
3. Combine the following into the application package as a single PDF with the following naming convention: "LastName, FirstName – UTEA.pdf" (file size under 10 MB only). Please include:
 - Your completed UTEA Application Form (Part I [student profile] and Part II [proposed supervisor and research project])
 - Unofficial ACORN Academic History (with your name visible on the print-out)
4. **Complete the [Application Submission Form](#) by Monday, February 23, 2026.**
Please upload your entire application package you created in the previous step.

2. Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)

The Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRA) program supports more than 3,000 students annually and is administered jointly by Canada's three granting agencies: the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). USRAs are meant to nurture student interest and fully develop the potential for a research career in health, natural sciences and engineering, or social sciences and humanities. These awards are also meant to encourage students to undertake graduate studies by providing research work experience that complements their studies in an academic setting.

The application for this program consists of two parts. Students must complete Form 202 Part I, and the [USRA Application Role Description](#) must be completed by the proposed research supervisor.

Application Procedure:

1. Complete **Form 202, Part I (Application for an Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA))** in the NSERC online system. If you have previously applied for a USRA, you cannot create a new Form 202. Instead, you must update Part I of the application previously submitted and upload new transcripts.
 - Log in to the [online system](#). If you are a first-time user, please register. The process will bring you to the *eConsole* page.
 - Select *Forms — Student* from the list under *Forms management*.
 - Select *Form 202, Part I*.
 - Complete the required modules. Please refer to the [USRA Instructions Webpage](#) for detailed instructions.
 - **NOTE:** If you self-identify as Indigenous or Black, please select the appropriate field under Form 202, Part I.
 - **Attach your most recent academic transcript, in PDF.** You may provide an e-transcript or academic history report generated directly from ACORN. If you are external to U of T, you must provide an official transcript, or transcripts that have been verified by your Undergraduate Office. Additional information can be found [here](#).

2. Submit Part I of your application.

- Once you have completed all modules, go to the *Portfolio* page and select *Verify* to ensure that all required information has been entered.
 - Download the Part I form as a PDF and send it to your supervisor so they have the information they need to complete the [USRA Application Role Description](#).

3. Your supervisor should send the USRA Application Role Description to you.

4. Combine all the relevant files in your application package as one single PDF (file size under 10 MB only), with the following naming convention: "LastName, FirstName – [AGENCY] USRA", where AGENCY is NSERC, SSHRC, or CIHR. Please include:

- Your completed Form 202 (Part I [student application])
- USRA Application Role Description
- Unofficial ACORN Academic History (with your name visible on the print-out)

5. **Following this step, complete the [Application Submission Form](#) by Monday, February 23, 2026.** Please upload your entire application package from step 5.

- NOTE:** If you self-identify as Indigenous or Black, please indicate this in the Form upon submission.

If the application is selected for an award, please complete the following step to ensure your Faculty Supervisor submits Form 202, Part II on NSERC's online system:

- Once you have submitted Form 202, Part I, a reference number will be generated. Email this reference number to your Faculty Supervisor – this is required to link both parts together into a complete application.
- Form 202, Part II is then **completed and submitted electronically by the proposed research supervisor **.** Application status will change to "Complete".

****** Use the following checklist to ensure your submission is complete:

Form 202, Part I (to be completed by the applicant)
<input type="checkbox"/> Application profile
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal profile
<input type="checkbox"/> Addresses
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic background
<input type="checkbox"/> Awards
<input type="checkbox"/> Transcripts (attachment)



Form 202, Part II (to be completed by the proposed research supervisor and submitted electronically)

<input type="checkbox"/> Project profile
<input type="checkbox"/> Research supervisor profile
<input type="checkbox"/> Current employment
<input type="checkbox"/> Outline of proposed research
<input type="checkbox"/> Outline of the student's role
<input type="checkbox"/> Expected quality of the training and mentorship to be received