UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS

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2024

Overview

- Award value of $8,500, paid as wages over 14 weeks

- Single common application form on the ROMEO system:
  - Students complete the online form, attach required materials, add supervisor
  - Faculty supervisor completes a reference
  - Student submits

- Deadline is NOON Feb 7, results shared by first week of March

- Single person projects only, with a faculty supervisor

- May be a project of your design or one that is suggested to you by your supervisor

- Students must write the application themselves, with feedback and guidance

Funding Sources – 51 awards (tentative)

- Ally Heaps (Computing Science, 4)
- CIHR (Health) USRA (1) (Black Canadian students only)
- Irving Awards (all disciplines, with priorities, 8)
- John P Cunningham (Chemistry, 2)
- NSERC USRA (Science, 11)
- RBC Foundation (many disciplines, policy related, 6)
- Richard Cunningham (Engineering, 1)
- Schwartz (Business / Management, 3)
- Scotia Scholars (Health, 14)
- SSHRC (social sciences, arts, humanities) USRA (1) (Black Canadian students only)

Value and Payment

- $8,500 regardless of source (in some cases university is "topping up")

- Each award is administered through payroll, you are paid every two (2) weeks through direct deposit to your bank account
  - Everyone gets paid ~$17/hr, plus 4% vacation pay
  - The total award value also covers mandatory deductions (CPP, EI, income tax, thus approx. take home pay is ~$7,300)

- Hours per week / total weeks / start and end dates **to be discussed with your supervisor**, but, for payroll simplicity:
  - 14 weeks, 32 hours/week, 448 hours total
  - May 6 to Aug 9

- Research Office sets up payroll and manages it for everyone.
  - You will need to submit banking and related information, if not already set up in payroll. Look for communication from Research Office

- Faculty supervisors are permitted to "pay more" and would discuss with the student

Eligibility

- With the exception of CIHR / NSERC / SSHRC USRA and Cunningham Engineering awards, all students must be returning for at least one final year of full time study to be eligible

- Students graduating May 2024 are not eligible (except USRA; Engineering)

- First year BEd students are eligible

- First year PBD in AI computer science students eligible for Ally Heaps only

- Some funding sources have specific eligibility criteria

- Successful applicants assigned awards based on subject matter and funder requirements

Application Package (1)

- One single PDF document
  - Formatting: ¾ inch margins all around, 11pt font, single spacing, name at the top

- 1-page research proposal
  - Objectives, context, methodology, expected impact or outcomes

- 1-page list of citations, optional bibliographic references

- 1-page statement of preparation: "How do your unique experiences make you ready for this opportunity?"
  - Academic preparation, qualifications, experiences for this project
  - How this project fits with your longer term plans

- STFX unofficial grade report (available free using Banner)
  - If you have courses / transcripts from other universities or colleges, please include an unofficial grade list for these

Application Package (2)

- Supervisor completes sub-tab section
  - You can have co-supervisors, but **only the main supervisor** completes this task
- Assessment of the research potential of the student:
  - Clear statement about the student's **readiness** for the project
  - Evidence of **potential** for the student to be successful in research
  - Specific **examples** that point to the excellence of the student, more generally
  - If co-supervisors, the assessment can be co-developed / co-written
- 5,000 characters or approximately 600 words
- May include additional information about cash and in-kind support for the student project
- Confirmation email sent to both student and supervisor AFTER the student submits the application

1-page Research Proposal

- Objectives, context, methodology, expected impact or outcomes

- Write clearly and simple to explain what you want to do and how you will do it

- Start by stating an issue or problem or opportunity, or the big question or debate, and why it is important (for society, for the discipline, etc)

- Then have a couple of objectives (to assess, to understand, to…)

- What is the context for this proposed project? Cite a couple of articles.

- How will you do this – literature review, surveys, interviews, focus groups, lab experiments, field experiments, simulations, modelling…

- What do you expect to be the outcome – the results will increase our understanding of… will contribute to… will provide insights on…

Statement of Preparation

- 1-page statement of preparation: "How do your unique experiences make you ready for this opportunity?"
  - Academic preparation, qualifications, experiences for this project
  - How this project fits with your longer term plans

- Describe specific courses you took or are taking and what you are learning from them that informs your ability to do this

- Describe any relevant work you might have done – as a research assistant, a volunteer (in a lab, on campus, in the community), and especially any skills you developed like time management, analytical skills, etc

- Describe how this fits with an honours program or other undergraduate work, and describe how this fits with any future plans like graduate school, employment, etc

- **Note: OPTIONAL** If you had "special circumstances" such as part time course load, medical or family leave / issues that affected your grades, you can discuss here

Advice on Theoretical Projects

- Non experts outside of your discipline will be evaluating this

- Give a solid hypothesis or question that you are investigating or thinking about

- Is there a current "debate" that has sparked your interest and you want to explore something related to this?

- Consider providing "the arguments" you will be exploring, rather than "objectives"

- What is motivating you to do this project? (this could be part of the discussion in the statement of preparation)

- What are the key texts (or a working reading list) you will be consulting, and why are these important?

- Make it clear what steps you will be taking – reading, reflecting, drafting "arguments" or "positions" for discussion and debate with your supervisor, etc

- If possible, what will the end product will be – contributing to your honours thesis; perhaps a potential journal article; foundation for a directed studies course, etc

Supervisors on Theoretical Projects

- When commenting on the potential of the student to be successful in research:
  - Draw a linkage to the appropriateness of how the student has set up their plan to the project (and their ability to do it)
  - Comment on the positioning of the hypothesis, question, or debate and the student's ability to take this on
  - Comment on the suitability of the reading list (if appropriate)

Evaluation Criteria (1)

- Will be reviewed by group of faculty members from different disciplines

- **Academic Excellence 20%:**
  - Relative standing in course
  - Grades in courses related to the proposed research subject matter
  - Course load (full course load vs less than full and overall performance)

- **Quality of the proposed research project and expected outcomes 40%:**
  - Significance, feasibility and merit of proposed research
  - Clarity of proposal (ideas, theoretical, technical / concepts clearly and logically written)
  - Appropriateness and clarity of methodology

Evaluation Criteria (2)

- **Research Potential 40%:**
  - Courses taken / work done in specific courses to help prepare for the project; Relevance of academic training to field of proposed research
  - Activities; Research experiences / employment; Other employment; Extracurricular activities; Other
  - Statement of interest in the project specifically and research generally
  - Plans / intentions for possible honours, graduate studies, employment in research / related fields
  - Clear statement about the student's readiness for the project and evidence of potential for the student to be successful in research
  - Specific examples that point to the excellence of the student, more generally

Ally Heaps

- Students must be in Computer Science program to be eligible

- First year Post Baccalaureate Diploma in AI students are eligible

- Computer Science students are also eligible to receive awards from other sources

- Project does not have to be connected to faculty's own research

- Students must be full-time at time of application, and be returning to full-time studies in the same program in the fall

NSERC USRA (1)

- To be assigned an NSERC USRA, must:
  - Be doing a science project in an NSERC discipline
  - Have minimum GPA of B- or 70%
  - Be Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Supervisor **does not** have to hold an NSERC grant
- Once assigned, students and supervisor **together** complete "paperwork" on the NSERC on-line system (details will be sent):
  - The student completes Form 202, Part 1, including transcripts
  - Faculty supervisor completes Form 202 Part 2
- **DO NOT** start the NSERC form until you have been assigned this award
- Students in any year, including graduating students, are eligible
- Project is typically closely connected to supervisor's research

NSERC USRA (2)

- USRA Supplements

- Canadian Forest Workforce Diversity Supplement
  - $5,000 supplement
  - If approved for USRA, and your project falls into research areas of relevance to Natural Resources Canada (Canadian Forest Sector), it is automatically forwarded for consideration
  - No separate application

- ECCC Atmospheric and Meteorological Supplement
  - $1,000 supplement
  - Research activities in atmospheric and meteorological sciences
  - If approved for USRA, you apply directly to ECCC by August 1

- Eligible **Indigenous students** automatically approved by NSERC outside of the minimum number of awards we have to offer – submit separately through NSERC

- Eligible **Black Canadian students** automatically approved by NSERC outside of the minimum number of awards we have to offer – submit separately through NSERC

CIHR and SSHRC USRA

- New initiative supported by the federal government's Black Scholars Initiative

- We can offer one award each (maximum quota offered to StFX)

- Eligible **Black Canadian students only**

- Students in any year, including graduating students, are eligible

- Apply through our internal program; two students will be selected
  - Students and supervisor **together** complete "paperwork" on the NSERC on-line system (details will be sent):
  - The student completes Form 202, Part 1, including unofficial transcripts
  - Faculty supervisor completes Form 202 Part 2
  - **DO NOT** start the NSERC form until you have been assigned this award
  - Automatically approved by CIHR and SSHRC

- If eligible for these, **but not selected**, you will be considered for any and all other internal awards, subject to alignment with the funds and overall ranking

RBC Foundation Research Mentorship Awards (1)

- Funding provided through the Mulroney Institute of Government

- Project does not have to be connected to faculty's own research

- Students in all Bachelor programs (including BEd) are eligible

- Students must be full-time at time of application, and be returning to full-time studies in the same Bachelor program in the fall

- Must propose research that is relevant to public policy and governance issues

RBC Foundation Research Mentorship Awards (2)

- Women's Studies and Leadership

- Economics, Trade and Finance

- Canada-US Relations

- Global Affairs

- Environmental Issues and Policy

- Indigenous Affairs and Governance

- Underserved Communities, Social Policy and Government

- Multiculturalism and Linguistic Diversity

Schwartz Business School Research Awards

- Students must be in BBA program to be eligible
- BBA students are also eligible to receive awards from other sources
- Project does not have to be connected to faculty's own research
- Students must be full-time at time of application, and be returning to full-time studies in the same Bachelor program in the fall
- Must propose research that is business / management related, including:
  - Accounting
  - Enterprise Systems
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Finance
  - International Business
  - Management and Leadership
  - Marketing

Scotia Scholars (1)

- Registered in an honours stream or advanced major undergraduate degree program, with a project related to health

- Completed at least two years of an undergraduate degree at time of application

- Achieved a first-class (A- or 80) average in their current undergraduate degree program

- Be in good standing for continued enrollment as of Sept 2024

- Students graduating in May 2024 are not eligible to receive Scotia Scholars Award

Scotia Scholars (2)

- Applications must fit with one of the following:
  - Health innovation
  - Mental health
  - Continuing care
  - Accessible health services
  - Well-being of Nova Scotians
- Selected applicants write an additional one-page "fit with priorities"
- Packages forwarded to Research NS; you receive official award letter from RNS, and you must accept/confirm
- **DO NOT** submit an application on the Research NS website

Other Research Funding

- Contact a professor who does research in discipline of interest for more information about whether or not they are hiring students as research assistants
- Extension Dept at STFX:
  - Wallace Internships for Entrepreneurship
  - Employment Innovation Research Internships (Jesse Popp, jpopp@stfx.ca)
- Other External opportunities:
  - Divert NS (research projects on waste diversion, waste reduction)
  - National Defence **Young MINDS Initiative**
    - $10,000, various themes, many disciplines
    - March 1 and Oct 1 each year

Useful Data for Research

- Engage Nova Scotia Quality of Life data set (2019)

- Eight domains
  - Community Vitality

  - Democratic Engagement

  - Education

  - Environment

  - Healthy Populations

  - Leisure and Culture

  - Living Standards

  - Time Use

- 230 questions, 12,827 respondents

- Data dictionary available on Dataverse

- Complete a data access request form

Certifications

- If your project involves human participants, animals, or biohazards, you and your supervisor are responsible submitting applications to receive approval PRIOR to the start of your project
  - Check with your supervisor, your project may be covered under an existing certification under his or her name
- Failure to have the appropriate certifications in place may delay the payment of your payroll
  - We can arrange for early release of payroll

Other

- All applicants will be asked to complete an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion survey
  - Will help us track participation over time and allow us to make efforts to increase diverse participation in our program
  - **Will <u>NOT</u> be shared with the review committee and will <u>NOT</u> be used for evaluation purposes**
  - May be used to confirm eligibility for certain awards (e.g., CIHR / NSERC / SSHRC USRA)
- Successful applicants will be asked to complete a satisfaction survey at end of summer
- We will offer various professional development opportunities through the 4-month period
- You are encouraged to participate in student research day March 2025

Can I Work Another Job?

- Awards are designed to be more or less equivalent to full time "work" over 14 weeks

- We recognize that students have income needs

- Taking a "second job" is permissible, if necessary:

  - Discuss with supervisor

  - Does not interfere with completing your research project and tasks

  - You can manage your time accordingly

- Note: If a "second job" at StFX, you cannot work / be paid for, more than 48 hours combined in any given week (payroll system will flag this and "someone" will need to pay you for overtime hours and rates – will not happen)

ROMEO System

- You must "register" to create an account
- "Apply New" (upper right corner)
- Click "Undergraduate Student Summer Research Award"
- You can go back to "edit" your application anytime by clicking on "drafts" on your home page
- Under "Project Team Info" scroll to bottom, add team member, "search" for your supervisor's name and "select". Set "role" to Supervisor
- There is no message to the supervisor, they can access your application from their home page under "drafts"
- After everything is done, submit, type in "OK" and submit

Questions?

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