

# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS WRITING WORKSHOP

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UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS

# WRITING WORKSHOP



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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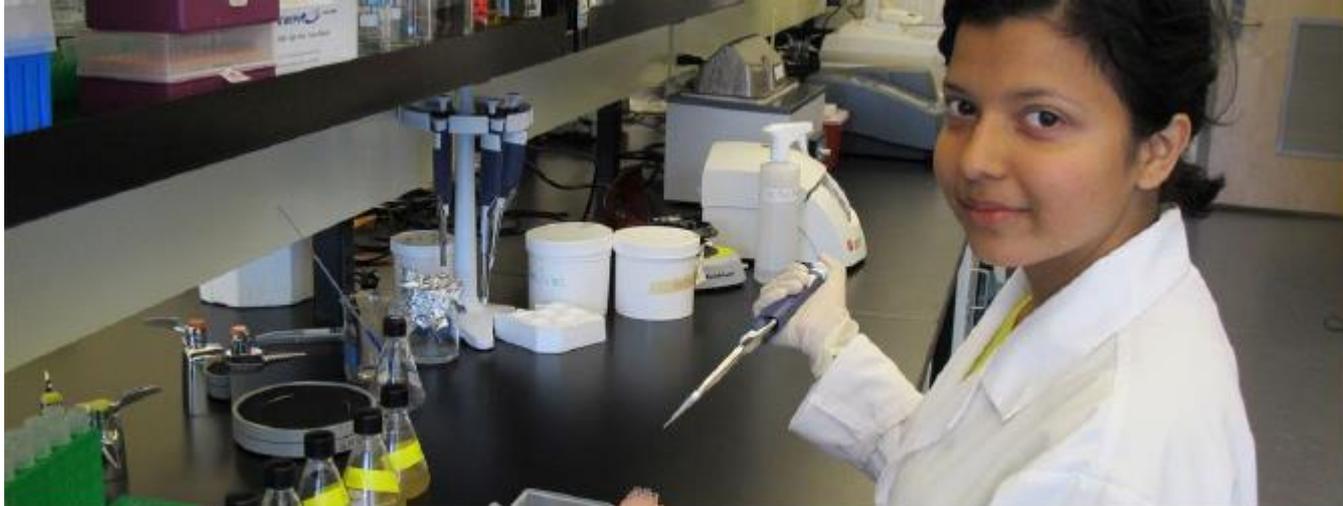


**Email me to make an appointment for  
help with writing your URA application!**

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS

### **Purpose:**

To provide an opportunity for UBCO Arts and Sciences undergraduate students to pursue innovative research.



## PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS



**To see the wide variety of previously funded topics:**

<https://ikbsas.cms.ok.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/104/2019/10/URA-Symposium-Itinerary-2019-with-Abstracts.pdf>

# WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Purpose:** an opportunity to develop an idea to solve a problem.



## THE PROPOSAL WRITING PROCESS

**BRAINSTORM:** Come up with an idea

**READ:** What has been done before? What needs to be done?  
How are you going to do it?

**WRITE:** Start to organize ideas; Create a rough draft;  
Get feedback; Revise;  
Edit final draft; Submit

# THE APPLICATION FORM

## A fillable PDF form for you; download form:

[https://ikbsas.cms.ok.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/104/2019/11/Form\\_A\\_Student\\_ApplicationNov2019-20RE.pdf](https://ikbsas.cms.ok.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/104/2019/11/Form_A_Student_ApplicationNov2019-20RE.pdf)



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Irving K. Barber School of Arts & Sciences & the International Student Initiative

For program information please contact:  
Robin Young (Science) Advisor -  
[robin.young@ubc.ca](mailto:robin.young@ubc.ca) or TBA (Arts) Advisor

## Undergraduate Research Award Form A: Student Application

Application package must be received no later than 4 p.m. on **January 27, 2020**

I am an International Student and would like to be considered for the IURA or the URA PLEASE NOTE: Click on fields, do not use TAB

### Student Application Process:

**Step 1:** Save both Form A and Form B. Open and complete Form A using Adobe Reader. Save and print Form A, and sign the hard copy.

## CHOOSING A TITLE



- Maximum 75 characters
- Needs to be **informative**
  - Most important idea or concept
- Create **interest!**

*(typically written later in your writing process)*



## TITLE EXAMPLES FROM PAST WINNERS

- Gratitude and well-being: a mediator analysis
- Evaluation of wine yeast viability in chemically defined grape juice medium
- Modeling wildlife habitat in the Canadian environmental assessment process
- Traction force microscopy and fluorescent live cell imaging to quantify cell adhesion forces



[https://ikbsas.ok.ubc.ca/awards/undergrad/ura/2018\\_award\\_recipients.html](https://ikbsas.ok.ubc.ca/awards/undergrad/ura/2018_award_recipients.html)

## KEY WORDS (*...also written later in your process*)



- Maximum 5 words (or short terms) to describe your project
- Key words tell the reviewer **what you think is most important** about your project:
  - Who should be interested? and Why?
  - Multi-word key words are fine
    - E.g. “climate change”



## ABSTRACT (... definitely written last in your process)



<http://blogs.plos.org/absolutely-maybe/files/2014/05/You-said-to-do-an-abstract.jpg>

Overview of project must include:

- Project rationale/ statement of problem
- Research questions/ hypotheses
- Methods proposed/used
- Expected results
- Broad implications/ applications of the results

**Maximum 100 words**



## RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

Use these headers (see Guidelines p. 3):

1. Introduction and Background
  2. Research Questions and/or Objectives
  3. Methodology
  4. Significance and Impact
- Make it **easy for your reader to find important information** (e.g. indentation, *italics*, spaces, etc.).
  - Proposal should have a **clear logic**.



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- Describes the **problem** or the **area of investigation**.
- Brief review of the **most relevant literature** with citations.
- Sets the stage for your project.



**Note:** the fillable form does not allow superscript notations for citations.

Use in text citations like APA or Chicago Author/Date styles,  
e.g: (Author et al, year) or (Author & Author, year)

## PHRASES FOR ESTABLISHING IMPORTANCE

Evidence suggests that X is among the most important factors for ...

X is essential for a wide range of scientific and industrial processes.

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of ...

X is an vital component in the climate system, and plays a key role in Y.



*For many more suggestions, see the [Introducing Work](#) section of the [Academic Phrasebank](#)*

## SECTION 2: RESEARCH QUESTION AND/ OR OBJECTIVES

- Use either or both; depends on your project (you may also use a hypothesis).
- At the end of your project, what is the main question you would like to answer or what do you hope to contribute?



***Write for an interdisciplinary audience;  
make your intention clear.***

## PHRASES FOR ESTABLISHING PURPOSE

The objectives of this research are to determine whether ...

Drawing on two strands of research into X, this study **will** ...

This research **will** examine the emerging role of X in the context of ...

The main aim of this study is to investigate the differences between X and Y.



*For many more suggestions, see the [Introducing Work](#) section of the [Academic Phrasebank](#)*

## SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY

Describes what you are going to do.

- What **tools or techniques** will you use?
- How will this **approach** help achieve your objective?
- Is the approach unique? (*You may need to justify it*).
- May provide a timeline (*speaks to feasibility*).
- Indicates how you might deal with potential problems.
- Provides **concrete steps that are doable** within the 16 week timeline.



# PHRASES FOR DESCRIBING METHODS

## For a previously established method:

- Samples **will** be analysed for X as previously reported by Vishak et al. (2012).
- Analysis **will** be based on the conceptual framework proposed by Yang et al. (2002).



## Describing the process:

- For the attitude questions, a Likert scale **will** be used.
- For the purpose of analysis, two segments **will** be extracted from each ...

## Indicating methodological problems or limitations

- In observational studies, there is a potential for bias from ...

*For many more suggestions, see the [Describing Methods section of the Academic Phrasebank](#)*

## SECTION 4: SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT

Describes the **expected outcomes** and indicates:

- the **impact** and **contributions** of the project;
  - This may be discipline specific or of interest to an external group;
- how the project fits into the “big picture”;
- potential follow-up studies if the project is successful.



## PHRASES FOR ESTABLISHING SIGNIFICANCE

This work **will** generate fresh insight into ...

Understanding the link between X and Y **will** help ...

This is the first study to undertake an analysis of ...

The findings should make an important contribution to the field of ....



*For many more suggestions, see the [Introducing Work](#) section of the [Academic Phrasebank](#)*

## QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL IMPACT STATEMENT

- What experiences have you had that have prepared you for the project? (courses, research, volunteer work, etc.)
- Why are you interested in this research?
- Why did you choose this project?
- How does this project connect to your future goals?



## YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

- Academic training relevant to the project (courses, previous research experience)
  - Articulate clearly **how past experiences or courses** have **specifically prepared** you for this project.
- Demonstrate that you are able to work independently (*and, where relevant, collaboratively*).
  - Consider including **specific examples** of previous employment and/or volunteer experiences.



# BUDGET

## Max is \$1,500 for supplies

- Ensure your expenses are allowed (*ask if you're not sure*).

### Some items that may not be allowed include:

- Computer equipment
- Conference travel
- [Consult list of appropriate expenses](#) (*p. 4 of Guidelines doc*).
- Provide details, but group expendable supplies (e.g. chemicals, PCR supplies, etc.).
- Explain any unusual expenses.



## STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FROM SUPERVISOR

- Ensure your proposed supervisor knows a **LOT** about you.
  - Provide a resume, transcript, tell them about yourself, your experiences, your aspirations.
- They should fill the space provided and comment on the process of preparing the URA application



## PROCESS: COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

**There are 3 required signatures:** yours, the supervisor, and the Department Head.

- Complete and submit Form A (*with all attachments*) to your supervisor **at least one week before** the deadline.
- The supervisor will complete Form B and submit the complete application to the Department Head before the deadline.
  - Departmental deadlines are sometimes 2 days earlier than the final deadline
- The full application is due to the Dean's Office - ASC 413 (Reception) - by **4:00 pm on January 27, 2020.**



## PROCESS: EVALUATION

After you submit your application:

- URA Coordinator, Julie Martin, ensures it is complete (*signatures and transcripts*)
- Applications are distributed to Selection Committee members; they read, score and rank applications, and submit scores to the URA Coordinator.
- Selection Committee meets to discuss and rank applications.
- A ranked list is sent to the Dean for consideration.
- Students are informed of the decision in **March.**



## **CRITERIA *(TO BE CONSIDERED EQUALLY)***

### **1. Quality of proposed Research**

- Merit of research and potential impact on the field
- Strength of research design and overall feasibility of proposed research
- Interdisciplinary elements (not mandatory, but encouraged)
- Clarity, presentation, and logic of proposal, in language accessible by multidisciplinary audience.

### **2. Researcher's abilities, qualifications, and potential for growth**

- Personal initiative
- Ability to think critically and analytically
- Ability to apply skills and knowledge
- Determination and ability to complete projects in a timely fashion
- Communication skills and ability
- Past academic achievement
- Relevant academic training and experience
- Other relevant experiences and accomplishments



## GENERAL TIPS: WRITING PROCESS

Follow a strong writing process:

- Outline (consultation with supervisor),
- Draft (consultation with supervisor),
- Revise (consultation with supervisor),
- Proofread carefully – *avoid errors when applying for \$.*

*Work closely with your supervisor at every step.*



## GENERAL TIPS: UNDERSTAND AUDIENCE & GET FEEDBACK

Ask trustworthy people **from outside of your discipline** to be critical when reading your proposal.

- *If they understand what you propose, then members of the Selection Committee will understand.*
- Use specific and clear language.
- Define terms and procedures in ways that the layperson can understand (*avoid jargon and acronyms whenever possible*).

***Show that you can clearly communicate your ideas to a broader audience.***



## FINAL TIPS

- Every sentence should be directly relevant to the proposed research.
- Be clear about the goals and scope of the research.
  - Don't exaggerate expected outcomes.
- Write in complete sentences! (*you can use bullets for lists*)
- Complete all sections. Use the space provided.



**Julie Martin can access UBCO transcripts.**

*Dean's Office can access these directly on behalf of the student.*

## QUESTIONS?

*For any questions about the application process, please contact*



[julie.martin@ubc.ca](mailto:julie.martin@ubc.ca)

*To make an appointment for help with writing your URA application, email*

[amanda.brobbel@ubc.ca](mailto:amanda.brobbel@ubc.ca)