CENTRE FOR SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS WRITING WORKSHOP

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Visit our website to book appointments:
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Questions? Contact us
csc.ok@ubc.ca
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://fass.ok.ubc.ca/awards/undergrad/ura/ or https://science.ok.ubc.ca/awards/undergrad/ura/
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
DOWNLOAD: FILLABLE PDF APPLICATION FORM

HTTPS://SCIENCE_OK.UBC.CA/AWARDS/UNDERGRAD/URA/  OR HTTPS://FASS_OK.UBC.CA/AWARDS/UNDERGRAD/URA/

REDACTED EXAMPLE DOC: HTTPS://DRIVE.GOOGLE.COM/FILE/D/1uFwZR4m1F2T4aPDf9Y0EAwpWY1Q8AT5D/view?usp=sharing

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Irving K. Barber Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
Okanagan Campus

Undergraduate Research Award
Form A: Student Application

Application package must be received no later than 4 p.m. on January 28, 2021

☐ 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
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
• The space-definedness of the blind, blindfolded, and sighted
• Enabled environment: Understanding bathrooms as sensory inclusive public spaces in the Okanagan
• Bias in the Legal System: How race and confessions impact a verdict

Find previous winners' titles at HTTPS://SCIENCE.OK.UBC.CA/AWARDS/UNDERGRAD/URA/
OR HTTPS://FASS.OK.UBC.CA/AWARDS/UNDERGRAD/URA/
KEY WORDS (...also written later in your process)

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

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

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, capitalization, *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 a vital component in the … 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
Choose a phrase from the Academic Phrasebank
If you would like, practice writing your own statement of significance at the link that I paste in the chat

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 …
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, if 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 Julie/Jody if unsure).

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 types of 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 28, 2021**.
PROCESS: EVALUATION

After you submit your application:

• URA Coordinators, Jody Ainley (FASS) or Julie Martin (FoS), ensure 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 CONSIDERED EQUALLY (FROM GUIDELINES P. 5)

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 when 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/Jody Ainley can access UBCO transcripts.
Dean’s Office can access these directly on behalf of the student.
QUESTIONS?

Questions about the application process, please contact

julie.martin@ubc.ca (FoS)
jody.ainley@ubc.ca (FASS)

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

csc.ok@ubc.ca
Visit our website to book appointments:

https://library.ok.ubc.ca/research/csc