

## **NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award FAQs 2020**

Due to the current situation of COVID-19 the NSERC USRA research projects will only proceed if the entire project can be completed online (e.g., data analysis, literature review, computer simulation, writing, etc.).

Supervisors are asked to modify their proposed research plan by completing the attached form.

The following must be considered in the revised research plan:

1. **No components of the research are to involve on-campus or field sampling**, even if social distancing is observed (see possible exceptions below in questions and answers). If the revised proposal depends on *any* return to campus or field research, it will not be accepted.
2. Confirm active supervision throughout the project will occur via video- and tele-conferencing, e-mail, etc.
3. Revised plans must be submitted and accepted in order to finalize the award process for the completion of the remote project.
4. If the revised plan is not submitted by April 23, 2020 the financial component of the offer will be rescinded.

The supervisor must email the completed form to the office of Research Services (Leslie Cudmore at [lcudmore@upei.ca](mailto:lcudmore@upei.ca)) by the deadline of **April 23, 2020**.

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **A. If the supervisor declines to modify the research plan to an online project, can the student identify another supervisor?**

Yes, provided that the student notifies Research Services ([lcudmore@upei.ca](mailto:lcudmore@upei.ca)) immediately of the situation and requests an extension to enable them to identify a new supervisor. An extension of up to one calendar week is possible. Failure to find a new supervisor within the time period will result in the financial component of the award being rescinded. The new supervisor must agree to all of the conditions, including providing the matching funds (minimum \$1125) and they must not agree to supervise more than two NSERC USRA funded students.

#### **B. If the proposed project is part of an approved essential research plan, can the student participate?**

Yes, it is possible. However, the essential research plan, including the student's role, must be approved prior to accepting the USRA. It is advisable that the supervisor and student should submit a full online project proposal by the deadline (April 23). Research Services will accept an amendment at a later date if there is a role within an approved essential research plan identified.

**C. Is it possible to do campus-based or field-based research if social isolation measures are relaxed during the summer?**

Yes, if it is compatible with the approved public health restrictions. However, all USRA projects must be established with the *entire* summer research experience executable assuming that return to normal activities does not occur during the USRA time period. If the revised proposal depends on *any* return to campus or field research, it will not be accepted.

**D. Will shortened work terms be possible?**

Yes, NSERC will allow shortened work terms. UPEI expects that students will engage in projects for a minimum of 12 weeks. Longer projects are possible but this will be up to arrangements between the supervisor and the student.

**E. Will the award value be reduced?**

NSERC is honouring the full value of the awards (\$4500) and therefore, supervisors must commit at least the minimum required amount (\$1125).

**F. Will projects be allowed to continue part-time in the Fall?**

No, projects that start during the summer must be completed during the summer term.

**G. Can the award be postponed until Fall 2020 or Winter 2021?**

Technically, NSERC allows this option. However, this would be a rare situation at UPEI and must be discussed with the Research Services office (Leslie Cudmore) before being considered.

**H. Do supervisors need to revise their project description in the NSERC online form?**

The project description in the NSERC online form does not need to be revised. However, your research plan must be communicated to Leslie Cudmore and Dr. Larry Hammell by completing the Revised Research Project form.

**I. What happens if the student is no longer able to accept the award?**

Please contact Leslie Cudmore ([lcudmore@upei.ca](mailto:lcudmore@upei.ca)) as soon as possible so that we can offer the award to another student. You can still list the award (as declined) on your CV.

**J. What is the process for activating the award payments?**

Supervisors need to complete the Revised Research Project form to initiate the award payments. Note that all USRAs at UPEI are considered as scholarships and therefore paid as stipend. Please ensure that the student's term is at least 12 weeks. This form is to be returned to Research Services by email ([lcudmore@upei.ca](mailto:lcudmore@upei.ca)) by April 23, 2020.

Students, if your banking information is not on file with the university, you must complete a personal information form and banking information form (available on [myUPEI](#)) and submit these documents to Human Resources at [staffing@upei.ca](mailto:staffing@upei.ca).

**K. Are the rules the same for the other Undergraduate Research Awards - Science (SURA), Engineering (EURA), Veterinary (VetSRA)?**

Yes, these SRAs will follow the same requirements: minimum 12 weeks, same original funding formula, and required submission of revised proposal for online research. The same process will occur: revised plan to be submitted by April 23 with verification by the supervisor of online project and matching funding.