Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) Resources for Black & Indigenous Students

Introduction:

This document outlines the process on how to apply for USRA for any of the three research granting agencies of Canada (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC) as a Black or Indigenous student. In addition, it summarizes the criteria required to identify as a Black or Indigenous student. For detailed information, please refer to the NSERC-CRSNG website.

Important Information:

- Select the Agency whose mandate aligns with your field of research.
- At present time, CIHR and SSHRC USRAs are exclusively for Black student researchers.
- For NSERC, institutions are permitted to recommend an unlimited number of self-identified Indigenous and Black student researchers to the USRA program over and above their quota.

Indigenous Identity (NSERC):

'Indigenous Peoples" is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. "Aboriginal Peoples" is also often used as a synonym. For the purposes of this program, NSERC uses the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982 definition of Aboriginal Peoples which includes the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada.' More information can be found in the Self-Identification Statement for NSERC.

Black Identity (NSERC, CIHR & SSHRC):

Black students applying to Tri-Agency programs like the USRA program must simply self-identify as Black in their application. As a reminder, you must also be a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident to apply. (NSERC, 2024)

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Process:

These instructions apply to both Black and Indigenous students.

1. Login or register on the online USRA system website.
2. Select "Forms-Student" from the list under "Forms management".
3. Select "Forms 202, Part I".
4. Complete the required modules:
   a. Application profile
      - Select NSERC
      - Complete the required fields.
   b. Personal profile
      - Personal identification number.

- All NSERC applicants receive a PIN. [Contact online services support](#) if you have applied in the past but do not currently remember yours.
- Collection of self-identification data; complete the self-identification questionnaire.
  - **If you do not correctly self-identify as Black or Indigenous at this stage, there may be issues with receiving your award as a result.**
- Consent to sharing information.

    c. Addresses
    d. Academic background
    e. Awards
    f. Transcripts

5. Submit Part I of the application.
   a. Go to "Portfolio" and select "Verify" to ensure that all required information has been entered.
   b. Copy the reference number for Part I of Form 202 and provide this reference number to your proposed Project Supervisor and the Student Research team at [studentresearch@ontariotechu.ca.](mailto:studentresearch@ontariotechu.ca)

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Process:

These awards are available exclusively to Black students.

1. Login or register on the [online USRA system](#) website.
2. Select "Forms-Student" from the list under "Forms management".
3. Select "Forms 202, Part I".
4. Complete the required modules:
   a. Application profile
      - Select CIHR or SSHRC
      - Complete the required fields.
   b. Personal profile
      - Personal identification number.
         - All NSERC applicants have received or will receive, a PIN. [Contact online services support](#) if you have applied in the past but do not currently remember yours.
      - Collection of self-identification data; complete the self-identification questionnaire.
         - **If you do not correctly self-identify as Black or Indigenous at this stage, there may be issues with receiving your award as a result.**
      - Consent to sharing information.
   c. Addresses
   d. Academic background
   e. Awards
   f. Transcripts
5. Submit Part I of the application.

a. Go to "Portfolio" and select "Verify" to ensure that all required information has been entered.
b. Copy the reference number for Part I of Form 202 and provide this reference number to your proposed Project Supervisor and the Student Research team at studentresearch@ontariotechu.ca.

Resources:
FAQs about the new Black Scholars Funding
Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan for 2018 to 2025
Tri-Agency Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
Instructions for Completing an Application – Form 202
NSERC USRA Program Application Tutorial Video