NSERC
CRSNG

Breakthrough answers to timeless questions

Des réponses innovantes à de grandes questions

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada

Canada
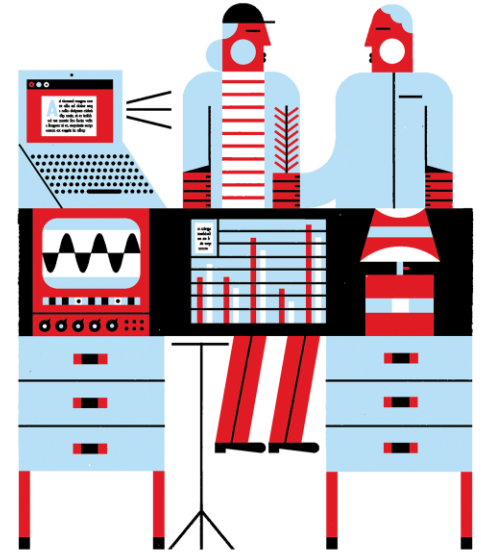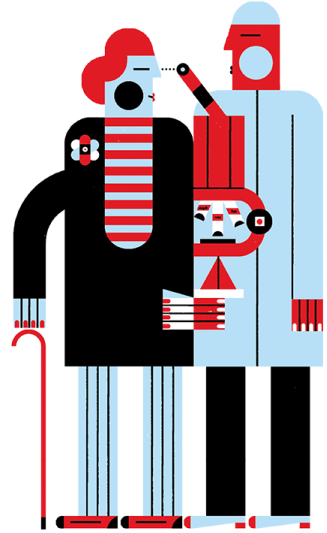
USRA information session for Liaison Officers (LOs)

Presented by: Ameth Lo

Table of contents

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
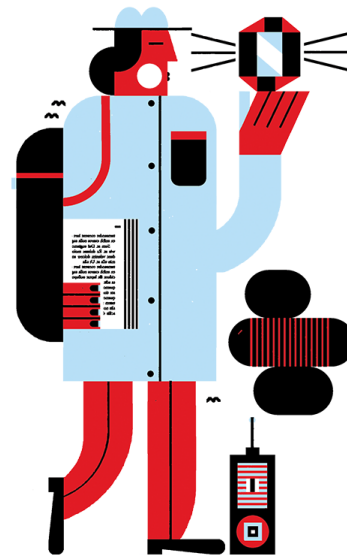
NSERC, CIHR and SSHRC's focus on EDI

The granting agencies are committed to implementing policies and processes that identify and mitigate barriers and biases within our programs.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

Selection committee membership

- We believe that diverse selection committee membership results in higher-quality review.

- In selecting members for the USRA selection committees, we encourage institutions to ensure the diversity of the members.

- We encourage institutions and departments to publish the names of selection committee members on their websites.

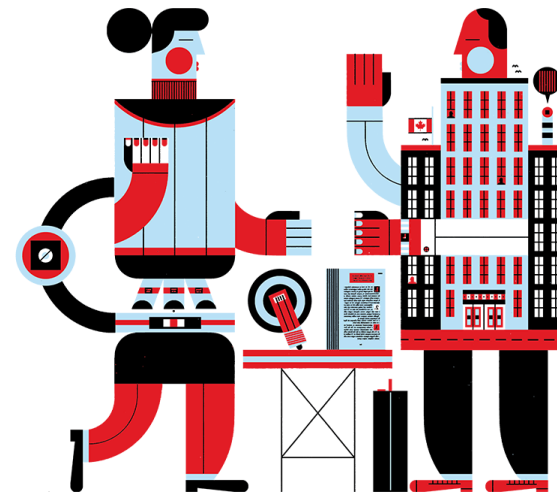- Refer to the Guidelines governing membership of selection committees for more information.

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Selection committee member training modules

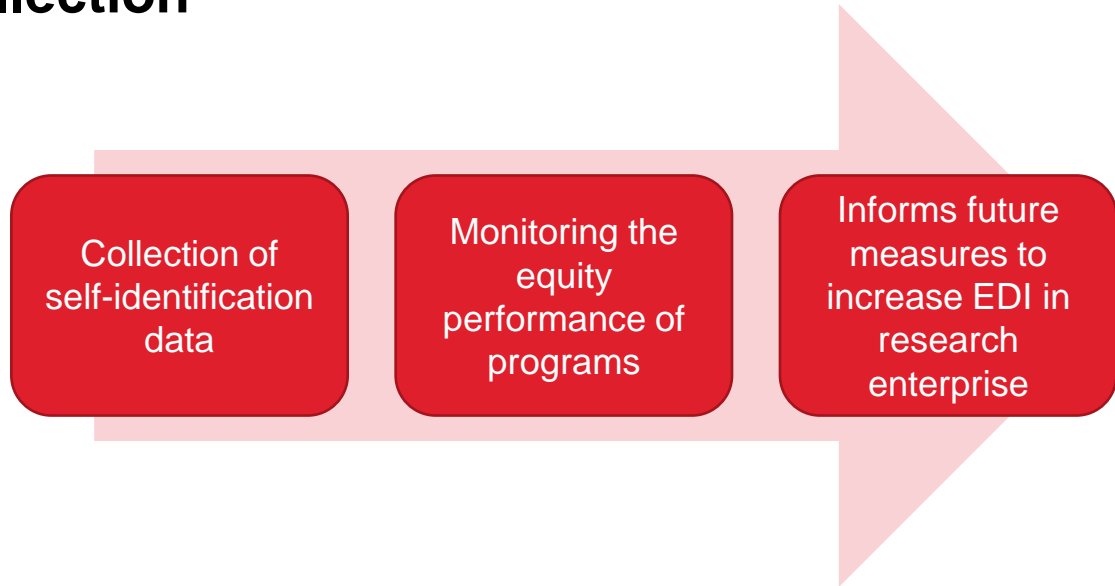We encourage you to share the following resources with your selection committee members:

- The Bias in Peer Review training module developed by the Tri-agency

- The Sex and Gender Training Modules developed by CIHR

• Vora, T. (2018). Being Conscious About Our Unconscious Biases. [image]. Available at: https://qaspire.com/2018/01/22/being-conscious-about-our-unconscious-biases/

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Data collection

Collection of self-identification data

Monitoring the equity performance of programs

Informs future measures to increase EDI in research enterprise

Tri-agency support for underrepresented groups

CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Instituts de recherche
Health Research en santé du Canada

NSERC
CRSNG

SSHRC CRSH

Tri-agency support for underrepresented groups

Black student researchers funding

- Last April, as part of Budget 2022, the federal government announced funding for the federal granting agencies to support targeted scholarships and fellowships for promising Black students.

- A portion of these funds is directed to the USRA program by supporting 90 additional NSERC USRAs, 95 CIHR USRAs and 95 SSHRC USRAs.

- At the present time, CIHR and SSHRC USRAs are exclusively for Black student researchers.

Black student researchers funding

Black student researchers funding

Program administration

- **CIHR and SSHRC** students will apply to the program using the NSERC online system. In the list of recommended applicants, LOs will identify to which agency the application is directed.
- NSERC will be responsible for the following aspects of the program administration:
    - Host the application form on the NSERC online system
    - Receive all applications and lists of recommended applicants
    - Verify that all applications on the list of recommended applicants have been received
    - Verify that the applications are complete
    - Verify the student eligibility
    - Verify the subject matter eligibility (preliminary)
    - Inform LOs of competition results
- **CIHR and SSHRC** will send their own notifications of results.

Black student researchers funding

Identification of eligible students

Self-identification statement:

- **For CIHR and SSHRC:** At the present time, USRAs are exclusively for Black students. Applicants are hereby disclosing that they self-identify as Black and understand that this information will be shared with the institution to which they are applying.
- **For NSERC**: Applicants who self-identify as Black may be considered above the institution's USRA application limit.

> **For the purposes outlined above, do you disclose that you self-identify as Black and understand that this information may be shared as described above?**
>   o **Yes**
>   o **No / I do not self-identify as Black**

Allocations

- For CIHR and SSHRC, each institution will receive one award, and then the remaining allocations will be distributed based on the share of the total funding.

CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of   Instituts de recherche
Health Research   en santé du Canada

NSERC
CRSNG

SSHRC CRSH

Literature and online systems updates

Literature changes for 2023–24

Eligibility and selection criteria

- Most of the eligibility criteria for USRAs are the same across the agencies for the Black student researchers funding.

- **One exception** is that at the present time, **CIHR and SSHRC USRAs are exclusively for Black student researchers.**

- The same selection criteria apply to all agencies.

- Institutions have the discretion to apply stricter selection criteria.

Online system updates

- Creating an application: Regardless of the granting agency, students must create their application using the NSERC online system

- Selecting the appropriate agency: Students must select the agency (NSERC, CIHR or SSHRC) whose mandate aligns best with their field of research (health, natural sciences and engineering, social sciences and humanities)

- **For CIHR and SSHRC:** Students must self-identify as Black and confirm they understand that this information will be shared with the institution to which they are applying by checking the relevant box within the application form.

- For NSERC: Institutions may recommend applications from self-identified Black and indigenous students beyond their allocation.
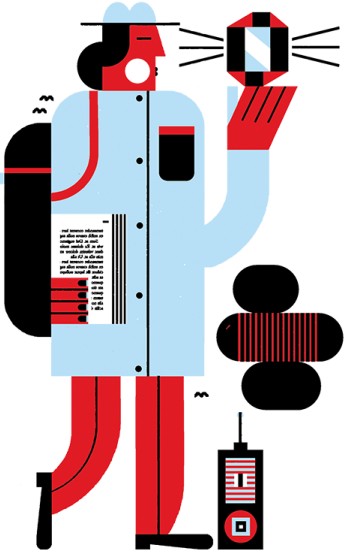
NSERC website

- USRA program literature will be live online January 19, 2023

- Probable closure of the online system (Form 202 Parts I and II) to update the system. We will communicate with LOs if we have more information.

- USRA program pages will be linked to CIHR's and SSHRC's websites.

USRA supplements

Canadian Forest Sector Workforce Diversity undergraduate supplements

Value

- $5,000 supplement to active USRA recipients
- Up to 30 available per year, three year pilot (2020–2023)

Objectives

- Promote research opportunities and encourage postgraduate studies in areas of relevance to Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Sector (CFS)
- To encourage diversity in the forest sector workforce, award priority is given to individuals from underrepresented groups in the forest sector workforce

Application requirements

- Applications are automatically considered by NSERC if the proposed project falls within the research areas of relevance to Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Sector

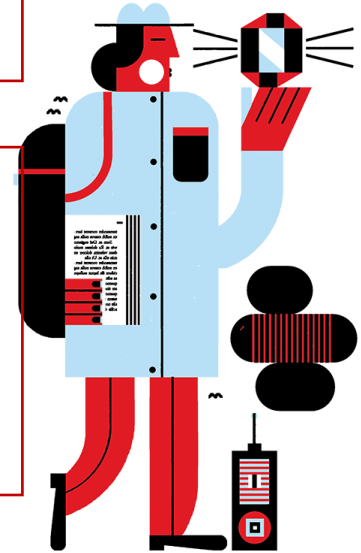# ECCC Atmospheric and Meteorological undergraduate supplements

Value

- $1,000 supplement to active USRA recipients
- Up to 20 available per year

Objectives

- Stimulate research in the atmospheric and meteorological sciences in Canadian universities
- Encourage and support students to carry out research of interest to Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Promote training of potential candidates for possible future graduate studies in the atmospheric and meteorological sciences and possible future employment at ECCC
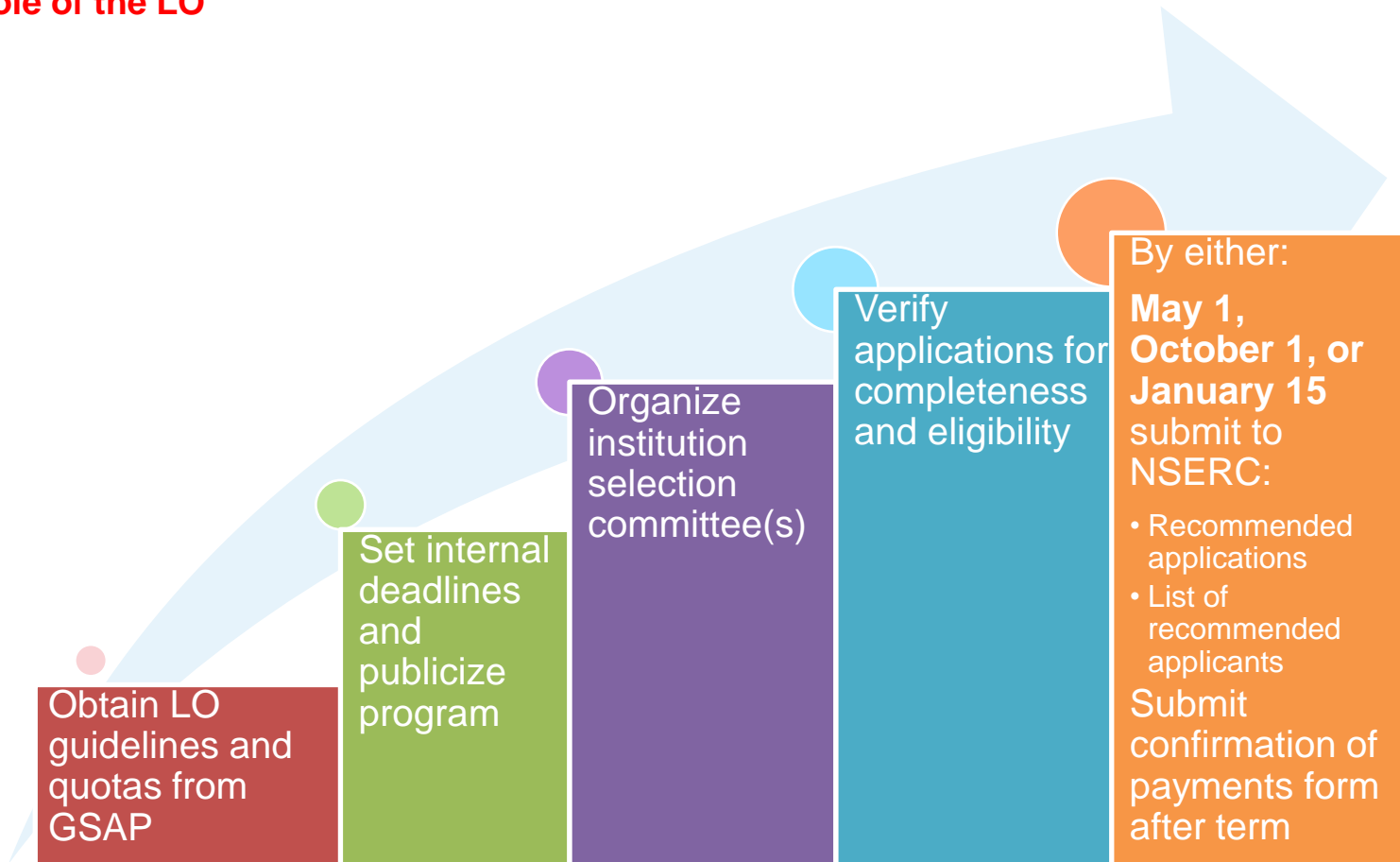
Application requirements

- USRA holders must apply directly to ECCC by August 1 of the summer they hold the award
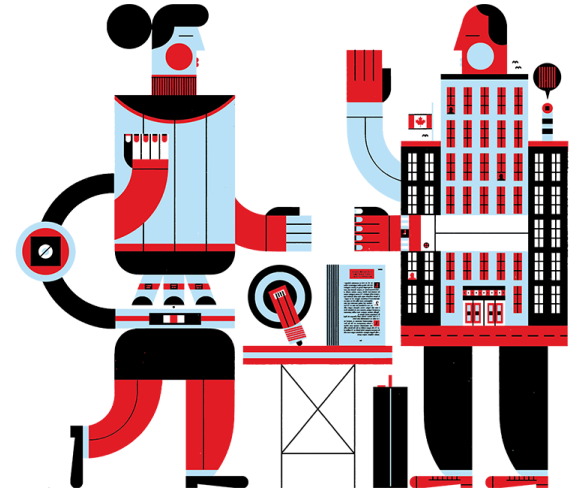 - If an award is held in the fall or winter, those students can apply the summer after they hold their award

Role of the LO in the USRA program

Role of the LO

Obtain LO guidelines and quotas from GSAP

Set internal deadlines and publicize program

Organize institution selection committee(s)

Verify applications for completeness and eligibility

By either:

May 1, October 1, or January 15 submit to NSERC:

• Recommended applications
• List of recommended applicants

Submit confirmation of payments form after term
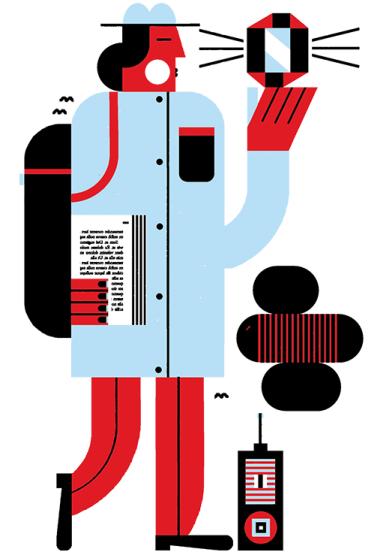
Reminders and important dates

Reminders

- Once an application has been "A-listed," **NSERC cannot return the application for any changes. Replacement applications will not be accepted.**

- If an application needs to be postponed to another term, **it will be withdrawn by NSERC,** and a new application will need to be created and submitted for the next term.

- Recommended applications from Indigenous peoples can be submitted above your institution's application quota.

- Indicate which applications should be considered for the **Canadian Forest Sector Workforce Diversity undergraduate supplement**. Applications that list one of the targeted research subject codes or that have one of the targeted key words in the title will be considered automatically.

- Confirmation of payments should be sent to NSERC **no later than one month after the end date of the award.**
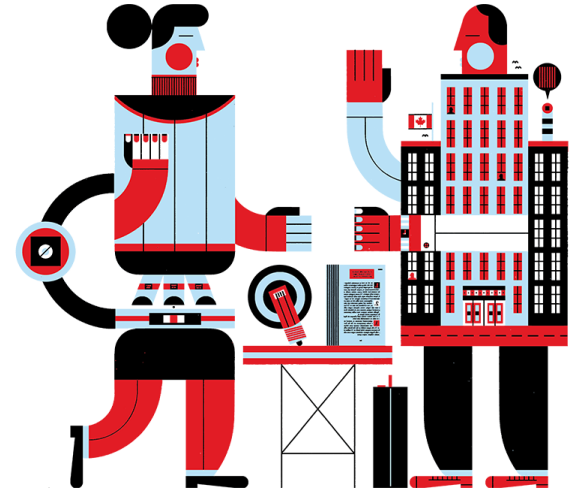
Important dates

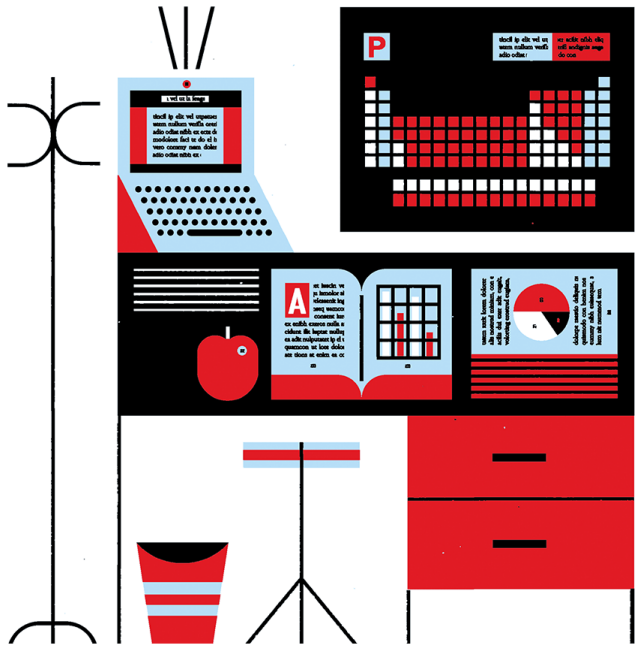| USRA to be held in:	Applications saved as "A-list" (submitted to NSERC no later than*)	Confirmation of payments (submitted to NSERC no later than 1 month after the end of the awards)
Summer 2023 (May to August)	May 1, 2023	By September 30, 2023
Fall 2023 (September to December)	October 1, 2023	By January 31, 2024
Winter 2024 (January to April)	January 15, 2024	By May 31, 2024

Best practices

Workshop: Breakout sessions

1. What do you anticipate being the most challenging aspect for promoting and implementing the Black student researchers funding? What best practices/recommendations would you like to share with other institutions for its implementation?

2. What aspects of the USRA award administration are most challenging? How could NSERC help to improve processes?

3. What pandemic-related restrictions do you still have in place at your institutions?

4. Any other issues you would like to be addressed at the plenary?

Questions?

Ameth Lo
Program Officer
Ameth.Lo@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

USRA general inbox
USRA-BRPC@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

Connect with us

🐦 **@nserc_crsng**

f **facebook.com/nserccanada**