

## Department of Biology - Internal Application Form 2026

### NSERC Undergraduate Summer Research Award (USRA) Undergraduate Student Summer Research Fellowship (USSRF)

This form is for students who wish to apply for an NSERC Undergraduate Summer Research Award or a Queen's Undergraduate Student Summer Research Fellowship.

To be eligible for an award, you should be registered in a Queen's Biology Honours (BSCH) degree plan degree plan and must have obtained a minimum GPA of 3.3 for all completed courses. Details of the selection criteria are outlined on the last page of this application form.

Please complete sections A and B of this application and send your completed application by email to [ug.biology@queensu.ca](mailto:ug.biology@queensu.ca), **no later than 3:00pm January 16, 2026**. You are encouraged to discuss possible opportunities for supervision of summer research projects with Biology Faculty members, but you do NOT need to identify a supervisor before applying for these awards. Nomination letters will be sent out to successful candidates during the second week of February, 2026.

#### Section A - Personal and Academic Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in Degree Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Queen's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the eligibility for each award carefully (linked on the biology website)

Are you eligible for a USRA?    Yes: \_\_\_\_    No: \_\_\_\_

Are you eligible for a USSRF?    Yes: \_\_\_\_    No: \_\_\_\_

Have you received either a USRA or USSRF in prior years?    Yes: \_\_\_\_    No: \_\_\_\_

The federal Tri-Agencies have created additional award opportunity for students who identify as Black or Indigenous, as a step towards addressing the disproportionate underfunding of Black and Indigenous scholars at the undergraduate level. If you wish to be considered for these USRA awards, please answer the following questions:

Do you self-identify as Black student?    Yes: \_\_\_\_    No: \_\_\_\_

Do you self-identify as an Indigenous student?    Yes: \_\_\_\_    No: \_\_\_\_

## Section B – The Research Interest Statement

The USRA and USSRF awards are allocated based on a combination of academic excellence (as gauged by student GPA and performance in Biology courses), and research aptitude (as gauged by research motivation and understanding of the research potential that the award would generate) indicated in the Research Interest Statement. **You do NOT need to have prior research experience to apply.** The selection committee is not concerned with the specifics of the research topic that you wish to pursue but is very interested in your perspectives on research in general, and the potential benefits of this award to you. We encourage all students who have an interest in research and meet the criteria to apply.

Your Research Interest Statement will be evaluated on the bases of both content (rationale, motivation, personal anecdotes) and writing quality. Please note that the statement should be devised and written by the applying student only, without any aid from large-language-models (AI), prospective research supervisor, or other Biology faculty member. Failure to comply with this stipulation or the formatting requirements described below may result in disqualification.

Please answer each of the following three questions for your Research Interest Statement:

- 1) What learning opportunity (e.g. course at Queen's or similar experience) has particularly motivated you to do research? Give a specific example.
- 2) What are your future career goals, and how do you envision the USRA contributing to your professional development?
- 3) What skills, training or learning opportunity are you most interested in gaining?

Note that your statement should be concise and is limited to an absolute maximum of one side of a free-form page document (preferably as a pdf file) (Formatting requirements: Times New Roman font; font size 12; single-spaced text; and 2 cm margins). Please avoid identifying yourself in your application so that we can remain as unbiased as possible during adjudication. Add your statement using the provided space and submit as one pdf file (title your pdf file with your student number only and remove identifiers from your file credentials – done through the file's Properties menu). We will be redacting your name and email address in Section A before releasing your application to the Selection Committee.

**NSERC Undergraduate Summer Research Awards and Queen's Undergraduate Student Summer Research Fellowship: Selection Criteria for the Queen's Department of Biology**

1. Eligibility: Please carefully check the eligibility of each award on their respective information pages.
2. Ranking of applicants will be based on three main criteria: (1) cumulative GPA for all completed courses, and (2) an equally weighted Research Interests Statement (RIS), with (3) ties resolved by cumulative GPA for completed Biology courses and the supplemental factors described below.
3. Supplemental factors: First, preference will be granted to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students. The goal of these awards is to encourage students to pursue a research career, and we expect that competitive 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year students on this career path probably will have already been formally accepted in a graduate program. That said, students in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year are welcome to apply, and have received awards in the past. Second, the Awards Committee will favour a first-time applicant over a returning applicant if all else is equal in the interest of sharing the limited number of awards among promising students.

Queen's University and Queen's Biology are committed to equity and diversity in all programs and activities. We encourage applications from persons in equity-seeking groups, including women, visible minorities, black, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ persons.

Students who are nominated by the Undergraduate Studies Committee for an award will then complete the NSERC USRA Part II application form, or the second part of the USSRF form.