

# Undergraduate Student Research Awards in Chemistry

NSERC USRA & Endowed Awards (Tsui, Cunningham, Sobey, Laing, Warr, Witherspoon, Pantalone)

Application Submission Deadline: January 24, 2025

Undergraduate student research awards in the Department of Chemistry are intended to stimulate student interest in chemistry research and encourage the pursuit of graduate studies and/or careers in chemistry. Awardees will receive financial support to conduct research under the guidance of a Department of Chemistry faculty member.

## Department of Chemistry Guidelines (in addition to Faculty of Science Guidelines)

### *Student Eligibility (all awards)*

- Have completed (or will have completed by May) at least 3 lecture classes in Inorganic, Organic, Physical or Analytical Chemistry.
- Graduating students are eligible to apply if they intend to begin a thesis-based graduate program in fall.

### *Host laboratory eligibility*

- Supervisor must have an appointment or cross-appointment in the Department of Chemistry

### *Application Procedure*

Applications may be submitted using the Faculty of Science online application form:

<https://dal.sharepoint.com/sites/science/SitePages/summer-research.aspx>

For Department of Chemistry USRA awards, the following guidelines are in addition to the Faculty of Science Guidelines.

### Dalhousie Students:

1. Meet with at least 3 (5 recommended) potential supervisors (visit the Chemistry Department USRA web page for a list of Chemistry professors who are offering undergraduate student research projects) and
2. Complete the Faculty of Science Application form. Complete applications will include:
  - a. a ranked list of potential supervisors
  - b. unofficial Dalhousie transcripts (note that if you are registered in any X/Y courses, you will have to obtain a signed statement from the professor(s) indicating your mid-year grade for each X/Y class)
  - c. copies of transcripts from all post-secondary institutions that you have attended

### Non-Dalhousie students:

1. Identify a research supervisor in the Dept. of Chemistry at Dalhousie University who has agreed to host you this summer.
2. Contact the Chemistry USRA Coordinator at [Mark.Obrovac@Dal.ca](mailto:Mark.Obrovac@Dal.ca) before the application deadline.

### **Questions?**

Contact the Chemistry USRA Coordinator at [Mark.Obrovac@Dal.ca](mailto:Mark.Obrovac@Dal.ca).

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## *How to Find a Research Supervisor*

Undergraduate student research award recipients in Chemistry will conduct research under the guidance of a Chemistry faculty member. As such, an application will not be considered until a potential supervisor agrees to host a student in their laboratory, should the student receive a USRA. In order to facilitate this, prior to submitting a USRA application, *Dalhousie students* must contact a minimum of **3** Chemistry professors (as this is a very competitive award, it is highly recommended that applicants contact up to **5** professors) whose labs they are potentially interested in joining for the tenure of the USRA, should one be awarded. *Non-Dalhousie students* are only required to contact one Chemistry professor, but are encouraged to contact more. The discussion between you and the Chemistry professor is meant to serve as a brief and informal information session – an opportunity for students to learn about the research projects available with different professors, and for potential supervisors to learn about the interests and ambitions of student applicants.

To meet with potential research supervisors in Chemistry:

(1) Visit <http://www.dal.ca/faculty/science/chemistry/USRA.html> for a list of Chemistry professors who are offering undergraduate student research projects. Project descriptions and contact information are provided for each professor.

(2) E-mail professors to make appointments for meetings with them. Specify that you are interested in applying for a USRA in Chemistry and would like to find out more about their research. Know your schedule so that you can suggest some possible meeting times. Estimate that each appointment will last an average of 20 minutes.

(3) In preparation for your meeting:

- consider printing off an unofficial transcript of your grades to bring along, especially if you have not had a class with the professor you are about to meet
- think about why you are interested in pursuing a research project in chemistry and what you hope to learn in the process
- think of some questions to ask – be courteous, but don't be shy! Scientists are curious people! For example, you might want to ask about details of projects that are available for undergraduate students in their lab.
- consider what you are hoping to learn from your research experience.

(4) If something comes up and you cannot make a scheduled meeting, it is important that you notify the professor and attempt to reschedule. It is very unprofessional to not show up on time or to skip a meeting altogether.

In order to avoid a last-minute rush, it is strongly recommended that students initiate this process before the end of the Fall final exam period.

Meeting with a faculty member in no way commits a student applicant to working with that supervisor, nor does it commit a faculty member to accepting a student. While all attempts will be made to match awardees with projects in their indicated area of interest, this cannot be guaranteed. Once students have met with all potential research supervisors, the students must rank the potential supervisors on a numerical scale where 1 indicates their top choice of supervisor.