

Brandon University Research Guidelines for COVID-19

The COVID-19 situation continues to evolve rapidly. The Office of Research Services (ORS) has moved to remote operations and will continue to support you remotely. Faculty should consult the Tri-Agency for ongoing updates to grants and funding and additional information. Please check tri-agency messages on COVID-19 on their respective sites: [CIHR](#); [NSERC](#); [SSHRC](#); and [CFI](#) and see the latest information here <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51915.html>

Faculty undertaking research with other external organizations, funded or unfunded, are encouraged to contact the organization directly for guidance.

The expectation is that researchers will continue as much research as possible remotely, but only limited research will continue in university research facilities, including off-campus research sites. Researchers who feel that they have exceptional circumstances, should obtain permission from their Dean for continuation of experiments, scholarly works, and creative activities in on and off-campus facilities.

Researchers should

- Postpone research procedures involving face-to-face interactions with human participants. All contact with participants should be performed remotely. While changes to eliminate the immediate risk to participants may be implemented, there is an expectation that these changes are reported to BUREC at the earliest opportunity (within 5 business days as a guide).
- Conduct research team meetings virtually
- Consult with their Dean to determine contingency plans for research involving animals
- Advise research staff, including students, of any changes to work in consultation with the Deans and HR
- Ensure students who are research assistants work remotely (except under exceptional circumstances with the Dean's permission). This may involve assigning new duties that align with the research project. For example, conducting literature reviews or assisting others who are at the data analysis and writing stage and to work from home if possible based on the need for accessing research data and/or availability of virtual tools or laptops. Researchers should provide any student workers engaged in laboratory work with Personal Protective Equipment wherever necessary.

If permission from your dean is obtained to conduct research on-campus, researchers should:

- Arrange their visits to the university with colleagues and co-workers so that only one person is in your area at any time, when possible
- Provide any student workers with Personal Protective Equipment wherever necessary
- Review protocols (where necessary) for disinfecting surfaces in research laboratories and facilities to reduce the risk of surface transmission; this includes, but is not limited to, lab benches, fume hoods, instrumentation panels, taps, etc.

- Conduct research team meetings virtually

Brandon University Research Awards (BURC)

- All travel has been suspended, including travel for research purposes
- All active BURC grants will be extended by six (6) months
- With regard to BURC Knowledge Mobilization Grants (KMG) awarded for conference travel.
 - Where a research conference has been cancelled and will not be rescheduled, researchers may submit requests to the ORS to present their research at another conference within a year of the original conference date.
 - Where a research conference has been postponed, the researcher may use the funds to attend the re-scheduled conference provided it occurs within a year of the original conference date.

NSERC USRA Program

Please note that all students who received a summer undergraduate award from Brandon University (URA) or NSERC (USRA) should contact their supervisor to determine how to proceed. Students will receive their award as originally outlined in their award letter. However, they may have to work on their own at home (remotely connected with their research mentor/supervisor) and spend their time reviewing literature, assisting their supervisor with analyzing data, compiling a review article or other publication, etc.

USRA FAQs

1. Is the program cancelled?

No, the USRA program for summer 2020 will go forward, even in the event of a shortened or canceled work term.

2. What happens if the university isn't open in May?/Will shortened work terms (<12 weeks) be possible?

In the event that a university remains closed in May, USRA work terms can begin when the university re-opens later in the summer. NSERC will honour the full value of the award, and encourages universities to do the same. The minimum university top-up of 25% will still be in effect. Work terms will not have to be 12 weeks long if the university re-opening does not allow it.

3. What happens if the university remains closed all summer?

NSERC is exploring various options such as allowing for working remotely and/or the possibility of funding.

4. Are virtual work projects a possibility?

Yes, if the student and supervisor want to pursue a remote work project, NSERC will support this. Supervision is expected to occur via video chats, telecons, and e-mail. NSERC should be informed before the start of the project.

5. Will projects be allowed to continue part-time into the Fall?

No. NSERC will be honouring the full value of the award regardless of the length of the term. If students and supervisors wish to continue the project full time once courses have resumed this will have to be outside of the USRA program.

6. Can USRA 2020 awards be deferred until 2021?

Universities may choose to postpone research projects until Summer 2021, but the award will have to come from the 2021 quota. It is not possible to transfer an award from one fiscal year to another.

7. Can a USRA holder choose to postpone their award to the Fall or Winter term?

Yes, students may postpone their award from the Summer to the Fall or Winter term (provided they will meet the eligibility requirements at that time). NSERC should be informed if the student appears on a submitted Recommended List of Applicants form.