Info Session for BYSI Students

November 2026

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



Why Apply?

- Gain paid, hands-on research experience.
- Build your professional network and connect with mentors.
- Strengthen your graduate school or career applications.
- Develop critical skills: writing, research, leadership, & community engagement.
- Receive professional development training and mentorship through BYSI.

3 Research Streams in BYSI

- **Independent Student Researcher Stream:** for students who want to undertake their own research project under faculty mentorship.
- **Research Assistant Stream**: for students seeking hands-on experience working on faculty-led research projects.
- **Internship Stream**: for students seeking research experience outside the traditional academic environment.

Independent Student Researcher Stream

- Students must craft the application with support of faculty supervisor.
- Typically paid as a scholarship, (supervisor or BYSI provide a “top-up”).
- Full ownership of your research
- Crystal will talk more on this

Research Assistant Stream

- Work on faculty-led research projects
- Gain hands-on experience and mentorship
- Paid full-time positions

Internship Assistant Stream

- Work with external organizations (non-profit, private, public)
- Engage in research, policy analysis, or organizational projects
- Real-world experience and networking

Application Tips

- Apply to multiple streams to maximize chances
- Strong statement = clear goals + alignment with chosen stream
- Highlight relevant skills and experiences
- Highlight what you hope to learn and contribute.
- Start early: draft your statement and CV now.
- Show interest in social innovation, leadership, and community impact.

Mandatory BYSI Activities

- Attend in-person professional development sessions with the BYSI team
  - Bi-weekly check-ins with BYSI staff

Key Dates

- Positions posted: Feb 15, 2027
- Application deadline: Feb 28, 2027
- Interviews: March 2027
- Student-employer matching: April 2027

Questions?

bysi@ualberta.ca

How to find a research supervisor

BYSI Info Session - 2026

Crystal Snyder, Team Lead
Undergraduate Research Initiative

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



BYSI Student Researcher Stream

Step 1: Find a faculty supervisor (focus of this session!)

- Start now!

Step 2: Apply (with your supervisor!) for funding

- Deadlines in winter term (early Feb)

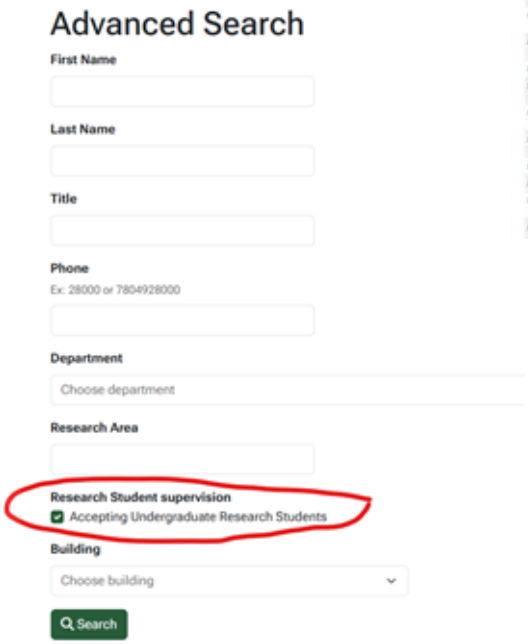
Finding a supervisor

- Can be a UofA professor in any discipline
- The prof will usually help you develop a project - you don’t need an original project idea ahead of time
- Most professors don’t formally advertise for **specific** undergraduate research positions/projects
- Profs post general info about their research and rely on students to contact them based on your interests

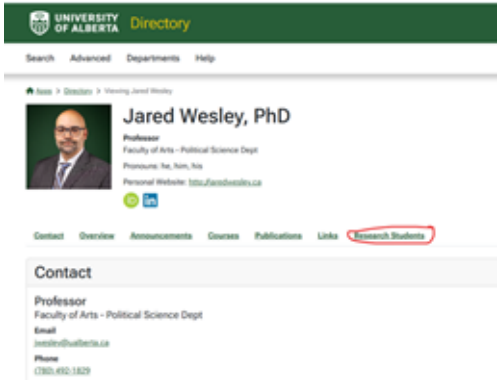
1. Where to look for profs (Demo)

Find a Person Directory Search



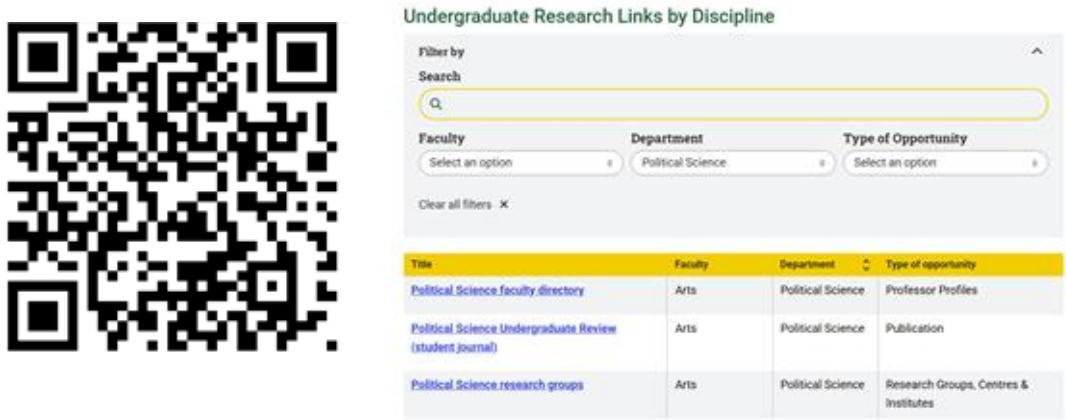


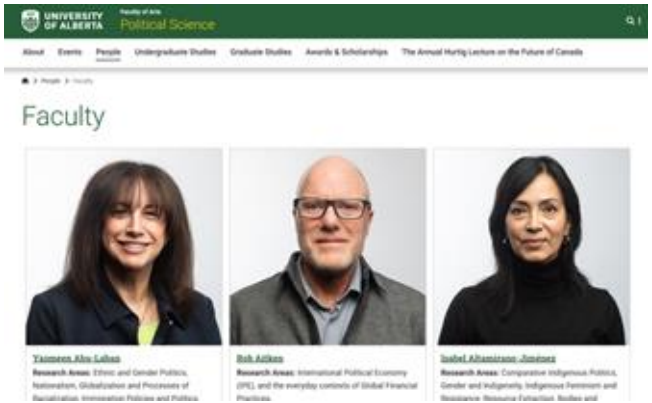




1. Where to look for profs (Demo)

Undergraduate Research Pages by Discipline





Common trouble spots

- “The prof’s webpage says they’re recruiting graduate students. It doesn’t say anything about undergrads.”
- “The prof’s profile is very technical - I don’t understand all the jargon. Am I underqualified?”
- “The prof is asking for a CV. What’s that? I only have a resume.”

2. Reach out to professors

- The goal is to **start a conversation!**

- Email introduction:
  - Introduce yourself
  - Explain WHY you are interested in their work (**be specific!**)
  - Ask for a conversation to discuss potential research opportunities

- **Avoid** closed-ended questions: e.g. “do you have any positions?”
- **Avoid** sending generic and/or AI-generated emails to a list of profs

Activity: Critique this email

Subject: Research Opportunity / Help Needed!

Dear Professor,

My name is Jordan and I need to get some research experience for med school applications. I'm looking for a professor to take me on as an independent study student next semester.

I saw your page on the UofA directory and thought your research sounded interesting. I don't really have any experience yet, but I am a very hard worker and learn fast!

Do you have any opportunities for me?

Jordan

Activity: Critique this email (feedback)

Subject: Research Opportunity / Help Needed! (Not specific)

Dear Professor, (Not personalized)

My name is Jordan and I need to get some research experience for med school applications. (major? Research interests? Motivation (other than checking a box for med school?)

I'm looking for a professor to take me on as an independent study student next semester. Why THIS professor?

I saw your page on the UofA directory and thought your research sounded interesting. (what's it about? What's interesting about it?)

I don't really have any experience yet, but I am a very hard worker and learn fast! (don't highlight lack of experience, emphasize strengths/assets)

Do you have any opportunities for me? (closed yes/no question, sounds demanding)

Jordan

Email Tip Sheet



Subject line: Interested in research opportunities in [specific field]

Dear Dr. [name]

My name is [insert name] and I am currently in my [year of study] in [program/major]. I have taken [relevant courses/experiences] and I am looking to gain more experience through undergraduate research.

I learned about your research on [topic] from your [e.g. website, publication], and I found your project on [topic] especially interesting because [describe your interest]. I am curious about [what you would like to learn more about], and would really appreciate the opportunity to discuss more about your research and possible opportunities to get involved.

Would it be possible to meet with you to learn more about possible research opportunities in your area, perhaps during your scheduled office hours, or at another time that is convenient for you?

Thank you for your consideration

[sign off]

Email Tip Sheet

Salary-matching support is also available for participating faculty members. Further information can be found on the BYSI faculty recruitment page.

3. Discuss next steps

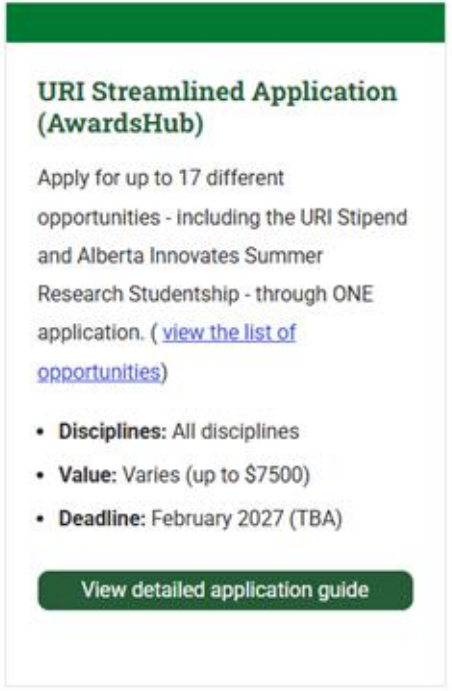
- If you are meeting with a prof, prepare beforehand! (tip sheet)
- Read a few of their recent papers
- Take your resume/CV and transcript
- Be prepared to discuss your motivations and goals
- Clarify mutual expectations (e.g. time commitment, schedule, funding, responsibilities, etc.)

If you’re not getting responses

- Be patient! It’s okay to send a polite reminder after 1-2 weeks.
- Expect some non-responses and rejections - **don’t take it personally!**
- Most students email multiple professors before finding a match.
- If you get stuck - **contact URI for support!**

Applying for funding

- URI Streamlined application **(AwardsHub)**
  - One application for ~17 different types of awards (eligibility varies)
  - Open to students in all disciplines
  - Open to international students
  - Not competitive based on GPA (some awards have GPA thresholds for eligibility)
  - **Deadline: February 1, 2027**



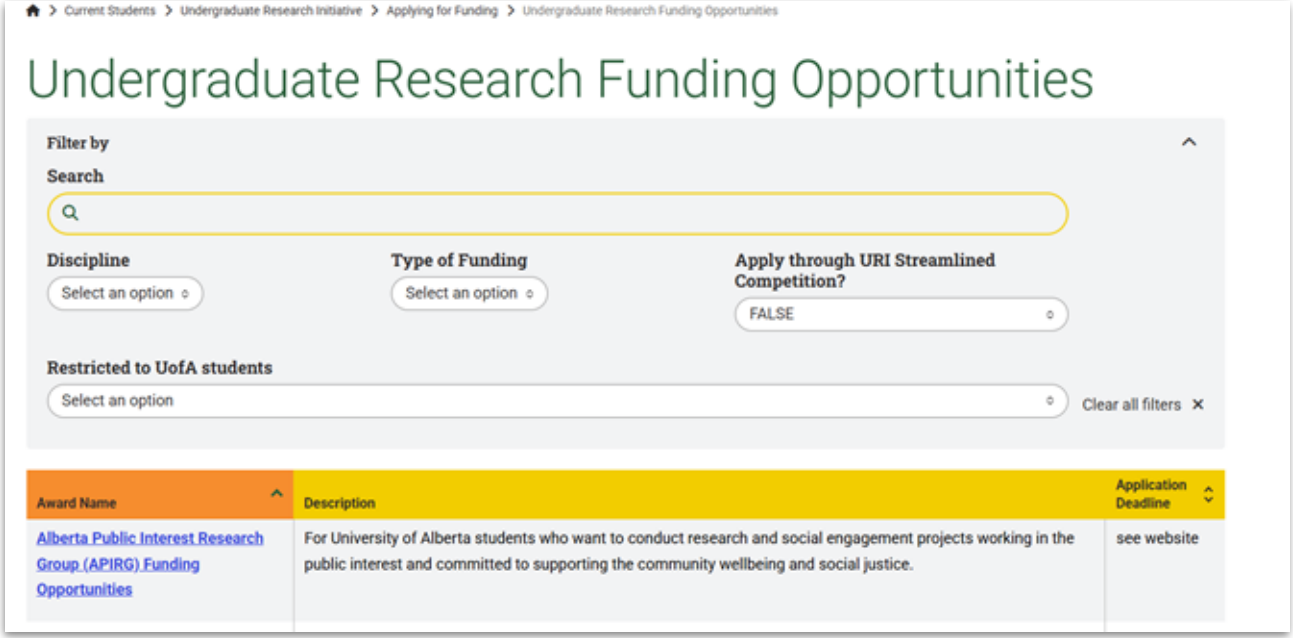
Applying for funding

- Tri-Agency USRAs
  - NSERC = Natural Sciences & Engineering
    - NSERC has **additional awards available to Black students**
  - SSHRC = Social Sciences & Humanities
  - CIHR = Health
    - SSHRC & CIHR USRAs **only available to Black students**
  - Open to Canadian citizens, permanent residents & protected persons
  - **Deadline: February 1, 2027**



Other funding opportunities

- Searchable list on URI website



URI can help you!

- General advising on how to find a supervisor based on your interests, feedback on your emails, etc.
- Advising on funding eligibility
- Support/feedback on funding applications
- Book via campusBRIDGE or by emailing uri@ualberta.ca.

Thank you!

Questions?

- **Seminar Feedback form:**
  bit.ly/URIfeedback

- **For more help:**
  - **uri@ualberta.ca**
  - **2-701 SUB**

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