

# JAMIE CASSELS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS (JCURA)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### 1. How is sessional Grade Point Average (GPA) calculated for the purposes of the award?

The sessional GPA is defined in the 2010-11 UVic Undergraduate Calendar as follows:

*The sessional grade point average is based on all courses completed in a session which have a unit value. Courses bearing the grade COM, N/X, or F/X are not included in the calculation of the grade point average.*

*A grade point average is found by multiplying the grade point value of each final grade by the number of units, totalling the grade points for all the grades, and dividing the total grade points by the total number of units.*

Normally, award eligibility is based on a student's sessional GPA in two academic terms in the 12 month period (May to April) immediately preceding the adjudication of awards.

Please note: Departments are responsible for ensuring that the GPA as defined is at a 7.0 or above before submitting the nomination. Departments may check with Student Awards and Financial Aid to verify GPA before nominating. Please contact the [Scholarship Officer](#) or 250-721-8107.

### 2. Will these GPA numerical requirements be impacted by the change to percentage grading (in other words will there be a translation needed for a 7 or will it still be a 7)?

There will be adjustments made but we have no details on it yet as the changes to the grading system have not yet been approved. With regards to scholarships, any that have specific GPA requirements in the terms of the award will be revised and Student Awards and Financial Aid will do them all at the same time and notify departments as soon as they have the revised information. For more information please look at the [UVic grading scale using percentages](#).

### 3. How does the award translate into hours of work?

The award does NOT translate into hours of work. It is an award and not a research assistantship. We recommend that the supervisor consider this opportunity much more in terms of what the student will learn (a "learning contract") than a work contract which would NOT be appropriate in this context. Please see # 10.

**4. Must I be registered in 12.0 units, or is this flexible?**

Normally students are required to be registered in 12.0 units of coursework in order to receive a merit based award. There are some exceptions to this rule. As an example, Co-op work terms, while they only have a unit value of two (2), are the equivalent of a full time study term. Students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning may have an accommodation regarding the number of units per term that are required. Students in their final year of study may also be eligible to participate in this award program if registered in sufficient units to meet their graduation requirements. Exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis by the Executive Director of the Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI).

**5. What is considered an academic unit in terms of eligibility for nominating a student?**

A unit is usually a department, school or decanal faculty (e.g. Business). Please see our website for the list of [academic units eligible](#) to nominate someone for this award.

**6. What are the timelines and deadlines?**

The call for nominations from the LTSI to the academic units goes out in March. The **first round of nominations is due to the LTSI by June 30th**. Once the LTSI has processed applicants from the first call we will do a second call mid-summer. All departments will retain their eligibility “spots” for that second call. **The second call will be due the end of the first week of class in September**. This means that if you absolutely can’t submit for the first call — you can still submit for the September deadline. Confirmation of the student recipients by the LTSI and Student Awards and Financial Aid will begin in summer and end by late September.

*Please note:* We ask that units collect all eligible nominations together and submit them as individual digital Word files in one email to the [LTSI](#).

**7. Are students paid? Do they get a cheque?**

Undergraduate awards are credited towards a student’s fee account to be applied towards their fees for the academic year. If their fees are paid and a credit remains in their account, students can request that Accounting Services produce a cheque for the amount of the credit in their fee account.

**8. How projects are typically defined?**

There are typically two main approaches; faculty supervisor initiated and student initiated. In the first case, a faculty member may have a research project in mind, or it may be something already underway which seems ideal for the student. In such a case the faculty member might approach the student to see if the student is interested in applying for the award. In the second case a student may have an idea for a research project and approach a faculty member to see if they would be interested in working with the student should their application be successful. In either case, it is hoped that a dialogue would occur, providing reciprocal insight and refinement of the project and clarification of the student's potential learning goals in order that both the application/nomination form can be filled out by the student and the supervisor respectively.

**9. Can the award be used toward my honours thesis?**

Yes, it certainly could be, but this would be decided by the academic unit. It could also count towards a directed study research project and can be combined with Co-op by being awarded in the non-Co-op term. Please consult your department.

**10. What is the time period of the award?**

Normally research would take place in September to April. However, other configurations are possible, depending on the pace and nature of the research.

**11. What is the nature of the award and the philosophy behind its development?**

The intention of the Office of the Vice President Academic and Provost was to create an award that would provide support for exceptional undergraduate students who might otherwise not be able to obtain a direct research experience as a part of what we anticipate should be a truly formative learning experience. The terms of the award and the application process are designed to be as flexible as possible to accommodate the wide range of academic contexts across the campus.

Regardless of which method is used to develop and select the award recipient's project (please see #7 above), the student must have a self-directed research opportunity. Even within a large-scale longitudinal research study a student, with their supervisor's help, should be able to define some part of the overall study to which they can contribute an original component.

For this reason it should be emphasized that this is NOT a work position (for example, it is not a research assistantship) with particular hours but is supposed to be a flexible and creative original research experience.

**12. What is the typical process that departments use to select their students?**

Processes vary widely. Some departments have an undergraduate awards committee, in which case this award might be considered as part of the committee's decision-making process. In other departments there is a call for expressions of interest from supervisors and/or students and the chair/director (or delegate) makes the decision. The award guidelines simply require that an academic unit can document its process and demonstrate its fairness and transparency.

**13. If I have ideas to improve the program, or questions about the program, where should I send them?**

The Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards Advisory Committee meets regularly to advise the LTSI and the Office of the VPAC as to processes and potential improvements. Please submit your ideas to the [LTSI](#) for consideration for the next meeting.

**14. I am a student majoring in a department (faculty/unit) that is different from the one my potential supervisor comes from. Am I allowed to apply for the award with that supervisor?**

It is not a requirement that the supervisor be in the same unit that the student is majoring in. The student is able to apply for the award with the supervisor that she/he would like to work with. The supervisor is usually a faculty member at UVic. The award nomination would proceed through the unit in which the supervisor has standing. If a supervisor has standing in more than one unit (e.g. if he or she is cross listed), then the supervisor can submit the application to whichever unit she/he thinks would be the best fit.

**15. What happens if a student is unable to complete all aspects of the Undergraduate Research Award?**

Normally the award is not considered completed until the showcase presentation is given at the Undergraduate Research Fair in March. As well, a small final survey is required. It is possible that the award could be revoked if these components are not completed. Supervisors should be in touch with their department chair/director if their student is unable to complete the requirements. The department chair/director (or delegate) should contact the Executive Director of the LTSI to discuss the situation.

**16. Can a student have a JCURA more than once?**

A student may only have a JCURA once during their time at UVic.

**17. JCURA workshops for recipients of the award**

It is necessary and required that the JCURA recipient attend at least one of the "Prepare Your Academic Poster" and "Speaking About Your Research" workshops that are offered each year in January and February at the LTSI.

**18. JCURA Reimbursement for project up to a maximum of \$100.00**

Each JCURA student is able to submit for reimbursement up to a maximum of \$100.00 toward having his or her JCURA poster made for the Fair. This reimbursement money is to help with costs in getting the JCURA poster printed and ready for the fair.

If you have a question about a reimbursement you wish to submit and are unsure if it is an allowable expense, please contact the [LTSI](#).