

Skill Identification: Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)

After completing an activity through EE, think about the skills that you have developed and the contacts that you have made. You can use our list below to help you get started. This is not an exhaustive list, and some of the points may not apply to your situation – it is intended to provide guidance as you update your resume, create cover letters for new opportunities, and prepare for interviews or networking opportunities.

If you can answer “yes” to any of the questions below, it can be used as an example of how you have utilized or developed an essential skill.

Did you...

- Write an effective research proposal that secured you an award?
- Illustrate and present your research findings to peers, faculty and staff at the USRA Poster Session or elsewhere?
- Use relevant scientific, technological and/or mathematical/statistical knowledge to interpret data and/or explain a hypothesis?
- Discuss ideas, issues and successes with your faculty supervisor continuously throughout your work term?

Those are **written, oral and verbal communication skills (Fundamental Skill)**.

Did you...

- Conduct a successful scan to locate a sufficient amount of information that is relevant to your study?
- Gather information that is appropriate for your research?
- Organize information and data in a meaningful way so that it can be easily interpreted?
- Use technology/software to assist with the statistical analysis of your information?

That is **managing information (Fundamental Skill)**.

Did you...

- Make decisions on the important factors that should be measured as part of your project?
- Observe and record data using numbers, technology and/or other tools?
- Make estimates and educated guesses that were either verified or disproven with the use of numerical data?

This is **using numbers (Fundamental Skill)**.

Did you...

- Come across unexpected challenges while solidifying your project proposal, and then suggest ways to overcome these issues?
- Seek different opinions while attempting to resolve a present issue?
- Encounter unexpected obstacles while completing your project, assess possible solutions and undertake an appropriate path of action to move forward?
- Identify areas of improvement to your research methods as you were completing tasks?

This is **thinking and solving problems (Fundamental Skill)**.

Did you...

- Engage and show genuine interest in your project, especially when interacting with others (e.g. supervisor, research participants)?
- Make efforts to connect, identify and recognize how your research is applicable and valuable to both yourself and the greater community?
- Take the initiative to move your project further, or make new contacts than you had previously anticipated?

This is **demonstrating a positive attitude (Personal Management Skill)**.

Did you...

- Set appropriate and timely goals and priorities while creating your research proposal?
- Plan and manage your time accordingly during the completion of your project in order to ensure your work would be completed on time?
- Manage any resources (access to participants, technology, etc.) appropriately while conducting your study?

This is **being responsible (Personal Management Skill)**.

What about...

- Implementing innovative ways to overcome challenges that presented themselves during your research?
- Responding to unforeseen changes in the research work plan to help ensure a successful outcome?
- Using "mistakes" as learning experiences and being receptive to constructive feedback from the review committee, ethics officers or your supervisor?

This is **adaptability (Personal Management Skill)**.

Did you...

- Identify personal learning goals to be achieved through the research project?
- Take advantage of opportunities to meet new people and make professional connections as you were conducting your research?
- Attempt to be mindful of the learning taking place while completing your research tasks?

This is **continuous learning (Personal Management Skill)**.

Did you...

- Complete the health and safety training required to participate in the USRA?
- Adhere to the confidentiality regulations as outlined by McMaster University for employees?
- Identify any potential health and safety risks related to your research prior to commencing the project?

This is **work safety (Personal Management Skill)**.

Did you...

- Accept feedback from other professionals regarding your research in a constructive and considerate manner?

This is **working with others (Teamwork Skill)**.

Did you...

- Plan, design and carry out your own research idea?
- Seek feedback where appropriate and make amendments to your plan based on new information?
- Continuously monitor the success of your project and identify ways to improve?

This is **completing/managing projects (Teamwork Skill)**.

*Created using [Employability Skills 2000+](#), The Conference Board of Canada