

Provost's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (URCA) Summer Fellowship Guidelines

Criteria for Granting Distinguished Undergraduate Research Awards

The Summer Fellowship is intended to provide support to enable students to perform undergraduate research and creative activity over a ten-week period during the summer. The Summer Fellowships are open to all students in any discipline supervised by a faculty mentor. The research and creative activity performed over the summer should result in a thesis, journal article, presentation, show or performance that contributes to the creation and dissemination of knowledge and creative works.

The Summer Fellowship provides a \$5,000 stipend for the student and \$1,000 to the faculty mentor to help support the student research and creative activity. This \$1,000 is only for the faculty to use on the student for their supplies, travel, etc.

Although previous research or creative activity with a faculty mentor may be beneficial, prior research or creative activity is not necessary for applying. A well-thought project, attainable outcomes, and a willing faculty mentor that can support the student is **essential** to being competitive for the Summer Fellowship, but prior experience is not required.

It is important that students and faculty mentors contemplating submission of projects become familiar with the procedures and requirements described below. Questions should be directed to the URCA Office (ureca@ou.edu).

The Provost's Summer UReCA Fellowship Process

Step 1a: Identify a willing faculty mentor/advisor. The faculty mentor can be in any unit, but their research and creative activity must be aligned with the project submitted to be able to support the student in achieving the outcomes of the project.

Step 1b: Outline an appropriate project with guidance from the identified faculty mentor. The project should be significant and challenging, yet doable within the allotted timeframe. The student must take ownership of the project and demonstrate a significant level of independence.

If the student has previously worked with the faculty mentor in the project area, then the project should be an extension of this area that can be defined as independent project that is completed during the summer fellowship period.

Step 2: Draft a cover letter and proposal. The cover letter that includes title, abstract (250 words), and signatures from yourself, mentor, and chair from the department. The proposal is to be no more than 4 pages (excluding references), 12-point font, single spaced with 1-inch margins, and please include page numbers. Submit as a PDF (cover letter first on the PDF, both parts together) in the Provost's UReCA Summer Fellowship Application. A formal project proposal must describe the research or creative project being considered.

Cover letter (1 page max) will include:

- A title
- An abstract (max 250 words)
- Signatures from yourself, mentor, and chair

Research project proposals (4 pages max) will include:

- A title
- A short (no more than 2-page) background section with key literature references (at least 5),
- A hypothesis, central research question, creative intervention, or outcome
- A succinct statement or list of objectives, including a plan of action or agenda

- A detailed description of the methods to be used for data collection (i.e., laboratory methods, interviews, focus groups, archival research, participant observations, etc., as appropriate) and analysis (including theoretical interpretive frameworks, statistical and bioinformatics methods)
- A statement outlining expected results or outcomes with dates and goals or benchmarks

Step 3: If IRB or IACUC review or exemption is required prior to conducting the work, this should be noted as well. You do not have to complete IRB or IACUC before submission, but must complete before conducting research or creative activities (again, if needed).

Institutional Review Board (IRB): <https://irb.ou.edu/howto/q1.html>

Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC): <https://www.ou.edu/acup>

Step 4: Submit the Provost's UReCA Summer Fellowship Application (link is at www.ou.edu/ureca) by the due date listed on the website. Please start the name of any files as "YourLastName_URCA_" at the beginning

Step 5: Arrange for your Mentor to submit a Letter of Support for your proposal. In the letter, the mentor must outline the agreed-upon way you will conduct your research and how much involvement they will have in the summer. This will be scored, so the letter from your mentor is crucial.

Step 6: Conduct or complete the proposed work over ten weeks during the summer. Students should be assured that the research/creative process is not without unexpected bumps, twists and turns. What is important is how these challenges are handled. The student should take the lead on finding or suggesting possible solutions to problems. Sometimes a new approach will succeed. Sometimes success will continue to be elusive within the available time frame, however we can often learn just as much, if not more, from unexpected or null results.

Step 8: Submit a final report (two pages minimum, single-spaced), that includes the research or creative activity performed over the summer, and attach the outcome(s) of the research such as a thesis, journal article, presentation, show or performance to the UReCA Canvas page at the end of the Summer Fellowship. If the project did not proceed as planned, please submit a report of the work performed, an analysis of the progress, and the future direction of the project.

Step 9: Participate at the UReCA Showcase in October, following your fellowship. You can either perform your creative activities, give presentations of research, or be a part of the poster session. Details will come during the summer for the Showcase.

Criteria for Evaluation:

The proposal will be scored in the following categories: proposal quality, methodology/timeline, and support from faculty. Each are elaborated as follows:

- a. **Proposal Quality:** Does the student articulate the full plan, and is the background literature sound in justification? Does the student explain the project for a wider audience to understand? Does the passion of the student's idea show in their writing?
- b. **Methodology/Timeline:** Can the student accomplish what they set out to do given their written-out timeline? Are the methods sound and understandable for the project?
- c. **Letters of Support:** Will the faculty support them throughout the process? Is this aligned or close to the area of the mentor? Does the mentor show a commitment to the student? Does the second faculty see potential in the student to complete the fellowship

Checklist for submission:

- o Fill out application
- o Submit Cover Letter and Proposal
 - o Cover Letter
 - o Title

- o Abstract (250 words max)
- o Proposal
 - o Title
 - o Main Proposal (4 pages max)
 - o 12 pt font
 - o 1 inch margins
 - o Single-spaced
 - o Page Numbers
- o Letter of Recommendation from Mentor to be submitted via email to ureca@ou.edu. Please have your mentor email it before the submission deadline. The subject line of the email should be “Summer Rec Letter ‘Student First Name’ ‘Student Last Name’”.