



Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate Research Award (URA)

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNH FACULTY MENTORS

Thank you for your support of undergraduate research at UNH. As you begin serving as a faculty mentor, we urge you to visit the [Hamel Center](#) website and to contact us with questions or concerns as soon as they arise. What follows is some basic information that may be useful as you start out, especially if you have not served as a mentor before.

The URA [UNH Faculty Mentor Recommendation form](#) is available online. It is the student applicant's responsibility to complete and sign *the top portion* of the form before giving it to you. You will then be responsible for completing the bottom half of the form, attaching a letter of recommendation, and returning it to the student in a sealed envelope for submission as part of the student's URA application.

Mentor Eligibility:

- All tenure-track faculty members at UNH and UNHM are eligible, as well as non-tenure-track research, clinical, and extension faculty.
- Non-tenure-track lecturers, adjuncts, affiliate and visiting faculty may become mentors with the prior approval of the Hamel Center director and the appropriate department chair.
- Faculty members at other institutions, and individuals who are not faculty members but have expertise appropriate to the proposed research project, may become mentors with the prior approval of the Hamel Center director and the student's UNH faculty mentor. See the complete list of [mentor eligibility guidelines](#).

Additional Notes about Mentor Eligibility and Availability:

- Eligibility for all mentors also assumes the mentor's *availability* to work with the student researcher throughout the entire undergraduate research process – i.e. availability not only during the actual research period, but also *before* the research begins (to assist with project design and proposal writing) and *after* the research has been completed (to assist with analysis of final results and presentation of research). Faculty mentors whose availability may be compromised (e.g., by sabbatical leave, extensive travel/absence, a new job/position or relocation) should contact the Hamel Center director before the application deadline in order to determine eligibility.
- We strongly encourage faculty members to mentor no more than two student projects per research period – i.e., during the academic year or summer (including REAP, SURF, IROP, and Undergraduate Research Awards combined) – to ensure that individual students receive sufficient guidance and supervision for their research. For faculty mentors who believe they have a strong rationale for mentoring more than two student projects per research period, we ask you to contact the Hamel Center director before the application deadline.

Mentor Responsibilities:

- Explore possible research topics that reflect the student's interests and preparation.
Note: Students may participate in a faculty member's research; however, students should not serve merely as research assistants. If participating in a faculty member's research, students should be given a specific research problem to investigate on their own with the advice and assistance of their faculty mentors. Students should have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of professional research from the design and development of the project to the analysis and conclusions.
- Help your student define and focus the project, including the development of a timetable to assure that the project can be managed within the time frame allotted.
- Identify the knowledge, experience, and skills the student needs to complete the project – and develop a plan for the student's acquisition of these before the research period begins.
- Discuss with the student the details of how the proposed research, scholarly, or creative project will be carried out and the features of a strong project proposal. A description of URA proposal requirements, as well as the criteria used by the Hamel Center's Faculty Advisory Committee in evaluating student proposals, can be found online and also on pp. 3-5 below.
- Help your student determine if his/her project will require approval from a University review committee. Any projects involving interviews, surveys or questionnaires – i.e. all having to do with *human subjects* – must receive approval from UNH's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the research begins. Similarly, research involving *vertebrate animals, infectious agents, DEA controlled substances, lasers, x-rays, hazardous chemicals, radioactive materials, carcinogenic material, recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, NMR/superconducting magnets, and/or patents and copyrights* must receive approval from the appropriate University review committee before the research begins. (In some cases, the faculty mentor may already have obtained approval for the research.) The Hamel Center must receive confirmation of research approval before dispensing award money. For more information about the research approval process, see the Hamel Center's [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) page.
- **Determine if the student's project will require additional modifications to accommodate COVID-19 policies and procedures.** URA applications for AY2022-23 should reflect the University's [mode of operation](#) at the time of application, and be designed to follow the policies and procedures in place for all University research as determined by the Senior Vice Provost for Research (SVPR), including social distancing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). For the most up-to-date information, mentors should consult the SVPR's [COVID-19 Updates and Resources for Research](#) page.
- Review and critique the student's proposal. While it is the responsibility of the student to write the proposal in its entirety, it is important that the mentor go over the proposal in time for modifications to be made before submission. *Keep in mind that the proposal should be understandable by faculty review committee members who are not from the specific field of study represented by the proposal.*
- If the student is conducting research away from UNH, discuss and identify the resources that will be available at the research location, including specific individuals to whom the student can turn for guidance. ***COVID-19 Note:** Permission to travel to off-campus research sites will be dependent on the University's [mode of operation](#) and also on the University's [phased approach to research activities](#) as determined by the SVPR.

- After reviewing the proposal and evaluation criteria, complete the UNH Faculty Mentor Recommendation Form and recommendation letter in time for submission by the application deadline. Your recommendation form and letter must be submitted in a separate, sealed and signed envelope attached to the student's application. **Note: The student applicant must complete and sign the top portion of the form before submitting it to you.*
 - For a *group* project, the UNH Faculty Mentor should write and submit a separate recommendation letter for *each* student applicant.
 - In a *co-mentoring* arrangement, the two faculty mentors should prepare a *joint* recommendation letter that addresses the shared mentoring plan.
- Develop a time frame and a system of communication with the student during the project period that will allow for an appropriate balance of mentor guidance and student independence.
- Complete the Faculty Mentor Evaluation at the end of the research period. (The evaluation will be provided to you electronically.)
- Assist the student in identifying appropriate forums in which to share his/her experience and research. While presentation is not a *requirement* of students who have received Undergraduate Research Awards, it is strongly recommended. Many URA recipients choose to participate in UNH's Undergraduate Research Conference (URC), but other conferences or departmental forums are also appropriate.

Proposal Requirements

The project proposal is the most important part of the application. ***To prepare a competitive proposal, students should follow the Proposal Outline carefully and adhere closely to the formatting guidelines.*** Ideally, all URA applicants should use the Proposal Outline as a guide in organizing their proposal, using the subheadings indicated below. However, since research varies among the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and performing/fine arts, students may adapt the outline to their project and field of study when appropriate.

Students are expected to write the URA proposal themselves, in its entirety. Of course, students should consult with their mentor before writing the proposal and ask their mentor to critique it once they have written a draft. Even with mentor input, however, the final proposal should reflect the students' own work. *****Students should allow sufficient time for revision.***

Proposal Outline

1. Abstract: a brief summary of your proposed project, *not to exceed 200 words.*

2. Project History and Definition

- general problem, theme, or issue to be addressed
- historical or theoretical context
- most relevant previous research, artistry or work on this topic by other scholars, researchers, or artists
- project's specific question, hypothesis, or objective

3. Approach/Methodology

- methods, procedures, theories, or lines of thinking and/or creating you will use to address your research topic *and why*
- materials and sources you will need to study in order to pursue your project
- *how* you will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate your findings (i.e., the material you study, the data you collect, or your creative experience)

- how and why your mode of analysis will enable you to accomplish your objectives and/or answer your research question(s)
- foreseeable challenges, obstacles, or difficulties – and how you are prepared to address them
- **COVID-19:** Your approach and methodology should take into consideration the University’s [mode of operation](#) at the time of application, and be designed to follow the policies and procedures in place for all University research, including social distancing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Articulate your plan clearly in the Approach/Methodology section. For the most up-to-date information, you and your mentor should consult the SVPR’s [COVID-19 Updates and Resources for Research](#) page.

4. Significance/Meaning/Implications

- contribution of your project to the problem and your field
- wider implications of your research or artistry (e.g., social, cultural, intellectual, creative, practical, theoretical)
- if this project is a portion of a more comprehensive research project that you are undertaking, include an explanation of how it fits into the whole

5. Personal Outcome

- contribution of the project to your educational goals, including how this project will enhance your understanding of your particular field
- contribution of the project to your long-term career goals
- tangible product(s) of your project (e.g., report, paper, thesis, presentation, production, exhibition, film, etc.)

6. Location

- principal location of project work
- other research or artistic sites and source locations to which you will travel
- if you will travel to an off-campus research site, describe specific resources and/or contacts at the site that will be instrumental to the project and to accomplishing your objectives
- if you need prior approval to gain access to your research site and its sources, describe *how* and *when* you will obtain written permission
- **COVID-19:** The location of your research should reflect the University’s [mode of operation](#) at the time of application, and be designed to follow the policies and procedures in place for all University research, including social distancing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Articulate your plan clearly in the Location section. Depending on the University’s mode of operation, your mentor may need to seek permission from the [Office of Environmental Health and Safety \(OEHS\)](#) for you to work in the lab or in the field; and lab/field research approved by OEHS may be further limited by density/occupancy requirements. Travel to off-campus research sites may also be restricted. For the most up-to-date information, you and your mentor should consult the SVPR’s [COVID-19 Updates and Resources for Research](#) page.

7. My Role/Preparation/Experience

- your preparation and qualifications to undertake the project (e.g., coursework, jobs, extracurricular experiences; other research, training, or performance experience)
- your plans (if any) for further preparing yourself before undertaking the project
- if a group project, the role of *each* student on the project
- role of your faculty mentor and others (graduate students/technicians/collaborators), including the plans you and your mentor have made to communicate on a regular basis during the research period

8. Timetable

- time allotted to each portion of your project (e.g., week by week, or stage by stage), with as much detail as possible
- brief explanation of research activities and timetable for your *entire* project, if the UROP-funded portion is part of a larger project (e.g., senior thesis)
- *Note: A successful URA project will require a substantial amount of time, effort, energy, and focus to complete. Your estimated URA Timetable should anticipate 100-125 hours of research, though this may be configured in any number of ways to fit your research plan: e.g., 8-9 hours per week during a 14-week semester; 35-40 hours per week during J-term, or a similar commitment of time during the summer.*
- **COVID-19:** Your estimated URA Timetable should take into consideration the University's [mode of operation](#) at the time of application, and be designed to follow the policies and procedures in place for all University research, including social distancing. Even if you have permission to work in the lab, for example, the time you can commit to your project on a daily/weekly basis may be limited by density/occupancy requirements. Keep these types of restrictions in mind when determining a realistic Timetable for your project.

9. Appendices

a. Statement of Previous Hamel Center-Funded Research (if applicable)

Students who have previously received Hamel Center funds (e.g. REAP, Undergraduate Research Award, SURF USA, SURF Abroad, IROP) must submit with their application a "Statement of Previous Support." This statement (no more than one page, double spaced *per award*) should include the following information about previously funded research: 1) Hamel Center grant received, 2) Project Title, 3) Faculty Mentor, 4) project start/end dates, 5) a brief description of how the *current* proposed research extends and/or differs from research previously funded by the Hamel Center, including how the results of that former research might inform the research now being proposed (if applicable).

b. Attachments

- illustrations, diagrams, or video/audio recordings as necessary
- one- to two-page bibliography of primary and secondary sources that you will use toward this project (e.g., books, journal articles, films, interviews, media sources, master classes).
Note: Be sure that all sources which you consulted in preparing the proposal are cited in the proposal text and listed in the bibliography. Format the in-text citations and bibliography according to the style guidelines for your discipline.
- surveys, questionnaires, and interview questions, if these are part of your research

Proposal Format and Style

The proposal should:

- include a title page (with your project title, your name and major, your faculty mentor's name and department, and the program for which you are applying)
- be typed and double spaced, using Times New Roman 12-point font (black)
Note: You may single-space your Timetable.
- have one-inch margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
- be no more than 8 pages long (for a *group* project, no more than 10 pages long) – this length *excludes* the title page, abstract, and appendices/attachments
- include page numbers, on all pages following the title and abstract pages
- follow the Proposal Outline carefully, using clear subheadings (as above) for each section

- include definitions of words specific to your field or research, if faculty members outside your field are not likely to be familiar with them. *Note: In general, you should keep in mind that Faculty Review Committee members represent a range of disciplines, so your proposal should be written in a way that can be understood by an educated reader who is not necessarily a specialist in your field.*

Criteria for Review of Applications:

The Hamel Center's Faculty Advisory Committee reviews all applications. Each proposal is read by at least three faculty reviewers drawn from one of the following two general areas of study: 1) departments in COLSA and CEPS, and 2) departments in COLA, CHHS, and Paul College. An application may receive a maximum of 25 points from each reviewer.

1. *Quality of the Proposal: 12 points*

- Is the proposal well written, well defined, convincing?
- Is the proposal complete? Are all parts clearly explained in accordance with the proposal outline?
- Is the proposal understandable to a general, educated reader who is not a specialist in the proposed research field?
- Is the project manageable and appropriate for the URA time frame (i.e., anticipating 100-125 hours of research)?

2. *Qualifications of the Applicant: 5 points*

- Are the qualifications, preparation, and experience of the student adequate for carrying out the project?

3. *Appropriateness of the Budget: 2 points*

- Is the budget itemized?
- Is it clear why the items are necessary to the project?

4. *Faculty Mentor Recommendation: 6 points*

- Past or present experience supervising the student in coursework, research, or independent work.
- Preparation of the student to undertake the project in the time period allowed.
- Significance of the project and its potential educational value for the student.
- Relationships between the student's project and the faculty mentor's own research, scholarly, or creative work or areas of expertise.

Questions? undergrad.research@unh.edu
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