



Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research

URA and SURF USA Off-Campus Mentor Guidelines for Students

If you are planning to do off-campus field research for a UNH-based project, you will not need a second mentor at the off-campus site. If, however, you are planning to work on research sponsored by another institution or one of its faculty, you will need an off-campus mentor, in addition to a UNH faculty mentor. This arrangement will require the approval of the Hamel Center director and your UNH faculty mentor prior to application. As part of the approval and application processes, you and the off-campus mentor will be required to provide additional information and supporting documents, in addition to the standard URA or SURF USA application materials. The process is explained below.

Before you write your proposal and complete your application:

1. Contact the Hamel Center director (paul.tsang@unh.edu) to initiate the approval process. You should be prepared to provide the following information in order to seek approval:
 - a. A brief description of the research project at the off-campus site.
 - b. A description of your responsibilities at the site. Will it be research exclusively, or will there be other assignments?
 - c. Information about the off-campus mentor. What is that person's role/title at the site and his/her area of expertise?*
 - d. Contact information (name, department, email address) for your UNH faculty mentor. (See guidelines below for choosing an appropriate UNH mentor.)

***In addition to the information provided by the student (above), the off-campus mentor will be expected to provide a c.v. or resume to the Hamel Center prior to approval. This document may be sent via email attachment to the Hamel Center director, Paul Tsang, at paul.tsang@unh.edu.*

2. The Hamel Center director will consult with your UNH faculty mentor to determine approval.

Be sure to allow sufficient time for the approval process before the application deadline.

If your off-campus project is approved, you will need to follow these application guidelines (in addition to the guidelines for the standard URA or SURF USA application):

1. Even with an off-campus, non-UNH mentor, you must still identify a UNH faculty mentor. Preferably, this will be someone who knows you well (e.g. from coursework, lab work, or work outside the classroom), and/or someone who does research closely related to the research to be conducted. This would likely be your academic advisor or someone in your major department who might assist with writing the proposal and also write a letter of recommendation.
2. Your UNH faculty mentor should write the "UNH Faculty Mentor Recommendation" included in the standard URA or SURF USA application. In this letter, it will be important for the UNH mentor to communicate what the actual mentoring/research arrangement is and how this will play out over the course of the research period (e.g. how frequently and by what means the two of you will keep in touch over the research period). If the designated UNH mentor will not actually have much hand in mentoring you over the research period (that is, if the two of you will not be in regular contact), then he/she may need to adapt the questions on the UNH Faculty Mentor Recommendation form as best as can be done.

3. For inclusion with your application, the person with whom you will be working most closely at the off-campus research site – i.e. the off-campus mentor approved prior to application – should write a letter that includes the following:
 - a. Confirms his/her willingness to serve as your off-campus research mentor.
 - b. Describes how you will be incorporated into his/her ongoing research (if the proposed project is that kind of research), and/or how he/she plans to assist you on your project.
 - c. If the off-campus mentor has worked with you previously, he/she may also comment on his/her experience with you, including any of your special qualities/abilities that will enable you to pursue a summer research project successfully.There is no special form for this kind of letter, but it would be a separate letter from the UNH faculty recommendation(s) required as part of the standard application.
4. If you are applying for a SURF grant, you will need a second letter of recommendation from another UNH faculty member, as is standard with the SURF application. This means that your SURF application will include three letters: one from your UNH faculty mentor, one from your off-campus summer mentor, and one from another UNH faculty member.
5. You will need to communicate with your off-campus mentor in advance of the application, to be sure that you have a clear understanding of the research to be done at the off-campus research site. This information will be necessary in preparing a detailed proposal.
6. In your proposal, you should plan to explain why you are planning to work away from campus with a non-UNH mentor. Sometimes the explanation is as simple as being able to live close to home for the January-term (for URA applicants) or summer (for URA and SURF applicants), which is okay; but there may be research reasons as well that should be made clear in your proposal.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Who receives the faculty mentor stipend (for SURF USA)?

Normally the stipend goes to the individual who is supervising the student during the research period.

2. What are the UNH faculty mentor's responsibilities?

- Assist the student in the application process (e.g. focusing the research topic/question; reading the proposal and critiquing it). *Note: The off-campus mentor should plan to read/critique the proposal draft as well.*
- Communicate with the student during the off-campus research period (e.g. via email, phone, Skype), in case the student has concerns about the progress of his/her research.
- Once the student has returned to campus, help him/her to integrate the research with academic work at UNH; help the student decide how he/she will present the research.

Additional Questions? undergrad.research@unh.edu
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