



# Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research

## Undergraduate Research Award (URA)

### Application Guidelines

Undergraduate Research Awards (URAs) are awarded to students who wish to conduct research either on campus or at other research sites *within the United States* during the academic year (including January term), or in the summer. If you don't need or desire academic credit for your research project, you may apply to the Hamel Center for **both** a **stipend** and an **expense award**. If you plan to pursue research for academic credit, you may apply to the Hamel Center for an **expense award only**. *You may not receive both credit and a URA stipend for the same research during the same time period.*

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** The AY2021-22 URA application deadlines below will be contingent on the University's [mode of operation](#) at the time of application, and also on the University's [phased approach to research activities](#) as determined by the Senior Vice Provost for Research (SVPR). When preparing applications, mentors and students should consult the UNH and Hamel Center websites frequently for any updates or changes. 2) Even if an application is successful, mentors and students should be prepared to modify their projects as needed to adhere to any changing University research policies and procedures during the proposed research period. Any project's ability to go forward will be dependent on the University's guidelines for research at any time during the research period.

#### Eligibility Requirements:

- Undergraduate at UNH or UNHM
- Enrolled in a UNH or UNHM baccalaureate degree program
- *Minimum 2.0 cumulative UNH/UNHM GPA at the time of application (First-year and transfer students must have completed at least one full-time semester at UNH or UNHM at the time of application, with a minimum 2.0 GPA from UNH/UNHM courses.)*

#### Award amounts:

- Stipend: \$1,000 (optional, if not conducting your research for credit)
- Expense Award: \$600 maximum

#### Deadlines:

- October 6, 2021 (for research during January term or spring 2022)
- March 2, 2022 (for research during summer or fall 2022)

*Note: Students may not accept both an Undergraduate Research Award and other awarded funding for the same research during the same time period (e.g. NSF, Pfizer, Space Grant, or other grant that awards money for research. If you have any questions, please consult with Hamel Center staff.*

### I. A complete Undergraduate Research Award application includes:

- Application Cover Sheet:** Read the application guidelines below, then complete and print the fillable Cover Sheet online.
- Proposal:** See Proposal Requirements on pp. 5-7 of these guidelines.  
*Note: The proposal describing your research or creative project is the most important part of your application.*
- Budget:** Review the Budget Form Instructions (attached to the Budget form online), then complete and print the fillable Budget form.
- UNH Faculty Mentor Recommendation:** A "UNH Faculty Mentor Memo" and "Faculty Mentor Recommendation Form" are available online. Print these materials, complete *the top portion* of the recommendation form, and give *both the memo and the form* to your UNH mentor immediately.

## II. What to do *before* you apply

We strongly urge you to take several steps *before* you write your proposal and complete your application. Some homework up front will minimize confusion at deadline time and will increase your chances of success! These steps are:

a. **Review the information in these guidelines *and* consult the Hamel Center website (<http://unh.edu/undergrad-research>) – even if you’ve looked at it before.** At the website you will find detailed information about the program and the application process (including application forms), as well as profiles of former participants.

b. **Make sure you are eligible.** To apply, you must be a UNH or UNHM undergraduate enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program, with a *minimum* 2.0 cumulative UNH/UNHM GPA at the time of application. If you are proposing a *group* project, make sure *all* applicants are eligible.

*\*Note: First-year and transfer students must have completed at least one full-time semester at UNH or UNHM at the time of application, with a minimum 2.0 GPA earned from UNH/UNHM courses.*

c. **Talk with a Hamel Center staff member about your proposed research and any questions you may have** – including how to identify a faculty mentor. In the Hamel Center office, you may also look at examples of other students’ successful proposals. *If you are planning a group project, be sure to contact the Hamel Center office before applying.*

*\*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.*

d. **Make sure you have a firm commitment from a UNH faculty mentor.** Give the “UNH Faculty Mentor Memo” and the “Faculty Mentor Recommendation Form” to your mentor *as soon as possible*. (Note: You must complete and sign the top portion of the recommendation form before giving it to your mentor.) The memo and form can be found with the URA application materials online. You should also plan to give your mentor any personal background information you think might be useful toward the recommendation letter (e.g., a resume or list of relevant coursework, jobs, skills or knowledge; educational and career goals). Note: All tenure-track, research, clinical, and extension faculty are eligible to mentor an undergraduate research project funded through the Hamel Center *without prior approval*. Other non-tenure-track faculty may be eligible *with prior approval*. For complete guidelines on faculty mentor eligibility, go to <http://unh.edu/undergrad-research/faculty-mentor-eligibility>

- 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.

e. **RE: Need for an off-campus mentor:** Students who are planning to conduct their research at a non-UNH site off campus (e.g. during January term or in the summer) may require a second mentor at the off-campus site, depending on the nature of the research. A student doing off-campus field research for a UNH-based project, for example, would not need a second mentor at the off-campus site. A student working on research sponsored by another institution or one of its faculty, however, 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 the student's UNH faculty mentor prior to application. Students with these kinds of off-campus research projects should contact the Hamel Center office before applying. For more information, go to <http://unh.edu/undergrad-research/faculty-mentor-eligibility#offcampusguidelines>

**\*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 Senior Vice Provost for Research.

f. **Consult the Hamel Center website for advice on writing an effective proposal** <https://www.unh.edu/undergrad-research/writing-effective-research-proposal>, and allow ample time to complete all application materials.

g. **Attend a proposal writing workshop.** The workshop presenter will go over the required elements of the proposal and will be available to answer any questions. For the most up-to-date list of scheduled workshops, go to the Hamel Center website: <http://unh.edu/undergrad-research/proposal-writing-workshops>

h. **You may also make an appointment with a Hamel Center staff member who can look over your proposal draft to see if it meets requirements for format and style.** (*Note: It is your mentor, not a Hamel Center staff member, who can critique your draft with regard to its discipline-specific content.*)

i. **Ask your faculty mentor to review your proposal draft.** Be sure to allow sufficient time for your mentor's review and comments before the deadline.

j. **Determine if your project will require approval from a University review committee.** Certain types of research are subject to federal regulations and University guidelines. For example, 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. If you have questions about how to obtain research approval, talk with your faculty mentor or a Hamel Center staff member. You do not need to submit written evidence of this approval with your URA application; however, if you are granted an award, the Hamel Center must receive confirmation of approval from the appropriate University review committee before dispensing your award money. So, it is in your best interest to begin the approval process before or at the time of your application. For more information, go to: <http://unh.edu/undergrad-research/responsible-conduct-research>

- k. **Determine if your project will require additional modifications to accommodate changing COVID-19 policies and procedures.** URA applications for AY2021-22 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. For the most up-to-date information, you and your mentor should consult the SVPR's [COVID-19 Updates and Resources for Research](#) page.
- l. **Complete the application with ample time left for obtaining the signature of your mentor's department chair on the application cover sheet.**

### III. Submitting your application

- a. **Be sure to submit your application as described here:**  
**One (1) complete application packet**, with the *original* faculty mentor recommendation in a sealed envelope paper-clipped to the top of the original application. *Recommendations must be submitted with the application and not sent separately to the office.* (If a group project, submit a separate recommendation letter for *each* project member.)
- b. **Collate the application packet in the following order** (use paper clips for documents – *no staples, please*):
  - Application Cover Sheet, with all necessary signatures  
(If a *group* project, submit a cover sheet for *each* project member.)
  - Project Proposal
  - Budget Form
- c. **Submit your application to the Hamel Center by the deadline:**
  - **October 6, 2021** for research during January term or spring 2022
  - **March 2, 2022** for research during summer or fall 2022
- d. **Notification:** All applicants and their faculty mentors will be notified of the review committee's decision *in writing* within approximately six weeks of the application deadline. If your application is successful, you will then be asked to sign a Letter of Intent and will receive further program information, including procedures for receiving your stipend and/or expense award.

### IV. URA Requirements and Expectations (for successful applicants)

In addition to the expectation that you will conduct/complete the research project proposed in your application, the Undergraduate Research Award comes with the following requirements:

- a. **Final Report:** describing your project and your findings (~2000 words).
- b. **Final Evaluation:** to be completed electronically by you and your faculty mentor.
- c. **Letter of Appreciation:** to be written by you to your sponsoring donor(s).
- d. **Presentation of Research:** presentation of your research results in an appropriate forum (e.g., to a class, to department majors and/or faculty, at an on- or off-campus conference).

URA students are also encouraged to consider publishing a research brief, commentary, or article in *Inquiry*, UNH's online undergraduate research journal ([www.unh.edu/inquiryjournal](http://www.unh.edu/inquiryjournal)), and/or to contribute to the Hamel Center's Undergraduate Research Blog.

## 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 received Hamel Center funds previously (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.*

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*See Criteria for Review of Applications, next page*

## **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](mailto:undergrad.research@unh.edu)  
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