

2025 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Request for Proposals and Fellowship Guidelines

I. Eligibility and Expectations

Applications for the 2025 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellows (SURF) program must be **written jointly** by both student and faculty mentor, with the faculty member responsible for submitting the application online through Submittable. This grant is intended to be a collaborative effort between students and faculty members from idea generation through project completion. **Please note instructions denoting student and faculty member's contributions on the application.** Faculty from diverse disciplines will be reviewing these grant proposals, so please make sure that the application is written for review by individuals outside your discipline.

Approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is not required at the time of application, but all projects requiring interaction with human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to participant research being initiated. Likewise, projects involving non-human vertebrate animals will require Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval before research can be initiated. Notification of IRB or IACUC approval must be provided to the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI) when granted in order for SURF funds to be released. Requirements for faculty and student participants are as follows:

Faculty:

All continuing full-time faculty and instructional staff are eligible to serve as SURF mentors. Mentors must commit to being present to work with their student for the majority of the 12-week program (Summer I and Summer II sessions). If the mentor will not be present with the student, they should clearly explain dates that they will be away and how they will continue to mentor their student remotely.

Students:

Student applicants must be enrolled at UT for the fall semester after the Fellowship. Students are expected to be in good academic standing and to have completed the relevant course work (determined by the supervising faculty member) or have relevant experience in order to complete the work proposed in the SURF application. As part of this program, students will be asked to take assessments that will enable OURI to monitor the program's effectiveness and will also be asked to participate in educational activities, including workshops. Students must commit to attending professional development seminars, completing the project outlined in the SURF proposal, and should present their work at an appropriate discipline specific conference or exhibition or submit their scholarship to an appropriate peer-reviewed outlet upon completion of the project. Students may not enroll in classes during the time that they are participating in the SURF (Summer sessions I and II).

II. Timeline

February 1: Application Due

March 15: Awards Announced

May 28 – August 13: SURF Fellowship

August 29: SURF Symposium

III. Goals and Outcomes

- The SURF program is a full-time, paid summer internship program that provides undergraduates with training and mentoring in the conduct of research, presentation skills, and prepares them for applying to graduate or professional school.
- SURF students will have a faculty-mentored, in-depth research or creative inquiry experience that trains them in 1) hypothesis or problem-based framing of a project; 2) skills and technologies used to complete the project; 3) implementation of the project with data collection and data analysis; and/or 4) creation of a work of art and exhibiting it to the public; and 5) dissemination of the results of the project to the community.
- Student learning objectives for the SURF program are:
 - Improvement of critical thinking skills.
 - Improved communication abilities in writing skills.
 - Improved communication abilities in public speaking/presentation skills.
 - Attainment of practical skills related to the field of inquiry, including information/reference searching, quantitative literacy, creative thinking, and problem solving relative to projects and performance standards.
- A final goal of the SURF program is to enable students to present their research or project at: 1) a discipline-specific conference at state levels or higher, or 2) generalized and academic conferences at the regional level or higher.

IV. Evaluation

The SURF proposal will be evaluated by the URI faculty standing committee. The Committee seeks applications that clearly describe how the student will develop as a scholar through participation in the project and through faculty mentorship. The committee also values projects that will likely make an original intellectual or creative contribution to the field/discipline. The number of grants available will depend on the number of submissions and yearly budget. Therefore, this will be a merit-based process. Students typically will receive notification of award approximately one month after the submission deadline.

The criteria used to evaluate research-oriented applications will include the following:

- There is a clear description of how the faculty member(s) will mentor the student so that s/he will grow as a scholar.
- The project is driven by a clear question (i.e., addresses a gap in the literature).
- The design of the project will allow the student to answer the research question developed in the introduction.
- The project is based on a sufficient amount of supporting evidence.
- The project is innovative and creative (i.e. the project adds an original intellectual or creative contribution to the field/discipline or practices in the discipline).
- There is a match between the goals and outcomes expressed by the student in his/her letter of interest and the project description in the grant application.
- The overall strategy and methodology are well reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
- The proposal is formatted according to the SURF guidelines and application.

The criteria to be used to evaluate creative works applications will include the following:

- There is a clear description of how the faculty member(s) will mentor the student so that s/he will grow as a scholar.
- There is a clear question that the student will use as a framework in creation of the work.
- The proposed creative works project is significant and the contribution the proposed project will make to the arts and humanities is clear and convincing.
- There is a match between the goals and outcomes expressed by the student in his/ her letter of interest and the project described in the grant application.
- The proposed creative works project has clear plans for documentation and dissemination of the project results as appropriate.
- The proposed creative works project has a strong likelihood of meeting project goals and being carried out on budget given the resources involved and qualifications of the project's personnel.
- The proposal is formatted according to the SURF guidelines and application.

V. Application Form

The application form on Submittable will require the following information. Each section of the application is carefully evaluated by the URI faculty committee and is therefore important to the overall success of the application.

- a. *Project Overview (written collaboratively):* (250 words) In a few sentences, please explain this project to someone outside your discipline. Please explain the idea generation and development of this research proposal. Be specific about the roles of the student and faculty member in the project.
- b. *Project Description (written by student with faculty mentor guidance):* Describe the project in no more than 1,000 words. As with the summary and remainder of your application, this should be written in language that is completely understandable to all disciplines. Jargon and abbreviations should be limited. Include background, theories, significance, and aims of your project. Explicitly state the question or problem being investigated. References should be included and uploaded as an appendix. If this project is a continuation of a previously funded proposal, please differentiate this proposed work and explain the incremental difference or impact of this current proposal.
- c. *Proposed Activities and Benefits to Student (written collaboratively):* Describe the student's proposed activities in no more than 1,000 words. What, specifically, will the student(s) do during the funding period? How will these activities contribute to the student's development as a scholar? Please explain the roles of the student and faculty mentor and what work each will do to complete the project with sufficient details to fully describe the activity plan. Please include how participation in this project will allow the student to improve his/her critical thinking skills, communication skills, and attain practical skills in the field of inquiry, such as information literacy, quantitative literacy, creative thinking and problem solving.
- d. *Mentoring Plan (written collaboratively, no more than 500 words):* Describe the specifics of how the mentor(s) will work with the student to facilitate their growth as a scholar and completion of the proposed research. Topics to address include how often the student/mentor(s) pair(group) will meet, how the mentor(s) will train the student in skills or techniques needed for the project, how the mentor(s) plans to support the student and increase student ownership of the project over time.
- e. *Anticipated Dissemination and Reach (written collaboratively; maximum 250 words)* Indicate where the student will likely present the work (and meeting or exhibition dates, if known) or appropriate peer-reviewed outlets. Please describe the appropriateness of each anticipated outcome by explaining its relevance and significance to your specific discipline. Please include any contingency plans if the anticipated outcomes are not available or achieved.
- f. *Itemized and Justified Budget:* Explain how funds will be spent and justify each expense. Additional Budget Guidelines are provided below to assist preparation of this section.
- g. *Faculty Evaluation of Participating Student (500-word max):* Please include information about the length and nature of your relationship with the student, including any prior research experiences. Discuss your experiences with the student in the collaborative process of this grant proposal. Elaborate on the student's strengths and weaknesses in the context of this project.

- h. *Student's Letter of Intent*: Please answer the following three questions in paragraph form (500-word limit): 1. How did your interest in this research project develop? 2. What skills do you possess that will help you complete this project? What skills will this project help you develop? 3. How does the completion of this research project fit within your future plans? The letter should be uploaded as a pdf file.

VI. Budget Guidelines

The University of Tampa is committed to supporting the development of student scholars by providing generous support that enables students to pursue full-time research during the summer. Students who participate in the SURF program will be provided the following:

- \$3,500 stipend
- Housing allowance is provided if the student chooses to live on campus (living on-campus is encouraged to create a community of student-scholars).

Faculty can elect to receive a \$1,000 stipend to support their time in mentoring the student. This stipend can be applied to travel funds or supplies if the faculty so chooses. **Fringe benefits of 8.33% are applied to faculty stipends and must be included in the total budget.** Note: Faculty members being paid to direct an Honors thesis may not request stipends for OURI grants supporting that thesis project. Faculty mentors may request stipends for projects distinct from a student's thesis (for example, another project with the same student or related project involving other students) and should address any overlap with an existing thesis project in their proposal.

SURF students can also request up to \$2,000 in supplies or travel funds, according to the following criteria:

- **Computer Hardware and Software** - Computer hardware and software essential to the conduct of the research may be requested.
 - All computers purchased with funds from the Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Grants will be property of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI) and should be used for research purposes by students and faculty on approved grants.
 - Quotes for computers must be obtained from ITS and included as part of the application. To obtain a quote, contact ITS with a list of required specifications.
 - Please include a screen shot or print a PDF of the item that you would like to purchase with its specifications visible as an appendix to your application.
 - The computer or technology will be officially assigned to the faculty mentor.
 - At the conclusion of the student's project, OURI should be contacted. Computers may be redistributed for use in student research.
 - Under no circumstances should a computer be retained by the student or faculty after the funded research has concluded without permission from OURI.
 - Please check with ITS to see if they have licenses to software that you need before you purchase new software.
- **Dues and Fees** - All professional dues and fees associated with the project to join or maintain memberships in established, reputable, professional associations necessary or helpful to the project sharing knowledge, networking, or other, may be

proposed to support the student and/or faculty.

- **Equipment** - Equipment essential to the conduct of the research may be requested.
- **Instrumentation** - Assessment tools and instruments including commercial tests, surveys, profiles, and all other instruments proposed for the project, should be itemized including how many instruments will be purchased from the vendor.
- **Supplies, Postage, Xeroxing** - Routine supplies, postage, Xeroxing, and other non-personnel office support may be proposed and must be itemized and detailed so that it is clear exactly what will be purchased.
- **Travel** - Travel to present papers at established and reputable local, regional, state, national, and international conferences of consequence must be itemized to include cost of registration, transportation, housing, food, and other expenses associated with project or paper presentation. Travel costs for the student and/or faculty member may be proposed, though faculty travel must be justified as directly supporting the grant outcomes and faculty members should explore other sources of funding (i.e., college deans and departments) before including faculty travel in the budget. You must provide three different quotes (screen captures are acceptable) for each travel expense item requested, e.g., airfare, car rental, and lodging. Each of the quotes must be from a different vendor (e.g. three different airlines, not three flights from the same airline). A copy of these quotes must be uploaded with your application. If you are not selecting the least expensive quote, you must provide an explanation (e.g., this hotel is more expensive but it reduces travel time and costs). If it is impossible to provide different quotes, you must provide an explanation (e.g., this airport is only serviced by two airlines). *Please note that all budget-supported travel must be undertaken during the grant period.*
- **Other Resources** - Other resources needed to develop, implement, and finalize the project may be proposed. All proposed expenses must be itemized and detailed so that it is clear what will be purchased.

Budget Quotes: A single budget quote (a screenshot is acceptable) must be uploaded for all items over \$250 (whether a single item or an order of multiple small items that totals \$250 or more). This includes gift cards. You must provide a single quote for all services, such as lab services or transcription. Budget items for which quotes are required but not supplied will be denied automatically.

Award Limits: Faculty/student pairs will be eligible for up to \$6,500 in total support if the student chooses to live off-campus (\$3,500 student stipend, \$1,000 faculty stipend, up to \$2,000 in other costs including faculty fringe benefit rate of 8.33%) plus a housing allowance if the student requests living on campus. Faculty may only supervise **one** SURF student per summer.

VII. Student Requirements

SURF students will be required to attend weekly meetings, held during lunch on Wednesdays,

over the summer to talk about their progress with other students. Students are also expected to write two social media posts during the summer describing their project and progress and submit these to OURI. In addition, students are expected to complete the requirements outlined below.

- 1) **Presentation at the SURF Symposium (August 29):** Students will summarize their research question and accomplishments for the University community at the SURF Symposium, which is held during the first week of classes during the fall semester. These presentations may be in a poster format or in the form of an oral presentation. This event is part of the Week of Welcome for new students.

- 2) **Final report /Accomplishments (September 5):** This document should identify the major results and accomplishments of the scholarship performed by the student over the summer. Accomplishments of the project should be provided in both qualitative and quantitative form. For work in the sciences, this would be in the form of a results section, relevant figures or tables, and a brief analysis of the impact of the work on the field. For work in the arts or humanities, a description or visual representation of the work should be provided, with an analysis of the importance of the work to the discipline and identifying any opportunities to display or present the work to a broader audience.

- 3) **Submission of an application for an appropriate form of peer-review:**
With the student as lead author or creator, an application must be developed and submitted to a discipline-appropriate conference or journal. Recommended forms of peer review include:
 - A. submission of a paper to a scholarly journal,
 - B. presentation of a paper at a scholarly conference,
 - C. recital,
 - D. art show,
 - E. other disciplinary form of knowledge dissemination (may require explanation)

Opportunities selected should be either discipline specific at state levels or higher or general and academic conferences at the regional level or higher. To be considered in compliance, the paper or application must be drafted with intent to submit to a specific conference or venue or submitted, but does not need to be accepted. Students who attend an external conference are asked to submit a paragraph describing the experience (plus photos if applicable) to OURI@ut.edu.

Each of these reports will be completed through Submittable. Students and faculty participants will be sent a link to the Submittable website for reporting.