FURSCA Guidelines for Preparing Student Research Proposals
Revised and Updated September 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Foundation for Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (FURSCA) was established to promote and support student research, original scholarship and creative efforts in all disciplines. Through a number of programs, taking place at all points in a student's career at Albion, FURSCA can help students pursue independent study in their areas of interest. Students work closely with a faculty mentor to develop and carry out creative and/or research projects. Participation in such projects provides valuable experience beyond the scope of classroom work, and enhances a student's preparedness for future employment and post-graduate studies.

FURSCA provides support for student research projects during both the academic year and the summer. During each of the three time periods, students may apply for up to $500 per semester to support research, scholarship, or other creative projects. In the summer, students may also apply for FURSCA support to stay on campus and do research, creative investigations or other scholarly work with a faculty or staff mentor. Students must work closely with a faculty advisor and are not limited to any particular discipline. Students have been funded to pursue a wide variety of projects in all disciplines on campus. To see a complete list of funded projects, please visit the FURSCA website (www.albion.edu/fursca). FURSCA does not support projects that are part of a class project. In addition, FURSCA provides up to $600 support for students to attend a conference where they are presenting (oral or poster presentations). For more information on conference grants, please see the FURSCA website.

In order to apply for funding, students must write an individual proposal and submit it to the FURSCA Advisory Committee for review and approval. The specific requirements and guidelines for proposals are listed below.

While each student in good academic and social standing is eligible for FURSCA funding, the proposal process is competitive and there are a limited number of spots available, specifically in the summer program. The FURSCA committee has high expectations for each student proposal. It is very important to follow the proposals guidelines in this document.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

FURSCA proposals are composed of four major parts:
1. the cover sheet,
2. the body of the proposal,
3. the signature page,
4. the faculty support letter.

The cover sheet includes basic information including: major, minor, graduation year and information about your faculty advisor. Budget information and a brief narrative of previous results (for continuing projects only) should be included on the cover sheet in the appropriate space.

The body of the proposal is limited to three pages, excluding references. This is where the description of the work that you are proposing is given. Group projects are permitted and encouraged but each student must submit their own proposal that clearly outlines their contribution to the group's goals. If your proposal is part of a group project, make sure to indicate your contribution to the project's goals. Separate proposals from the different group members are allowed. Identical proposals from two or more students will not be funded. Proposals that request funding for more than one student will not be funded. Student applicants should consult with their faculty mentors well in advance of submitting their application online.

The signature page gives FURSCA permission to ascertain that the student is in good academic and social standing with the College. The signature page requires the signature of the student in order to be complete. By submitting a letter of support, it is assumed that the faculty member is willing to work with the student.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS
After a proposal has been submitted, it is then reviewed by the FURSCA committee. The FURSCA committee is composed of faculty from all divisions (generally two from each division), a representative of the library, the Director of the Prentiss M. Brown Honors Program, a representative from the Provost's office, past FURSCA Directors, and two student members. The current committee makeup can be found on the FURSCA website (www.albion.edu/fursca).

As part of the application process for the summer program, students are often asked to submit a revised proposal for further review. Often the committee members have questions about the proposed work and would like to see information clarified or explained further. Commonly, students are asked to revise either the budget or the timeline (see below for further information) so students are asked to pay careful attention to the requirements.

Once a final decision on the proposal has been made, students will be contacted with the decision. This process generally takes 1-2 weeks for a semester proposal and between 3-6 weeks for the summer program.

ELIGIBILITY
All students in good academic and social standing are eligible for funding through FURSCA. Before funding is announced, a student's academic and social standing will be checked with the registrar and the Dean's office, respectively.

DETAILED PROPOSAL INFORMATION

1. COVER SHEET

A copy of the cover sheet is included at the end of these instructions. A .docx file is also available on the FURSCA website (www.albion.edu/fursca). When filling out the form, please make sure that the cover sheet stays at one page.

Abstract.

Please provide a short (200 words or less) abstract that describes the work that you are proposing in layperson's terms. The abstract should be understandable by a general audience. The abstract will be placed on the FURSCA website and could be used in presentations or recruiting activities.

Human Participants or Animal Subjects.

If a project requires human participants, it must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you are using animal subjects, you must go through the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Final FURSCA funding of the project will not be given without IRB/IACUC approval. If a project already has IRB/IACUC approval, please provide a copy of the approval email from the IRB/IACUC to the Coordinator, or attach a copy to the end of your proposal. When submitting a summer proposal, you can submit your proposal to the IRB or IACUC (if needed) **at the same time. Students who don't receive IRB/IACUC approval for their summer projects by April 12, 2024 will have FURSCA funding revoked.**

Budget Information.

Awards are limited to $500 per semester for a research project conducted during the school year and $500 to support summer research conducted at Albion College or with an Albion College faculty or staff member. Funds can be used to pay for supplies, printing costs, subject incentives, software, books, or other costs associated with the completion of the project. This award may be used for travel expenses related to the collection of data for the student project. For semester research grants, student wages are not eligible expenses. If you have any questions about whether or not an item is eligible for funding through FURSCA, please contact either the Director or the Associate Director of FURSCA.

If books, DVDs, and/or magazines are needed for a project, please make sure to check the library catalog for these items before including them in your budget. Items that are needed for only a short term should be borrowed through the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system. Help using the ILL system can be obtained through the library. If books, DVDs or magazines are purchased for completion of a student's research project, they will normally become property of FURSCA after the completion of the project and should be returned to the FURSCA office.

Software that comes with a multi-year license may be installed on a student's personal computer, but the license should be returned to IT after the project is completed to be available for future students.

If money is being requested for travel needed in the course of the research project, reimbursement will be done in the form of mileage, not "gas money". In order for this reimbursement to be available for

travel expenses, the travel must be approved in advance by the FURSCA committee. In order to be reimbursed, you need to provide driving directions that have the actual mileage to and from your destination. This will be used with the standard reimbursement form. If you have questions, please check with your faculty/staff mentor or the Associate Director 3 for more information. For example, in the second half of 2021, the mileage reimbursement was $0.545/mile. If your research trip is 50 miles each way, then the total mileage is 100 miles (2x50 miles). You would request a budget of $54.50 for this trip ($0.545/mile x 100 miles). If you have questions regarding whether or not a trip is eligible for reimbursement, please contact the Director or Associate Director of FURSCA.

2. BODY OF THE PROPOSAL

It is expected that the proposal is the work of the student. However, students should meet with faculty sponsors well in advance of the deadline to review the proposal. **Proposals that have not been reviewed or read by faculty sponsors may not be funded.**

The body of the proposal, excluding references and timeline (summer only), should be no longer than three pages. Font size should be 10 pt or greater. Single or 1.5 spacing is recommended.

The body of proposal has a three-page limit, not including references or timeline (the timeline is required only for summer proposals). Proposals that are longer than three pages will not be reviewed by the committee. While we understand that scholarship in different areas can be unique and varied, all proposals should answer the following questions. Proposals should also use section headings that reflect these questions (sample headings are included):

      1. What is the goal of the project and why is achieving this goal important? (e.g. Proposed Goal of Project)

      2. How does this project fit into work that has already been done by you or/and others? (e.g. Introduction or Background)

      3. What is the strategy for completing this project? (e.g. Methodology or Methods)

      4. What do you wish to gain from this experience? (e.g. Outcomes)

      5. What is the timeframe for completing this project? (summer only) (e.g. Timeline)

      6. References (e.g. Works Cited or References)

The FURSCA committee understands that the sections listed above may not be relevant to your discipline and the information in your proposal is not required to be in the order listed above. Whatever format you use for your proposal, please make sure all of the requested information is supplied, all questions are answered and that this information is easily identified. **Please use section headings when crafting your proposal. Proposals without section headings might not be reviewed.**

Proposed Goal or Why?:

This section should answer the question "What is the goal of the project?" Many proposals can present this information in one or two paragraphs. The goal of your project is not the same as the work you will do. That is, research and creative activity are not themselves the goal. Ask yourself what your work will

contribute to human thought. Make sure you focus on the proposed intellectual or creative achievement. In some proposals, this information might contain the:

- hypothesis
- argument you are testing/proposing based on evidence
- creative objective

Introduction/Background:

This section should explain the rationale for your project and describe any preliminary preparations you have made before undertaking the project. You should briefly summarize any work you, previous students or your 4 advisor have already done related to the proposed project (such as a directed study on the topic, library research, etc.), any planning you have done to lay the groundwork for your project, or explain briefly what led you to want to undertake this project. A brief literature review, or summary of the current state of the field should also be included in this section. You might also describe why you think your project is important and interesting.

The committee is composed of faculty, staff and students from all disciplines. **The introduction (and the entirety of the proposal) should be written so a layperson understands the context of the work you are proposing to do.** If an introduction is too technical, you might be asked to provide clarifications about the project that are accessible to a broader audience.

Methodology or How am I going to get there?:

In this section, you should describe in general terms what you propose to do. The committee is interested in seeing a methodology (if appropriate) or an outline of the proposed work. How are you going to complete the aims of the project? References to known methodologies are appropriate in this section. We are not looking for you to copy what has been done in the previous literature, but instead to describe the basic outline. Discussions with your advisor may be helpful to make sure that your project is well designed.

If a literature review is part of the proposed project, it is appropriate and necessary to include a tentative reading list. This list is meant to help guide the research project and make sure that all of the sources are available through the library or easily accessible from other sources.

** NOTE ** All research that involves the use of human research participants (e.g., certain types of interviews, experiments using human subjects, surveys and questionnaires) MUST receive approval from the college's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Research that involves the use of animals must receive prior approval from the college's IACUC panel. Please see the FURSCA website for links to the appropriate committee's website. If a project requires IRB approval, funding will not be released until IRB approval has been forwarded to the FURSCA committee. **For summer projects, IRB approval must be completed by April 12, 2024 or else the project will not be funded for the summer.**

Proposed Outcomes or What do you wish to gain from this project?

You should clearly state what the outcomes of the project are. These outcomes should be unique to your project, and will be determined by you and your faculty mentor. If there is a specific way in which the "success" of your project will be measured, you should indicate this as well. Try to be realistic and specific with goals, taking into account the time frame of the study.

While we do not require you to write a thesis, we encourage students to present the results of their work in a variety of venues. The committee prefers to see outcomes that are tangible such as: planning to present research at a specific conference, or exhibit your creative project at a museum or in the student galleries on campus. Presentation of your work at the next convenient Elkin R. Isaac Student Research Symposium **IS REQUIRED, and you should indicate your willingness to present at the Elkin Isaac Symposium in your proposal.**

Timeframe or Timeline (summer only):

In the summer research proposals, a timeline that outlines your short term goals and the approximate time needed to reach them should be included. For most projects, a week to week timeline is preferable. Two weeks is about the smallest amount of time that you should include in your timeline. You should present a feasible plan to convince the FURSCA advisory committee that you know how to go about getting research/project results. Please see the FURSCA website or the FURSCA CourseWeb page for examples of successful timelines.

The timeline is not included in the three page limit.

References or Citations:

References or citations should be in the style that is appropriate to your discipline. For example, chemistry students should use ACS guidelines, while psychology students should use APA style. Students in the Fine Arts and Humanities should use MLA style. If you are in doubt, please ask your faculty advisor or the Director of FURSCA for help.

Copies of successful proposals that have been funded through FURSCA in the past are available on the FURSCA website or through the FURSCA office. Please make sure to adhere to the guidelines laid out in this document when you are preparing your proposal.

SIGNATURE PAGE

A copy of the signature page is included at the end of this document. The signature page gives FURSCA permission to ascertain that the student is in good social standing with the College. Students who are not in good standing are not eligible for FURSCA funding. Signatures of Faculty/Staff mentors and Department Heads are no longer collected on the signature page. By submitting a letter of support for the student project, the faculty/staff mentor is acknowledging they have reviewed the project and support it.

A paper copy of the signature page must be delivered to the Associate FURSCA Director, Renee Kreger in the FURSCA Office by the faculty deadline.

SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Once the proposal is complete, you must submit your application via the online portal. For semester proposals, the submission link is found in the FURSCA Moodle site (courses.albion.edu). You will have to self-enroll yourself in this course. Please see the FURSCA webpage for the instructions on how to access the site or contact the IT Help Desk.

The submission link for Summer proposals is accessed at www.albion.edu/fursca.

Your application is not considered complete until the signature page has been received by the Associate Director. Note that the deadline for the signature page is the same as the Faculty Deadline. Late proposals **WILL NOT** be considered for funding.

PRESENTATIONS, PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

All presentations, papers or other publications that result from work that is funded by FURSCA should indicate this support. Papers, posters, publications, etc should include either: "This work was supported by a grant from the Hewlett-Mellon Fund for Faculty Development at Albion College, Albion MI." Or "The authors [can include names or initials] were supported by a grant from the Foundation for Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity (FURSCA) at Albion College, Albion MI."

CONTACT INFORMATION

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CHECKLIST for FURSCA PROPOSALS

Before submitting your FURSCA proposal, have you:

_____ Discussed the project proposal with my faculty/staff advisor.

_____ Included the appropriate sections headings in the body of the proposal

_____ Checked over the budget for appropriate and itemized expenses.

_____ Turned in the signature page to the Associate Director (Renee Kreger)

_____ Included citations as appropriate for your field

_____ Indicated your willingness to participate in the Elkin R. Isaac Research Symposium

NEW Academic Year (Fall/Spring) Proposal Application

Name:
Graduation Year:
Major:
Faculty Advisor:
Is this for the Fall or Spring semester?
Project Title:

Abstract

Please provide a short (100 words or less) abstract that describes the work that you are proposing in layman's terms. The abstract should be understandable by a general audience.

Budget Summary

Itemize your budget. On each line, please indicate the amount requested, describe the item, and briefly indicate its purpose. At the conclusion, please indicate the total amount requested. Budget guidelines can be found here: http://www.albion.edu/images/sites/fursca/Guidelines.pdf

Total_____

Does this project require chemicals or biological agents?   Yes   No

Does this project require IRB or IACUC approval?   Yes   No

If this project requires IRB or IACUC approval, you must provide the approval before funds will be released.

Please make sure the cover page does not exceed 1 page.

Project Outline

INTRODUCTION: *What has been done in this area, either by yourself or others in the field?*

PROPOSED WORK: *What is the goal of the project and why is achieving this goal important?*

METHODOLOGY: *What is the strategy for completing this project?*

OUTCOMES: *What do you wish to gain from this experience?*

REFERENCES: *In the style appropriate to your discipline.*

(The full proposal should not exceed three pages, not including the cover page.)

CONTINUING Academic Year (Fall/Spring) Proposal Application

Name:
Graduation Year:
Major:
Faculty Advisor:
Is this for the Fall or Spring semester?
Project Title:

Budget Summary

Itemize your budget. On each line, please indicate the amount requested, describe the item, and briefly indicate its purpose. At the conclusion, please indicate the total amount requested. Budget guidelines can be found here: http://www.albion.edu/images/sites/fursca/Guidelines.pdf

Is this project a continuation of a project that you have had previously funded by FURSCA?   Yes   No

If the answer is no, please use the NEW Project Proposal Form

Project Outline

Introduction: Please summarize your project. Approximately one paragraph.

Previous Results: What did you accomplish in the previous granting period? Approximately one paragraph.

Proposed Work: What are you proposing to do with this money? One to three paragraphs.

References: Please use the style appropriate to your discipline.

Summer FURSCA Research Fellowship Application

Name of applicant: Date:

Graduation Year: Major:

Advisor: Advisor's Department:

Title of Project:

Summer start date: [ ] May 13 [ ] May 20 [ ] May 27 [ ] June 3 [ ] June 10

Total number of weeks planned (can not be less than five weeks)?

Abstract. *Please provide a short (100 words or less) abstract that describes the work that you are proposing in layman's terms. The abstract should be understandable by a general audience.*

Does this project require IRB or IACUC approval? [ ] YES [ ] NO

If yes, has approval been granted? [ ] YES [ ] NO (If you answer no to this question, please explain. Proposals that do not receive IRB approval will not receive funding.)

If this project is a continuation of a previous project, please provide a brief narrative of previous results in the body of the proposal.

Does this project require chemicals or biological agents? [ ] YES [ ] NO

If yes, Have you received approval to order these chemicals? [ ] YES [ ] NO

BUDGET SUMMARY

Amount(s) Requested For each line requested, briefly explain the purpose

Total_____ Please make sure the cover page does not exceed 1 page.

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