

URCA Associate Proposal Application Guideline Checklist

Deadline: April 4, 2025 by midnight CST (*check website for specific date*) **Submit:**

- **One hard copy**—delivered to Dr. Belasen’s mailbox in the Main Business Office (Room 3144, Alumni Hall Box 1102) ○ Do not use report covers for your proposal.
- **One electronic copy**—emailed to Dr. Belasen (abelase@siue.edu)

General Information:

- Proposals are a maximum of 5 pages typed.
 - Not including: Cover/Application Page, Abstract, Budget Justification, References, and Appendices such as illustrations or glossaries
- Page numbers at top of each page
- Free of grammatical and spelling errors
- All acronyms and abbreviations are properly referenced.
- Make sure Budget summary on Cover/Application Page is consistent with the Budget Justification section.
- Reference Proposal Samples on website

Proposal Guideline Checklist: □

Cover/Application Page

- Use the Microsoft Word form provided on the website to TYPE all answers.
 - Please indicate whether the project will satisfy your Senior Assignment or not.
- Get Handwritten Signatures of your Department Chair and Dean.
 - *Important Note: These are very busy people whose work often takes them offcampus. Don't wait until the last minute to obtain these signatures, or you may find they will not be available to sign for you! Please plan accordingly to have your application complete and signed by the deadline. (You may need to make an appointment with your Department Chair and Dean to get their signatures.)*
 - Note: Departmental Administrator for purchasing is NOT your mentor or the department chair. This is the person the Provost’s office will work with to transfer your budget funds over to your mentor’s department.
 - In the case of dual mentors from differing departments, select one mentor’s department to be in charge of purchasing.

□ **Abstract**

The abstract is a brief but comprehensive summary of the contents of the proposal in plain language. The information in the abstract needs to be concise, well organized, self-contained, and understandable to persons outside the discipline.

- Approximately 150 words
- On its own separate page—behind the cover/application sheet, before the literature review. *The abstract does not count towards the proposal page total.*

□ **Introduction and Significance**

Plain-language introduction to introduce your project. Please realize that some members of your audience are skilled in areas outside of your discipline.

- Thorough statements that orient the readers to the overall area of investigation and communicate information essential to their comprehension of your proposal.
- What general question are you trying to answer and how are you going to approach doing it?
 - Choose a topic you can identify enthusiastically with. Your thinking ability and consulting with your mentor should help you to create a research question that excites you and is doable at the undergraduate level.
- Provide a statement of the significance of your study or creative activity. Where does your work fit in the scheme of things within your discipline?
 - Readers want to know why you are doing your study and why it should receive approval and financial resources from the University. This section answers the "so what?" question. Reviewers want to know what contributions your study will make to your discipline.

□ **Literature Review**

This section allows you to set the scene for your own work and to review relevant background knowledge and investigations. In reviewing the literature, your task is to capture the main contributions and directions taken by experts on your topic. Select both classic and contemporary foundations for your proposed investigation. Stick to what is relevant to your main topic. Your job is to find or create a niche where your own project fits. That way, your readers can see how it will enrich other works that have already been done in your field.

- This section might address the following:
 - "What is the origin of your particular project?"
 - "How does your project complement or contrast with prior research?"

□ **Hypothesis**

Here is where your idea occupies center attention. What do you wish to explore in this scholarship? (i.e., the problem you identified in the above literature review).

- Phrase your goals, objectives, or hypothesis clearly and unambiguously.
 - *Explicitly state the goals for your project in language that the reviewers can understand.*
- Why does this problem capture your attention and what do you plan to do with it?
 - If your proposal is part of a larger, ongoing project undertaken by your mentor, what part of the larger one is identified as your idea to pursue? □
Brief discussion of how you plan to disseminate any findings.

□ **Materials, Procedures, and Timeline**

This section of the proposal contains the step-by-step plan of action and schedule for conducting your research or making your artistic creation. Be sure to explain your role in the overall project, especially if your work is part of a larger one being carried out by your mentor. Rejection sometimes results from readers not clearly understanding the project, its foundations, and its limits. If there is reasonable doubt as to whether particular language is going to be understood by the reviewers, it is wise to provide definitions and explanations. Depending on the topic and procedures, this section should discuss and explain in detail:

- Target population and sampling methods.
- Materials required and their use.
- Instruments and techniques
- Design and method for data collection or artistic creation
- Procedures for data analysis or critique of performance
- Reasonable schedule of steps for successful completion of your work within two semesters.
 - Plan to have project finalized, with poster ready to be printed, by the middle of March in time for the April Symposium.

- **Important note: the \$500 equipment fund will likely not be available until September.** While Associates are certainly encouraged to start working on their project before September, it should be noted that this work should not require funding. **Associates and mentors are strongly encouraged not to pay for equipment out of pocket prior to September in the hopes of getting reimbursed; reimbursement will likely not be possible!**

- In addition, it should be made clear that the applicant and mentor have planned appropriately to secure any clearances/permits (e.g., IRB, Animal Care, Hazardous Material training) necessary to complete the proposed project.
 - Successful applicants will note in their application that they will work with their mentor to obtain any necessary clearances regarding IRB, Animal Care, Hazardous Material, and/or external populations/sites or collaborators (e.g., if you are working at a local high school) before collecting any data or starting on their projects. Letters of support to this effect are not necessary but might be very helpful.
- Assure the readers that you have considered any limitations, including time and scope, during the formulation of your proposal.

□ **Budget Justification**

Items needed should be listed in categories that conform to SIUE purchasing practices. Keep in mind that the University owns site licenses for certain types of software and has purchasing agreements in place in areas such as office supplies. Be careful not to make the common error of assuming that readers know why you requested the budgeted amounts in each area. Budget items should only include things that can be paid for with state money since URCA funds are state funds and are subject to all of the state rules. It is up to the mentor to ensure that the budget presented follows state rules and will be allowable. Most students and many mentors may not be familiar with the University budget categories. Please speak with your departmental secretary or budget person for additional help with your budget.

- Maximum 2-pages
- Give a detailed explanation of each budget item.
 - Students must create a poster for the Symposium. Students may use the Provost's color printer to create their poster free of charge OR purchase their poster printing elsewhere, but this should be built into their budget.
 - Students wishing to laminate their posters should also build this expense into their budget.
- The total budget should not exceed \$500.
 - If you don't use all \$500 to complete your project, just put the amount you need.
 - If you need additional funding beyond the \$500 necessary to complete the project, you must provide clear evidence of its source.

- Important Note: There are two separate types of funding.
 - (1) **Up-to-\$500 is the budget you are preparing in your proposal and is the money needed to carry out your project.** Do not list conference travel expenses in this budget!
 - (2) Up-to-\$400 travel money that Associates may receive to travel to present their finished work.
 - This is not a part of the up-to-\$500 equipment budget. This would be the conference travel expenses.

□ Reference Page

- Fully cite all works mentioned throughout your research proposal.
 - Use the reference style that is accepted in your discipline (for example, MLA, APA, ASA).
 - You may indicate citations within the text of your proposal with numbers in parentheses (1) in order to save space, but the full citations should appear in numerical order on a separate reference page according to your discipline specific style (with the addition of a number in front of it!). See also the specific examples below:
 - (1) Name, I.I., Year. Book title (edition if necessary). City: Publisher, page-page.
 - (2) Name, J.J. and D.D. Name2, Year. Article title. Journal title, volume (issue): page-page.
 - (3) Name1, Q.Q, R.J. Name2, and X.X. Name3, Year. Chapter title. In Book title (edition if necessary). City: Publisher, page-page.