**URGO Summer Research: Tips for an Effective Application**

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**Process**

1. Closely read the entire application information packet and application instructions.
2. Interview faculty to find a mentor(s) and a research question/creative project.
3. Meet early and often with your faculty mentor(s).
4. Do background reading on your topic over winter break.
5. Ideally put together a draft of your proposal and essay questions over winter break.
6. Refine. Revise. Edit. Proofread. Have people both inside and outside of your discipline read your proposal.
7. Faculty turn phase 1 in by February 1st at 5 p.m. to urgo@augsburg.edu (Phase 1 is not competitive. All Phase 1 applicants automatically go on to Phase 2).
8. Faculty turn in phase 2 in by February 22nd at 10p.m. to [**urgo@augsburg.edu**](mailto:urgo@augsburg.edu). Late proposals are NOT read. (Phase 2 applications are not accepted unless Phase 1 was turned in on time.)

**Product**

**Clarity is key**. Unfortunately, the committee does not have the time to interview candidates; therefore, we can only evaluate what we see on the paper. It is up to you to anticipate questions and to answer them within your proposal. Too often the committee is left with many questions (e.g., What makes this an important question or project? How will the student recruit subjects? Is this really doable in ten weeks? Is there enough work here for ten weeks? Does the student have sufficient background/skills to carry out the project? How will the proposed method answer the question?).

**Narrow trumps broad**. Scope of the project/creative activity should be narrow enough to be completed in 10 weeks. More often than not, proposals are overly-ambitious. Narrowing your question/project scope allows for deeper inquiry and results in a more meaningful product. If you begin with a broad question or project description the rest of your application will be vague and wandering as well. For a good reference on learning how to move from a topic → a focus → a question →a problem, consult “The Craft of Research” by Booth, Colomb and Williams.

**Establish rationale** for the project through your literature review. What has the scholarly conversation been around this topic? What is missing from the conversation (hence the need for your study)? How do you anticipate adding to the conversation? Consult and site a variety of peer-reviewed sources.

**Spell out methodology/process** in a step-by-step fashion. The committee should be able to follow what you are doing first, second, etc. Sometimes your methods are not as linear; nonetheless, it should be clear what you are doing and in what order. Often, you should explain why you picked a certain methodology.

**Timeline** should provide a clear sense of how you will be spending your time and the order in which you will be doing things. Include writing goals and process for developing a high quality final oral presentation. In other words you don’t want to save all your writing (for some students it might be painting or composing) for week ten. You should have writing assignments along the way and draft dates that you and your mentor(s) agree upon. We understand that once research begins timelines shift; nonetheless, giving careful thought to creating a timeline helps you to determine the feasibility of your project and the nature of the tasks in which you will be engaged.

**Use language** that can be understood by an educated reader, but not necessarily someone with detailed knowledge of your specific field.

**Put time and reflective thought** into answering the essay questions. It’s obvious to the committee when an applicant has not invested sufficient time and thought to the essays. Do not write answers the night before. Make time for several drafts.

**Professional Presentation.** Responses should be comprehensive and thoughtful. You want to leave the impression that you are capable of being a researcher. ABSOLUTELY NO ERRORS.

**Deadline.** Applications that do not meet the deadline will not be reviewed**. Plan ahead** to ensure that you will have adequate time to produce the highest quality application and handle the unexpected.

**How to pick a Research Topic.** Typically, it is wise to work on your mentor’s area of expertise. Proposals tend to be more defined and narrow in scope.

**Creative Activity**

Research conducted as part of a creative project should be integral either to the process of artistic creation or necessary to the end product itself, as well as contribute to aesthetic or practical knowledge of the artistic field or medium in which the student is working. Students proposing a creative project should take care to show how their project depends on research, and explain how the research will enhance and deepen the creative activity.