



Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program Policies and Procedures

Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates – Undergraduate Research Fellowships Program

Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU) Undergraduate Research Fellowships (URFs) are student support awards intended to facilitate a specific student's (mentee) participation with a specific faculty/staff member (mentor) on a defined project. Funding amounts and suggested workload are:

- Academic Year (AY): \$2,000 (\$1000/semester), suggested work load of ~10 hours per week
- Summer: \$2500, suggested workload of ~20 hours per week

Applications

Applications are meant to be developed as a collaborative process by the mentor and mentee pair. Some parts are to be written as a team and some parts are written individually (see below for more detail). Each application will be submitted online through Qualtrics. Applications sent via email will not be accepted unless there is a specific need and prior arrangements have been made. Applicants should prepare their entire application before the submission process (responses can be copied and pasted into the form), as the Qualtrics form must be submitted in one sitting. These cannot be saved for later completion.

Application Instructions

Applicants will need to be prepared to answer the following questions. Responses may be prepared in advance to be copied and pasted into the Qualtrics form.

1. **Mentor Information** (First name, last name, title/academic rank, department, UI email).
2. **Co-Mentor Information**, if applicable (Same as primary mentor information).
3. **Student Information** (First name, last name, HawkID, UI email, major(s), minor(s), anticipated graduation date).
4. **Funding requested.** Full fellowship (Summer or Fall Funding) or split award between no more than two students.
 - For split fellowship, a space will be provided to list the other student's name. Each student will need to submit a separate application. See following section for more information about split awards.
5. **Project title** (prepared by both mentor and mentee). Summary title for a general audience.

Application Instructions (continued)

6. **Project abstract.** 200 word maximum (prepared by both mentor and mentee).
 - This is a brief description of the project that the mentor and mentee will pursue. The abstract does not need to be overly detailed, but it should convey the general idea of the project in a way that is accessible. *Note: ICRU does NOT judge the merit of the project. Please read "Application Review and Decisions" for more information.
 - These questions should be addressed: What question are you investigating? How are you going to investigate it? What communities are impacted, and how are they impacted?
 - Please limit the use of technical or discipline-specific jargon.
7. **Student Involvement.** Please describe the nature of the students' involvement – 300 word maximum (prepared by both mentor and mentee).
 - Projects that strongly involve the student in all stages (planning/design, execution, analysis, presentation) are preferred. Consider including the following points:
 - What work/tasks will the student perform?
 - What tasks will the student be unable to perform?
 - What is the anticipated timeline for this project?
8. **Selection of Student.** 200 word maximum (prepared by mentor only). Please explain your reasons for choosing this student for this project. Try to include:
 - How long have you been working with this student?
 - How does this project fit your student's academic, career, and personal goals?
 - How is this student's skillset or interest a match for this project?
9. **Mentor's Role.** 200 word maximum (prepared by mentor only). Please highlight your philosophy as a mentor, as well as your plan for this particular student.
 - ICRU gives preference to mentors who have a clear understanding of their role, their goals for the mentee, and the method through which they fulfill their mentoring role. Consider the following points:
 - What are this student's needs?
 - Who will train the students in new techniques?
 - How often will the student and mentor meet to discuss their work?
 - What opportunities will the student have for interactions with the mentor and other personnel/collaborators?
10. **Student Interest.** 300 word maximum (prepared by mentee only). Why do you want to be involved with this project?
 - How did you find out about this mentor?
 - Why do you want to (or why do you already) work with this mentor?
 - What about this project captures your interest?
11. **Student/Project Fit.** 300 word maximum (prepared by mentee only).
 - What are your academic and career goals?
 - How does this particular project fit with or help you obtain your goals?

Split Fellowships

In cases where one mentor wishes to work on one project with two students, Fellowships may be split. To apply for a split award, EACH MENTEE to be supported should have an individual application, even if most details are the same.

For Academic Year awards split by semester, check either the "Fall" or "Spring" option under the funding session. Funding will be disbursed to mentees based on the specified term. For other splits, mark "Split Award". Half of the funding will be disbursed to each mentee each semester.

*Mentors may only apply for one Fellowship per cycle (see eligibility). If a mentor submits two applications for different students without Selecting "Split Award", *both* applications will be automatically denied.

**ICRU limits the number of Fellows for one Fellowship to two mentees. Applications submitted for more than two Fellows on the same Fellowship will be automatically denied.

Due Dates

ICRU URF applications are due midway through the Spring semester each year. Concise dates will be published by the start of winter break of the preceding semester. ICRU encourages mentor and mentee pairs to watch for these dates and contact ICRU with any questions.

Late applications will NOT be accepted. For extenuating circumstances, please contact ICRU in advance or as soon as possible.

Eligibility

Applications must name both an eligible mentor and an eligible mentee, according to all of the criteria listed below. Failure to meet all criteria will result in an application's automatic denial.

Mentors. A mentor is considered eligible only if he/she/they:

- Maintain an active appointment as a Faculty or Professional Scientific and Staff member at the University of Iowa.
- Apply for only one ICRU URF per session.
 - One URF may be split between *no more than* two students.
 - "Session" refers to the summer OR academic year. One application may be submitted for the summer session and one may be submitted for the academic year.
- Submit an application for each session for which he/she/they are seeking funding.
 - Summer and Academic Year sessions are awarded based on separate applications. Each application will only be considered for the session marked.
 - Applications for continued projects should show expected progress. For instance, an academic year application that continues from a summer application should not be an exact copy of the summer application.

Eligibility (continued)

Mentees. A mentee is considered eligible only if he/she/they:

- Are registered for the upcoming Fall semester as full time, degree-seeking, University of Iowa undergraduates.
- Have a minimum 3.0 GPA and maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout the funding period.
- Apply for only one ICRU URF per session.
 - "Session" refers to the summer or academic year. Students may have both a summer and an academic year URF.
- SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS: Students applying for summer awards must not hold other stipend-based summer undergraduate opportunities, including BSURF, BSSURP, SROP, etc.
 - Hourly-based pay for time spent outside of the Fellowship hours is acceptable (i.e. IBA, pay from research group).

**Note: If one mentee named in a split award is deemed ineligible, but another is eligible, only the ineligible mentee's application will be denied. The eligible mentee will receive half of the award with the expectation that he/she/they work half of the required hours.*

Application Review and Decision

Applications will be reviewed by a selections committee. ICRU instructs this committee to give high priority to meaningful student experiences, both in the actual work done and the mentoring received. As Fellowships emphasize experience/training, and ICRU does not have expertise in most disciplines, the academic merit of a project is not under review.

Strong applications will:

- Fully engage the mentee in all stages of the project – contemplation, design, execution, analysis, and presentation.
- Include regular opportunities for mentor-mentee interaction.
 - ICRU recommends least one face-to-face meeting per week. Proposals indicating that the mentor and mentee will be in different physical locations, limiting in-person contact, will receive low priority.
- Include a feasible timeline.
 - ICRU understands that research and creative work are fluid. Unexpected issues may cause delays or changes in direction. These do not need to be incorporated into the application's timeline or reported to ICRU.
- Show mentee's strong understanding of the project and its significance.
- Explain the connection between the mentee's involvement with the project and the mentee's career, academic, or personal goals.
- Convey excitement and collaboration from both the mentor and mentee.

Restrictions

- URFs cannot be deferred or transferred.
- Off-campus projects will not be funded without prior arrangement **UNLESS**:
 - Both mentor and mentee are in the same location off-campus, **OR**
 - Off-campus work is only a small minority of the project's timeline.

Automatic Denial of Applications

ICRU reserves the right to automatically deny an application without review if application instructions are not properly followed. ICRU will not contact mentors for resubmission. The following list details reasons that ICRU will automatically deny an application without review:

- Either a mentor or mentee is listed on more than one Fellowship Application.
 - Mentors may be primary on only one application, but may still be secondary on another. If a mentor is listed as the primary mentor on multiple applications, and “Split Award” was not selected, the application will be automatically denied.
 - Mentees cannot be listed on more than one application.
- More than two students are named on a “Split Award” Fellowship.
- Application pieces #7 and 11 (as listed above) are identical on both a Summer and Academic Year Fellowship. ICRU Fellowships are meant for training and experience. Expected progression should be reflected in these pieces.
- A mentee’s GPA is below the 3.0 cut-off. Except in extenuating circumstances, ICRU automatically denies these applications.

Disbursement

ICRU URF funding is disbursed by ICRU during the second week of each semester. Summer funds are transferred in one lump sum. Academic Year funds are split between the two semesters – half is disbursed in the fall and half in the spring.

ICRU transfers each mentee’s funds directly into the mentee’s UI account as a refundable scholarship. The UI will first use the funding to cover any remaining UBill balance. The rest will be refunded to the mentee electronically as a direct deposit.

Once disbursed, ICRU has no further control of how funding is delivered. Issues with refunds should be directed to the Billing Office or the Office of Financial Aid. ICRU can answer if/when/where funds were disbursed.

ICRU retains the right to cancel awarded Fellowships if either the mentee or mentor withdraws from the Fellowship or fails to complete its requirements. Please contact ICRU immediately for concerns regarding completion of or adherence to requirements.

URES:3100

ICRU enrolls all Fellows for course number URES:3100 for transcript recognition of URF participation for each semester. This is a zero-hour course graded R (“registered”) or W (“withdrew”). No extra tuition, fees, or costs will be incurred by the mentee.

ICRU submits the grades for all Fellows. Mentors have no grading responsibility other than to make ICRU aware if the mentee fails to fully participate in the Fellowship. Failure to complete ICRU Fellowship requirements will result in a “W” grade for the course. Mentees will be contacted before a “W” grade is given. R/W courses are not factored into GPA calculations.

Hours and Duration

URFs begin on the first day of each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) and end on the last day of each semester (Friday before Finals week). Fellows are expected to work an average of 8-10 hours per week during the academic year (not including finals week or Thanksgiving/Spring Break - 15 weeks per semester) or 15-20 hours per week during the summer (15 weeks). ICRU does not require Fellows to report or log hours. Mentees are solely responsible for tracking their hours.

Withdrawal from or Failure to Complete the Fellowship

Occasionally mentors or mentees need to withdraw their participation due to unforeseen circumstances. In such scenarios, both the Fellow and the mentor are expected to contact ICRU before the beginning of the semester. If only one party contacts ICRU, ICRU will follow up with the other party.

Withdrawals made prior to the beginning of a semester

If either the mentor or the mentee decides to withdraw from the Fellowship before the beginning of the semester, ICRU will consider the Fellowship to have been cancelled for both parties. No courses will be registered or funding disbursed for the mentee.

Mentee withdrawal or failure to complete the Fellowship after the beginning of a semester

If a mentee decides to withdraw or fails to complete the Fellowship, and ICRU is not informed before the start of the semester:

- The mentee will need to fill out appropriate paperwork to drop URES:3100 **OR** the mentee may incur a "W" for URES:3100.
- Disbursed funds may be revoked.

Mentees who fail to complete ICRU Fellowship are at risk of the above penalties. Fellows have "failed to complete the Fellowship" if they cease to participate in the assigned project.

Mentor withdrawal or failure to complete the fellowship after the beginning of a semester

If ICRU is not informed of the mentor's decision to withdraw before the start of the semester:

- The mentee may need to fill out the appropriate paperwork to drop URES:3100 **OR** the mentee may incur a "W" for URES:3100.
- Disbursed funds may be revoked.

Because students are often dependent of Fellowship funds, ICRU prefers not to penalize the mentee if a mentor withdraws. Please contact ICRU to discuss possible solutions.

Future fellowship applications

Withdrawal from a Fellowship does not hurt a mentee's or mentor's future chances of receiving an ICRU Fellowship UNLESS evidence suggests the withdrawal was purposefully withheld from ICRU. Failure to complete a Fellowship may negatively affect future Fellowship application results.

ICRU URF Requirements

Acceptance of an ICRU Fellowship constitutes an agreement with ICRU to fulfill the following program requirements:

- Completion of a Mentorship Agreement by both the mentor and mentee.
 - Agreement form will be sent to mentors and mentees upon notification of funding.
 - Funds will NOT be disbursed until ICRU receives the signed Mentorship Agreement via email as a PDF or Word document.
- Mentee participation in Mentee Training during the funding period (summer only).
- Presentation of the funding period's work at either of ICRU's research festivals
 - Fall (FURF – mid-November)
 - Spring (SURF – mid-April)
- Completion of questionnaires sent by ICRU during the funding period.
 - Maximum of two during a funding period (Academic Year or Summer)

Questions?

Unforeseen circumstances do arise, and ICRU will do its best to work on a solution with mentors or mentees. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

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