URC PINS proposal evaluation rubric

Undergraduate Research Center, University of Denver, 2020

Pre-review checks (See next page for details): ☐ Writing Center visit ☐ Proposal meets formatting requirements ☐ Budget requests are appropriate
A winning proposal will average "Good" or better. Don't be afraid to submit!

Category	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Research novelty + impact: A strong case is made for the novelty and importance of the research.	**Excellent:** The proposed work is highly original and the results are expected to be important in the specific field of research, and perhaps even beyond.	**Good:** The proposed research or scholarly work is novel and that the work is interesting and important in the field of study.	**Fair:** The proposed work is incremental over past research and demonstrates some potential for impact in the specific field of research.	**Poor:** The proposed work is unoriginal and demonstrates no potential impact.
Methods: (*This score is counted double*) A specific plan for carrying out the research is provided. It is reasonable and justified in the provided timeline.	**Excellent:** Methods and outcomes are communicated clearly and they are reasonable within the proposed timeline. Risky parts of the plan are identified; fallback options are provided as needed.	**Good:** Methods are communicated clearly and they are reasonable within the proposed timeline. The most risky parts of the plan are identified.	**Fair:** Methods are communicated but are hard to understand; they are mostly reasonable. There are minor concerns over feasibility or timeline.	**Poor:** Methods are not communicated clearly and/or they are not reasonable.
Writing presentation: (*This score is counted double*) The writing is compelling, scholarly, accessible, and careful.	**Excellent:** The proposal is clearly and compellingly written, and also understandable to a broad audience (i.e. non-experts in the field).	**Good:** The proposal is well-written, and mostly understandable to a broad audience.	**Fair:** The proposal is capably-written, and partially understandable to a broad audience.	**Poor:** The proposal cannot be understood by non-experts, and/or is too basic for scholarly writing.
Personal student outcomes: How will the proposed funding and work impact the student's future?	**Excellent:** The proposal provides a compelling and specific description of how this funding and experience will enhance the student's future opportunities and/or career outlook.	**Good:** The proposal describes how the grant will be important in the student's personal and professional future.	**Fair:** The proposal describes some potential for impact on the student personally, but it is limited and vague.	**Poor:** The proposal has little-to-no mention of how the proposed work will impact the student personally.
Student preparation: The student's background and history are appropriate for the proposed project.	**Excellent:** The student's academic and/or scholarly background are well-suited to the proposed work, so much so that the student's ideas contribute critically to the project.	**Good:** The student is well-prepared for the proposed work.	**Fair:** The student is not completely prepared for the proposed work, but they can catch up quickly.	**Poor:** The student does not have the necessary coursework or training to undertake the proposed work.
Faculty collaboration: Proposal demonstrates collaboration between DU faculty and student(s); roles are clearly defined.	**Excellent:** Both student and faculty are engaged in the project, and have a strong working relationship. Roles of both student and faculty are well-defined and suited to each.	**Good:** Both student and faculty are suited to the project, and worked together in the past (perhaps in a class). Roles are well-defined.	**Fair:** The student-faculty team is adequately suited to the project, and their roles are mostly defined.	**Poor:** The team does not seem appropriate for the proposed project. Roles in the student- faculty partnership are unclear.

Reviewers also check: ☐ Timeline is clear and reasonable ☐ Budget is detailed and justified for the proposed work
IRB, IACUC, or IBC compliance: ☐ Not needed ☐ Complete ☐ In progress (needs checking) ☐ Needed but not addressed

URC Proposal Style Guidelines

URC faculty reviewers look for well-written, thorough project proposals that can be understood by a general audience. For a research proposal, detail your research question, the data you are collecting, how you'll collect it and how you'll use your time wisely. For creative projects, make sure to explain how your project is contributing to the field you're working in by generating something new and important, and your methodology/mindset/plan to do it.

Formatting
- Two pages single spaced for proposal; a 3rd page may contain bibliography, timeline, and budget justification
- 1" margins and 12-point font of your choice
- Full name in header, and include the title of your proposal at the top of the first page

Content
- **Title and Abstract:** When you submit your proposal, you will be asked to enter a title and abstract for your proposal. The abstract should be 2-3 sentences, and provide a clear explanation of the motivation and plan of the proposed project that is *understandable to non-experts in your field*.

- **Research Novelty/Impact**: Provide an explanation of how your proposed work is original and has a high potential for impact, even beyond the specific field of research. Explain this in a way that is *understandable to non-experts in your field*

- **Methods**: Provide the specific plan for carrying out your proposed research. Ensure this plan is reasonable and justified in the provided timeline. Consider outlining risky parts of the plan and identify fallback options, as needed.

- **Personal Impact**: Outline how this particular funding and experience will change future opportunities and the career outlook for the you.

- **Timeline:** Provide a timeline of your proposed research process, highlighting your ability to complete your research within an appropriate and reasonable time frame. We understand that there is uncertainty, but show us that you have a thoughtful plan.

- **Reference list or list of academic literature:** When appropriate, provide citations and a reference list to highlight research that directly relates or impacts your research proposal. Not all projects will require this section.

- **Budget Justification:** Provide rationale for your budget justification. The budget should be detailed (include specific items to be ordered, with quantity) and well-reasoned to show the reviewers why the provided funds are needed to support your research project. Often calculations are used to explain budget requirements and estimations of cost. Example: "$270 for 1 Liter of spectroscopic-grade methanol (>99.995% purity)…" instead of "$500 for chemicals".

- **URC budget usage guidelines:** Be sure to follow URC guidelines for budget usage here: https://www.du.edu/urc/funding/, summarized here:
  - Budget requests for research-related travel, supplies, materials, user participation compensation are allowed.
  - All non-consumable materials and equipment must stay with the faculty advisor or department. If you are purchasing non-consumable materials or equipment, *you must explain your plan for this*.
  - *Disallowed expenses*: Payment for training, courses, and lessons.
  - *PINS grants only*: personal stipends are not allowed.
  - *Summer grants only:* Personal housing expenses in Denver cannot be budgeted; this should be part of your stipend. Any stipend requires a separate 1.8% fringe charge, all of which must fit within the maximum allowed budget.
- **Faculty Endorsement:** While this is not a part of the application on the student's part, it is your responsibility to choose a faculty mentor that is reasonable for your research topic. When selecting your faculty mentor, ensure you communicate that they will need to complete this endorsement after you have completed your portion of the application. Be sure to choose a faculty member and research topic you feel excited about and comfortable researching.

For additional questions, check out the Undergraduate Research Center website for FAQ's, or contact our program director, program coordinator, or office assistant (contact information below).

Dr. Katherine Tennis, Director
*E-mail: **katherine.tennis@du.edu***

Leah O'Grady, Program Coordinator
*E-mail: **leah.ogrady@du.edu***

Grace Warner, Office Assistant
*Email: **grace.warner@du.edu***