UCCS Undergraduate Research Academy: Overview, Eligibility, and Expectations

Overview: The Undergraduate Research Academy encourages students to expand their education beyond the classroom through participation in research and creative projects mentored by UCCS faculty. The Academy objective is to support collaborative efforts between the student and faculty member, where both members benefit from the experience. Academy students act as research assistants on meaningful projects identified by their faculty mentor. The faculty member is responsible for providing significant and meaningful guidance and mentorship. Through this opportunity, the student gains valuable experience, while being paid, and the faculty member's research program goals are furthered. Students may identify faculty mentors or vice versa.

Funding Possibilities: The student and faculty member can apply for funding from the Undergraduate Research Academy Summer Program to support their research project. The maximum total award available is $4000. This award is meant to support summer research (e.g. students will be funded May through August). Although the dates of the research internship are flexible, students are expected to dedicate ~200 hours towards research over the summer[1]. Students <u>must</u> attend <u>all</u> summer URA workshops held during the summer semester including completion of the [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) mini-conference.

Budget: Awards cover budget requests for student pay, project related supplies, travel, or a faculty honorarium. Students will be paid as research assistants. Mentors should use the criteria determined by student employment to determine the appropriate pay level.

- The majority of the budget must go directly to the student, therefore a maximum of $1000 can be used for expenses other than student pay. Please note that the entire award can be used for student pay.
- If a portion of that $1000 will be used for a faculty honorarium, it is limited to $750.
- Fringe benefits should be included in the budget for both the faculty and student researcher. Current rates can be found [HERE](#).
- The review committee may suggest a reduced budget. The Faculty Mentor

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[1] Students must abide by university policies on employment. These policies may differ between the regular semester and the summer semester. Faculty Mentors are responsible for ensuring they are following university policies regarding student employment.

can appeal the committee's decision to the URA director. The URA director will determine if a research proposal will be funded at the reduced rate.
- If Faculty Mentors require an extension for unused funds at the end of the summer period, they must contact the URA director for an extension at the start of the fall semester. Funds may be extended into the fall semester if there is a legitimate research purpose.

Review Criteria: Proposals will be evaluated based on the overall quality of the application submitted and available funding. Keep in mind that reviewers come from a variety of disciplines and the proposal should be tailored to a broad audience. Typically, former URA faculty mentors from the previous year serve as the reviewers for the current application cycle. The applications are scored based on the following criteria:
- Quality of the student applicant's essay
- Quality of the mentorship plan
- Quality of the project proposal
- The impact of the project on the student's academic success and Faculty Mentor's research agenda/professional goals

Other Information: The awards are made to neither the student nor the faculty member but rather to both. If for some reason this team dissolves, the remaining award money must be returned to the URA.

Eligibility:
- Student applicant must be a junior or senior standing in the summer semester they plan to take part in the URA
- The project idea and faculty mentor should be identified before applying (Note: the faculty mentor is responsible for creating the project proposal)
- Previous URA mentees in good standing are eligible to reapply, however, preference will be given to student and faculty pairs that have not previously received funding from the Undergraduate Research Academy
- Mentors must be tenure-track, tenured or research appointment faculty. Instructors may also serve as mentors with approval from their department chair.

Student expectations:
- Complete an applicant demographics questionnaire HERE.
- Attendance and participation in the Welcome URA 101 meeting in May (multiple meeting options will take place during May so all can attend) and

all four Summer URA workshops (~2 hours each) typically with two sessions held in June and two in July.

- Students must also attend the Responsible Conduct of Research mini-conference
- Attend regular meetings with mentor
- Dedicate ~200 hours towards research over the summer (work schedule to be determined by the faculty mentor and student depending on their availability and project needs)
- Give a poster presentation at Mountain Lion Research Day (MLRD) December 2024 or at the Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum (CSURF) in Spring 2025. Note: students graduating in Fall 2024 must participate in the Mountain Lion Research Day in Fall 2024.
- Completion of an Exit Survey

Faculty expectations:
- Collaborate on the proposal for the URA Summer 2024 Academy with the student researcher and submit the proposal via email to csr@uccs.edu by the **April 1st deadline**
- Research mentoring
  - Help student researcher set and meet clearly defined expectations. We suggest faculty utilize a Mentoring Agree document, templates for which can be found HERE
  - Meet regularly with the student researcher
  - Mentor the student researcher on developing their posters/presentations for MLRD or CSURF
  - Attend MLRD or CSURF
- Track expenditures for your URA funding and ensure compliance with university policies (e.g. student employment)
- Notify URA director of all scholarly products resulting from this award
- Notify URA director about the student's acceptance into graduate school or employment post-graduation
- Completion of an exit survey