



2023-2024
Vanderbilt
Undergraduate
Summer
Research
Program

VUSRP provides
Vanderbilt
undergraduate
students with the
opportunity to
engage in 10
weeks of full-time
research with any
Vanderbilt faculty
member



Overview of the application process

- Student identifies mentor (may be an ongoing relationship or established recently)
 - Student initiates InfoReady application (watch [video](#) for instructions)
 - Student submits responses to 4 questions (submit well before deadline)
 - System sends email to faculty sponsor
 - Faculty member fills out their portion of application
 - Both parts must be completed by noon on January 31
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- Applications are sent to faculty reviewers (some attempt to match field but many reviewers will receive applications that are not closely related to their own work)
 - Faculty use rubric to score application on 6 areas (50 points total)
 - Each application is scored by 3 reviewers
 - Total score used to rank applicants for awards
 - Students not initially awarded are placed on a waitlist

Pointers....

- The faculty questions are available on the InfoReady site – download and share with your faculty sponsor so they can start preparing their answers
- Talk with your faculty mentor about the project, your ideas, your background and motivation, and your goals; share a polished draft of your application with them and ask for feedback
- The judging rubric is also available – think about what the judges will want to see
- Make sure that someone outside your field can understand the significance of your proposed work
- Start general and then get more specific
- Don't just concentrate on WHAT – also explain WHY
- Follow the guidelines for appropriate use of AI (answers must be in your own words)

Student questions

- Describe the existing knowledge that underpins the research questions you will address this summer. Where are the gaps in knowledge? (250 words)
- What is the specific question or hypothesis you will address during the summer? Include the rationale that motivates your choice. If appropriate and feasible for a 10-week program, you may describe more than one research aim. (200 words)
- Describe the research design/methods that you will use to address your question or hypothesis. Keep in mind that reviewers may not be familiar with the technical aspects of your field and use language that a general audience would understand. (300 words)
- How does participation in VUSRP, as defined in this application, enhance your short-term and long-term personal goals? Be specific. (200 words)

Faculty questions

- Please assess the applicant's readiness to undertake and benefit from the proposed project. If the student has worked with you in past, provide an assessment of the student's contribution. If not, discuss coursework, experiences, and/or attributes that the student will bring to the proposed project. (250 words)
- We encourage faculty to discuss training goals with the student. What training goals have you established and what activities will support those goals? (250 words)
- If any aspect of this project will take place off campus and/or travel is involved, please briefly explain below. If not, indicate N/A. (150 words)
- How will the student be mentored? Please give specific information about how often the student will meet with you, how the student's progress will be evaluated, and how feedback will be given. Additionally, indicate who will provide daily supervision and what types of mentorship they will provide. If you answered yes to question 3, be explicit about how the student will be supervised while away from campus. (250 words)

Judging Rubric

Merit of project. (10 pts) Based on Student questions 1 and 2

*Consider: The strength of justification provided for the work; how well the proposed research question/hypothesis is placed within the context of prior knowledge.

Methods and scope. (10 pts) Based on Student question 3

*Consider: Whether there is sufficient explanation of the research design/methods; whether the approach is sufficient to address the question/hypothesis; whether the timeframe (10 weeks) is appropriate.

Mentoring plan. (10 pts) Based on faculty questions 2-4 and student question 4

*Consider: The appropriateness of the plan to support student progress and to provide timely and useful feedback; the alignment of goals articulated by the student and the mentor.

Student preparation and readiness. (10 pts) Based on faculty question 1

*Consider: Whether the mentor provides strong support for applicant based on previous work experience, class performance, or other interactions; sees potential for applicant to leverage this experience for growth.

Overall quality of proposal (student portion). (5 pts) Based on student questions 1-3

*Consider: The clarity of the writing for the intended audience (you the reviewer).

Anticipated student outcomes & impacts (5 pts) Based on student question 4

* Consider: How the proposed project contributes to the student's stated personal goals.

Resources to use during proposal development

- 1:1 writing consultations (50 minutes)
- www.vanderbilt.edu/writing (in-person and hybrid modalities available)
- Up to 3 appointments/week (Spring 2024)
- We can support you at any stage of the writing process