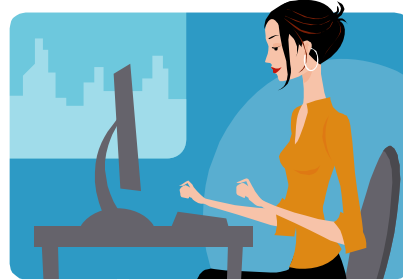


**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM FACULTY/STAFF MENTOR  
HANDBOOK**

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## URS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Undergraduate Research Scholars program, established in the spring of 1999, is dedicated to enhancing the academic lives of UW-Madison students by providing first and second year undergraduates with opportunities to earn credit for participating in the research and creative work of scholars on the UW-Madison campus. URS welcomes all students who have the potential and motivation to benefit from working with faculty and research staff as research assistants, and hopes especially to include students from populations that are under-represented on our campus (e.g., students of color, women in science and engineering, first-generation college students).

The program has been designed to include partnerships between students and mentors, seminars on research-relevant issues, and practice in research/artistic presentations. The many benefits of the program are found in the fluid interaction between these activities.

Since 1999, we've listed a wide range of research opportunities and placed hundreds of first- and second year students in research positions across the university in areas of investigation as diverse as molecular biology, physics, art history, economics, theatre, sociology, archaeology, genetics, textile art, political science, engineering, psychiatry, and social work. For the year 2009-2010 we are again planning to enroll up to 150 scholars.

URS fellows and scholars have been awarded a number of prestigious research fellowships and scholarships, including: McNair Fellowships, Hilldale Fellowships, Pathways Scholars Fellowships, Pfizer Research Fellowships, Barry M. Goldwater Scholarships, Chancellor's and Powers/Knapp Scholarships, Ford Foundation Fellowships, and NIH summer internships. We encourage our students to present papers at research conferences or co-author publications on research.

### Admission to the Program

The URS program is **intended to be a two-semester experience**. Admitted students enter the program in the fall semester and register for URS research credits in both the fall and spring semesters. Freshmen and sophomores in any UW-Madison school or college are eligible to be URS scholars. The program admits incoming first-year students in the summer before their first college fall semester, or students who are beginning their second year on UW-Madison campus. URS also admits new transfer students who might particularly benefit from being involved in the program during their first year at UW-Madison.

Interested students complete an application form providing details about their motivation for research. The factors considered in admission include high school grade point average and class rank, ACT or SAT scores, and enthusiasm about research and participation in a diverse scholarly community. Admission is based on the student's overall motivation and potential to benefit from the program.

Preliminary indications are that URS scholars have found their URS experience to be a major influence in helping them shape their educational path and in helping them adapt to their college environment. In addition, it appears that students who participate in URS are more likely than their non-URS peers to continue to progress toward degrees at UW-Madison. We attribute this success trend primarily to the involvement and commitment of Faculty and Staff Research Mentors.

### The Faculty Research Mentor

The essence of the URS Program is the Scholar/Research Mentor relationship and the opportunity it gives the student to engage in inquiry-based learning or creative work early in their collegiate career. The student scholar will gain experience in probing the unexplained,

exploring the possible, creating new knowledge, and producing works of art. The impact can be profound and life changing.

We ask that you, or a graduate student or post doc under your supervision, take an active role in your scholar's research experience. Your student will be a first or second year student, who, most likely, has had very little or no prior research experience. **We encourage you to establish clear guidelines as to what you expect your scholar to accomplish/learn on his or her research project.** To avoid later confusion, it would be best if you and your scholar schedule periodic conversations about the scholar's progress during the course of the semester/year.

For researchers, the benefits of working with a URS scholar include sharing the excitement of research with a bright and eager future scholar, acquiring valuable research assistance, supporting an undergraduate's exploration of academic and career interests, and connecting directly with the experiences of undergraduates on campus. Many URS students stay with their original mentors throughout their undergraduate careers, and they are establishing an impressive record of conference presentations and academic publications with their mentors.

The research component of the course—the work the students do with you as their faculty mentor---constitutes 75% of the student's grade for URS, so you will need to make your expectations clear. Towards the end of the semester you will be contacted by email and asked to submit a grade for the student(s) working with you.

### **The Interview Process**

Finding a research position through the Undergraduate Research Scholars program entails the scholar discussing the list of available opportunities with the URS Director and URS staff during the orientation meeting or by making an appointment with a URS staff member. URS has compiled a book of URS Research Opportunities based on the submissions by Research Mentors. We do not make these opportunities available to students outside of URS. Students select two to three research positions that are interesting to them. It will then be up to the student to contact the research mentor and set up an appointment to meet for an interview. Most likely you will receive an email from interested students asking to set up an interview.

Students are usually surprised that they have to interview with a faculty or staff person - a prospective Research Mentor -- about the research or creative opportunity. Both students and research mentors have a choice about working together. It should be a mutual decision. Through the interview process, students and mentors will learn about each other, and students will learn more about what the mentor's project entails, and the mentor's expectations. Mentors - if you are looking for a student that has specific skills or background, this is your opportunity to see if the student has the qualifications you desire. It is also an opportunity for students to have a chance to decide if your project fits their skills and interests.

### **The Research Contract**

After completing interviews with prospective research mentors and setting up research positions, all URS students must work out the details of their new research or creative project assistantships with their research mentors. Together, mentors and scholars must write these details on the **URS research contract**. The contract (an example is included at the end of this handbook) should clearly outline specific tasks that will be the student's responsibility, the number of hours per week the student is expected to work, and the number of credits, either 2 or 3, that the research mentor believes is appropriate for the amount of time invested. If a student is expected to work with you 4-6 hours per week then 2 credits is appropriate. For 7-12 hours a week, 3 credits is appropriate. The course that URS students register for is INTER L&S 250. If you find during the semester that the student is averaging more or fewer hours than expected, please contact the program director and the credit load will be adjusted accordingly.

Both Faculty Research Mentor and URS scholar must sign and date the contract. **Students must submit it to their Research Fellow or URS office by Wednesday, October 7th, 2009.**

Sample Research Contract is on page 12 of this manual.

## **The Research Fellows**

Research Fellows -- juniors and seniors who have had research experience - forge a crucial link between the URS scholars and the professional staff of the program. They develop and facilitate the weekly **small group seminars** in pairs. These seminars (Interdisciplinary-L&S 250) are the "class" component of URS and are designed to foster the growth of academic communities amongst the younger scholars who are conducting research. URS Seminars explore the research enterprise and the university experience. The seminars meet weekly on Tuesdays or Wednesdays 5:00-6:00 pm. These sessions are designed to remove the mystique of the big university and replace it with the broader aspects of research and creative work, and to address research-related topics of interest to students in the sciences, humanities, social sciences, and the arts. These small groups allow URS Scholars to voice their concerns and opinions, explore research ethics, and give each other invaluable support and feedback. This is the only opportunity that the scholars have to read and discuss issues related to research with one another. Scholars in each group will have a wide array of research and academic interests, so activities and discussions all acknowledge the diverse fields and backgrounds represented in each group.

Fellows serve in the teacher role in the URS program; they design a course syllabus, plan activities, and create an academic community. Fellows also assist scholars with finding compatible research opportunities, and serve as role models on the road to graduation. Fellows participate in ongoing training and are supervised by URS staff. They receive a stipend each semester for their work.

## **Research Presentations**

At the end of fall semester, scholars give short oral presentations about their research work or artistic project to their URS seminar group and guests. The presentations offer the students an opportunity to share findings with their fellow scholars, get feedback on ideas, and share enthusiasm for the hard work they've completed. The presentations are a step toward developing personal presentation styles and empowering a self-image of being knowledgeable about the

research work.

At the end of the spring semester (April 15<sup>th</sup> 2010) each student will present his/her research either orally or by poster at the campus-wide **Undergraduate Symposium**. This gives the students the opportunity to formally present their work to the campus-wide community, and have their abstracts published in the symposium program.

**Research mentors will need to approve their scholar's abstracts** so that they will be accepted at the symposium. We strongly encourage research mentors to work with students as they develop their presentations or posters. Again, for many of our scholars, this will be the first formal research presentation or poster they have ever done, so they will need as much guidance as possible to be successful and for this to be a rewarding experience.

### **Interdisciplinary L&S 250: Research and Seminars**

Inter-LS-250 is designed to allow students to earn academic credit while working on research and other kinds of creative projects with faculty and staff across the UW-Madison campus. This undergraduate course is unusual in that it involves an individual, unique research experience along with program seminars in which URS Scholars and Research Fellows, under the direct guidance of the URS Director, explore topics of general interest related to research and academic development and discuss the research experience.

All UW-Madison courses are listed under an academic department in the Timetable. Since URS can involve research experiences in areas from engineering to nursing and from music and to biology, it is placed in the L&S Interdisciplinary Department. On the UW transcript, the course will appear as "Inter L&S 250, "Undergraduate Research Experience." The course title makes clear that students have participated in a research-based class. Your grades for the Scholars at the end of each semester should be submitted to the URS director who will submit them to the Registrar.

The URS seminars are organized into small-groups that meet weekly and allow URS scholars to assemble for presentations and discussions about the university's research culture, research

ethics and responsibilities, how research is conducted in the various disciplines, post-baccalaureate options, and explorations of how to build diverse and tolerant communities. The seminars are organized by Fellows and allow Scholars an opportunity to share their research experience with their classmates and participate in informational discussions that are relevant to the particular curricular track that they are pursuing.

Other than regular attendance, participation, and some readings, requirements in Interdisciplinary-L&S 250 include the following:

- Response Papers

Each URS scholar is expected to reflect upon their research experience or seminar readings by writing short papers. We want them to be creative, but what's key is the writing process. We want these writing exercises to help students in the meaningful interpretation and analysis of the research.

- Research Abstract

Each scholar is required to write an abstract at the end of the semester that includes a clear succinct statement about what the research is about, any relevant background information about the project, a brief description of the methodology, preliminary results, anticipated relevance and applications and plans for future research. We strongly encourage research mentors to review their student's abstract, to see that they have a clear understanding of the project.

- Research Paper

At the end of the spring semester each scholar is required to submit a 3-5 page paper that outlines the research that they completed throughout the year. We strongly encourage research mentors to read their student's paper before they turn it in to their fellow to make sure that they had a clear understanding of the goals and significance of the project. Research fellows will read the paper and ask each student to revise it based on their suggestions. The final draft will be turned in to the director.

### **Grading in Inter L&S 250**

The work that the student does with you is approximately 75% of their grade and their participation in required URS seminars is about 25% of the grade. Final grade rosters for Inter L&S 250 are filled out by the URS Director Svetlana T. Karpe. Mentors will be contacted through email or phone about your evaluation of the URS scholar's work at the end of each semester.

### **Grading Guidelines for Research Mentors:**

We encourage you to make your expectations clear to the student, so that s/he will not be in for any surprises when a grade is reported. If at any time your student is not performing as expected, please contact the director or his/her research fellow so that we may address the situation. In general, we suggest the following guidelines when evaluating your student's grade at the end of the semester:

**A** Exceptional. Student took initiative or performed all duties above and beyond expectations.

**AB** Active engagement in research activity, completed all assignments, reported to work regularly and for expected number of hours, developed new skills and applied them appropriately.

**B** Did not fully meet expectations. Somewhat engaged in research activity, did not always work expected number of hours, no evidence of new or improved ability for systematic inquiry.

**BC - C** Below expectations. Minimal initiative and engagement. Poor performance in all areas.

**Below C** Very Poor performance in all areas.

### **URS Research and Federal Work Study Policy**

Students in URS are permitted to earn Federal Work Study (FWS) pay for **part of the work** they do as a research assistant through the URS Program **if** they are eligible for

FWS funds and if the research mentor has funds to pay the “employer” portion of the salary\*. The Research Mentor’s departmental office is responsible for collecting the reports of FWS hours worked (the time sheets) and for processing them so students are paid. Students may not earn more than their FWS allocation per semester. The departmental office is required to have on file a description of the student’s work position that is paid for by the FWS funds. The Student Financial Services Office will assist you and your scholar in every way possible to work out this arrangement. Please note that the URS Program DOES NOT have FWS funds for URS Scholars.

Students may also earn pay for their URS related research if the Research Mentor has grant or other funding available to support student workers, though URS students generally only expect to earn credit for their work.

## Undergraduate Research Scholars Program



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(\*students should not be paid for the hours that they earn degree credit)

