WELCOME TO THE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM!

This year, over 250 students across all academic colleges at Texas A&M University in College Station and Galveston applied for the 2015-2016 Undergraduate Research Scholars program, making this our largest Undergraduate Research Scholars class to date. During the next two semesters, you will have an exceptional opportunity to engage in extensive creative research by working closely with Texas A&M University faculty, staff and graduate students. You will find yourself challenged in many ways, but you will develop knowledge and skills that you would have never gained from coursework. Our staff in LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research are here to answer your questions and help you achieve your goals, so please do not hesitate to ask questions or stop by our office. We look forward to working with you over the next year.

Duncan S. MacKenzie, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Undergraduate Research
LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research
Associate Professor of Biology

The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not ‘Eureka!’ but ‘That’s funny…’

- Isaac Asimov
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Overview ........................................................................................................ 1

Program Requirements ................................................................................................. 1

Communication ............................................................................................................. 1

Completion of the Program .......................................................................................... 2

Thesis Writing Class ..................................................................................................... 2

Reimbursements ............................................................................................................ 2

Research Compliance .................................................................................................. 3

Types of Research Compliance ................................................................................... 3

Approval and Training .................................................................................................. 3

Public Presentation Requirements ................................................................................ 4

Public Presentation Form ............................................................................................... 4

Thesis Requirements ................................................................................................... 5

Thesis Installment and Progress Report Deadlines ......................................................... 5

Resources ..................................................................................................................... 6

Workshops ..................................................................................................................... 6

Thesis Templates and Examples ..................................................................................... 6

eCampus Community (ecampus.tamu.edu) ................................................................. 7

The University Writing Center (uwc.tamu.edu) .......................................................... 7

Texas A&M University Libraries (library.tamu.edu) .................................................... 7

Advice From Former Scholars ..................................................................................... 8

Contact Us ................................................................................................................... 9
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduate Research Scholars actively participate in an independent research project under the guidance of a Texas A&M University Faculty Advisor, produce an undergraduate thesis, and present their research publicly to the scholarly community. Undergraduate Research Scholars must meet the requirements outlined in this guide to successfully complete the program. Upon graduation, Scholars receive the Undergraduate Research Scholar distinction on their transcript and in the graduation program.

All Undergraduate Research Scholars are required to:

- Attend the Undergraduate Research Scholars Orientation & Welcome
- Attend one of the Thesis Formatting workshops
- Complete the pre- and post-program surveys
- Obtain Research Compliance Approval before collecting data (if applicable)
- Meet all thesis installment and progress report submission deadlines
- Create and deliver a public presentation
- Submit a public presentation form
- Complete and submit a final thesis

It is recommended (but not required) that Undergraduate Research Scholars enroll for 0-3 hours of research credit in their department during each of the two semesters that they are participating in the program.

COMMUNICATION

The best way to contact us is through email at ugr@tamu.edu. Weekly email reminders will be sent to all Undergraduate Research Scholars, and bi-weekly email reminders will be sent to all Faculty Advisors. Additionally, all pertinent program information, including what is outlined in this guide, will be provided on our website at ugr.tamu.edu/UGR/UGRS/Current.

Teams: Reminders will be sent to all Scholars, but some information may only be sent to a team’s Primary Contact. Be sure to stay in constant communication with your team. See the Thesis Manual for team submission instructions.
COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM

Upon completion of the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program, graduating seniors will receive a medallion to wear at graduation. Medallions are distributed to at our Recognition Ceremony at the end of the spring semester. You will be recognized as an Undergraduate Research Scholar at graduation in the graduation program and on your transcript. If you are unable to attend the Recognition Ceremony, medallions are also distributed at graduation. If you are not a graduating senior in May 2016, you will receive your medallion when you graduate. Unless put on a journal or patent hold, Undergraduate Research Scholars Theses will be deposited into the Undergraduate Research Collection in the OAK Trust Texas A&M Open Access Digital Repository at oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/3367. Once deposited, your thesis will be available for viewing by the public.

THESIS WRITING CLASS

Thesis Writing (UGST 485) is an optional one (1) credit hour Writing Intensive (W) course. Dr. Duncan MacKenzie, Associate Director for Undergraduate Research, will teach this course during the spring semester on Wednesdays from 4:00pm-5:00pm. The class will be available to Undergraduate Research Scholars at Texas A&M University at Galveston through a videoconferencing system.

REIMBURSEMENTS

Reimbursements are available to Undergraduate Research Scholars for research-related expenses for up to $300. The Undergraduate Research Scholars $300 allocation can be used for research expenses related to your Undergraduate Research Scholars project, including software, books, poster printing, lab supplies, travel, and registration for research meetings at which you are presenting your Scholars project. Note: You must contact us at ugr@tamu.edu BEFORE you spend any of the funds.

To request a reimbursement must complete a Reimbursement Form and send it to us at ugr@tamu.edu. The Reimbursement Form is available for download on our website at ugr.tamu.edu/UGR/UGRS/Current/Reimbursements.
Research performed by undergraduate students must comply with all federal, state, and University rules and regulations. Undergraduate students are expected to obtain the same approvals and receive the same training as graduate, faculty, and staff researchers performing equivalent procedures.

Your Faculty Advisor will know whether your study requires research compliance approval and will be able to guide you through the approval process. If you are unsure about whether or not your project needs Compliance Approval, talk to your Faculty Advisor!

**TYPES OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE**

If you are working with any of the following, you must obtain necessary approvals from the appropriate committee and complete any specialized training before collecting any data:

- **Human subjects:** Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- **Vertebrate animals:** Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- **Biohazards and pathogens:** Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)

For more information about each of the three compliance categories above, please visit the Research Compliance & Biosafety website at [rbc.tamu.edu](http://rbc.tamu.edu).

**APPROVAL AND TRAINING**

If your proposal describes studies which may require compliance approval, LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research will provide a copy to Research Compliance & Biosafety for their review. You must work directly with the Research Compliance & Biosafety office to receive any required approvals. If you think that you need additional training or certification, please ask your Faculty Advisor. If your project requires compliance committee approval, you must submit evidence of the approval in the form of an Outcome Letter* to Undergraduate Research staff at ugr@tamu.edu by November 22, 2015. Approval will then be verified by Research Compliance & Biosafety.

*i.e. IRB Outcome Letters, IACUC Amendments, IBC Completion, NOT CITI training documents.*
All Undergraduate Research Scholars are **required** to publicly present either an oral or poster presentation of their research project to satisfy the public presentation component of program. Students may present at national conferences or other symposia, but many take advantage of Student Research Week held on the College Station campus. Student Research Week is hosted each year in March by the Graduate Student Council. For more information about Student Research Week, please visit [srw.tamu.edu](http://srw.tamu.edu).

Students at Texas A&M University at Galveston have the opportunity to present at the TAMUG Student Research Symposium in April. TAMUG students should note that the deadline to submit the public presentation form is different due to this symposium falling after the final thesis deadline. For more information about the TAMUG Student Research Symposium, please visit [tamug.edu/Research/Symposium](http://tamug.edu/Research/Symposium).

All Undergraduate Research Scholars must include the following acknowledgments on the presentation:

- Undergraduate Research Scholars logo
- “Your Name, Undergraduate Research Scholar”

**Note:** You can find the Undergraduate Research Scholars logo on our website and on the eCampus Community.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION FORM**

Once you have made a public presentation, you must submit a two-part Presentation Form to receive credit for presenting. The form will call for details about the presentation, an Abstract, and a PDF copy of your PowerPoint Slides (for oral presentations) or poster (for poster presentations). This form should be submitted on the eCampus Community no later than Sunday, April 3, 2015 (College Station)/April 24, 2015 (Galveston).

**Teams:** Only one presentation form is required per team. All team members must participate in a public presentation.
THESIS REQUIREMENTS

The Undergraduate Research Scholar’s Thesis will be the primary product of the Undergraduate Research Scholars program, and will be written in progression over the fall and spring semesters. Research should be presented in a scholarly, well-integrated, and properly documented manner and should report the original work done by the student under the supervision of their Faculty Advisor. The Undergraduate Research Scholar’s Thesis will meet the same high standards for format and style as a doctoral dissertation. Therefore, all Undergraduate Research Scholars must follow the thesis format outlined in the Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis Manual. A copy will be available for download on our website and the eCampus Community. Note: Theses will be reviewed by the Undergraduate Research staff for format only. All content should be reviewed by your Faculty Advisor.

Thesis Templates in Microsoft Word and LaTeX are available to assist students during writing and thesis preparation, and can significantly help in meeting the Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis format requirements. Thesis templates are available for download on our website and eCampus Community. To see previous Undergraduate Research Scholars theses, visit the Undergraduate Research Collection in the OAK Trust Texas A&M Open Access Digital Repository at oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/3367.

THESIS INSTALLMENT AND PROGRESS REPORT DEADLINES

First Installment and Progress Report
Sunday, November 22, 2015 by 11:59pm

Second Installment and Progress Report
Sunday, January 24, 2016 by 11:59pm

Third Installment and Progress Report
Sunday, February 28, 2016 by 11:59pm

Final Thesis
Sunday, April 10, 2016 by 11:59pm

RESOURCES

WORKSHOPS

We offer a variety of workshops to assist in the completion of the program. These workshops provide essential information for writing a thesis and making presentations. The following workshops will be hosted over the course of the fall and spring semesters:

FALL

- Thesis Formatting (mandatory)
- Research Compliance (Instructed by Research Compliance & Biosafety)
- Writing Productivity (Instructed by POWER Writing Support Services)
- Citation Software (Instructed by University Libraries)
- Drop-in Thesis Help Sessions (occurs the week before a deadline)

SPRING

- Writing Abstracts
- Giving Effective Presentations
- Student Research Week Practice Session
- Drop-in Thesis Help Sessions (occurs the week before a deadline)

For detailed information about these workshops, including dates and times, visit our website at ugr.tamu.edu/UGR/UGRS/Current.

THESIS TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES

Thesis Templates in Microsoft Word and LaTeX formats are available to assist in the proper formatting of your Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis as outlined in the Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis Manual. Utilizing one of our templates is expected. An example thesis is also provided to help visually represent the Thesis Manual. The Thesis Manual, templates, examples, and more can be found at ugr.tamu.edu/UGR/UGRS/Current/Resources and in the eCampus Community.
The eCampus Community will be your gateway into the Undergraduate Research Scholars program. It is from here that you can check deadlines, review requirements, and receive assistance from other research scholars. **eCampus is where you will submit thesis installments and progress reports, and receive feedback on your documents from Undergraduate Research staff.** Further instruction on utilizing the eCampus Community, such as how to upload documents, will be presented in the mandatory thesis formatting workshops. Undergraduate Research Scholars will be granted access to the eCampus Community prior to the first installment submission deadline.

**THE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER (UWC.TAMU.EDU)**

The University Writing Center offers face-to-face or online consultations with certified consultants for writing or public speaking projects. During the consultations, you will receive personalized advice and assistance based on your project and your needs. They will work with you on any type of writing, at any stage of the composing process, including developing and organizing content, understanding assignments or the demands of specific genres, and perfecting prose by editing and proofreading. For public speaking, you can ask for assistance with developing and perfecting outlines and content or with designing slides, handouts, or posters. You can even practice your presentation!

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES (LIBRARY.TAMU.EDU)**

The library provides subject librarians who can help you with your bibliographic searches as well as webpages and workshops on how to use the most common bibliographic and database tools. Take advantage of all the resources the library has to offer, including training with citation software (EndNote or RefWorks) that will make writing your thesis so much easier. If you aren’t using one of these programs to organize your citations, you will be amazed at how they simplify the reference process. Library staff will be providing workshops on how to use these tools for Undergraduate Research Scholars during the fall semester.
“I would not have done as well as I did without the mentorship of my professor. Because of my research experience I was able to get into graduate school. It was the most fulfilling experience of my entire undergraduate career.”

“I’ve always wanted to go to graduate school, but after the research program I won’t limit myself as to where I can go or what I am capable of. I’ve proven to myself that I can do the work and am very excited about research. I know that it is something I could do with my life and love it.”

“Doing research has really helped me with my confidence. I feel that I am a part of something important. I have also learned how to communicate better and present my research publicly.”

“It helped me better understand what graduate student life is like. I also realized I do not want to go into a career as a research professor.”

“I feel that I have matured a lot as a person. In research, my faculty advisor and my graduate student advisor treated me like a capable adult (that doesn’t really happen in classes). I feel that I have started to become a more capable person.”

“Overall, I think the sense of accomplishment that accompanies completing this program is one of the greatest experiences of the program.”

“Don’t be timid in asking questions. Everyone is more than happy to help and guide you in the right direction.”

“Even though they explicitly warn you about procrastination, it can still happen. Try to avoid it at all costs. Your chapter submissions will be much more polished if you don’t wait ‘til the last minute and write them in an 8 hour sitting the night before. It will also make writing your final draft worlds easier.”

“This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know faculty members and to be intrigued by doing the things you are learning about.”
Dr. Sumana Datta, Executive Director

LAUNCH
Learning Communities | Academic Excellence | Undergraduate Research
National Fellowships | Capstones | Honors

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