

STUDENT UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
RULES AND REGULATIONS

RULE 1 – ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

- I. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) shall administer the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) within the policies set by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. All formal communications shall be addressed to or signed by the Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education or his/her designee. The Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Selection Panel shall select recipients for awards.
- II. The Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Selection Panel shall consist of:
 - A. Faculty or administrators at an Arkansas public or private institution of higher education who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline to be reviewed.
 - B. Other panel members will be considered who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline to be reviewed and who have an affiliation with an Arkansas public or private institution of higher education or an education-related entity.
 - C. The Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education or his/her designee shall serve as presiding officer of the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Selection Panel and shall ensure that staff services for the Panel are provided.
- III. The focus of the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship is the continued development of undergraduate academic research efforts at Arkansas's public and private institutions of higher education and to provide funding to encourage students to conduct in-depth research projects in specific fields of study under the tutelage of tenured or full-time faculty member. The program is designed to assist all students throughout the state.
- IV. The Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education has the final responsibility for selecting fellowship recipients pursuant to the provisions of Act 2124 of 2005 and subsequent legislation, and program rules and regulations.
- V. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall follow the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act when functioning under Act 2124 of 2005 and subsequent legislation.

RULE 2 – FELLOWSHIP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

I. Eligibility Criteria

An applicant must meet the following requirements to be eligible to receive the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship:

- A. The applicant must be a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident alien.
- B. The applicant shall be enrolled in an approved Arkansas institution of higher education as a full-time student, as defined by the Department of Higher Education.
- C. The applicant must be enrolled in a program of study that leads to or is creditable towards a baccalaureate degree. These programs include baccalaureate and associate degree programs.
- D. The applicant must have completed at least 30 semester credit hours before funds are awarded.
- E. The applicant must have a minimum cumulative 3.25 grade point average.
- F. The applicant must have a tenured or full-time faculty member to serve as his/her mentor.

II. Continued Eligibility

A student may compete for additional years, but cannot receive more than three years of funding.

RULE 3 – APPLICATION PROCESS

I. Solicitation of Applicants

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education will disseminate the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship announcement through workshops, meetings, press releases, ADHE newsletter, ADHE website and other means deemed appropriate.

Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship announcements will be emailed to:

- A. Presidents and Chancellors
- B. Chief Academic Officers
- C. Directors of Research and Sponsored Programs

- D. Previous SURF panel members and mentors
- E. Faculty, administrators, and other interested persons

II. Application

Students must submit an application for the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education will provide an application on the Department's website. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education will also provide application forms to any individual upon request. The applicant must complete the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship application to be considered for the fellowship.

III. Submission of Application and Application Deadline

Any interested student who has met the eligibility criteria listed in Rule 2 may apply.

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall establish the deadline for receipt of applications each year. The deadline date shall be clearly printed on the application and website.

All applications and supporting documentation must be postmarked by the established deadline date in order to be considered. It is the responsibility of the individual applicant to ensure that the application is postmarked by the deadline date.

*If any deadline date occurs on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the following business day.

IV. Application Review Process

- A. The SURF Panel will read and score applications.
- B. SURF Panel members meet at ADHE or another centrally located location to make recommendations for SURF awards based upon the selection criteria listed in Rule 4. The SURF Panel is divided into two groups (STEM and non-STEM). Based upon appropriations, the STEM SURF Panel will award 60% of the funds to STEM applicants; the non-STEM SURF Panel will award 40% of the funds to non-STEM applicants. Should there not be enough qualified applicants in the STEM or Non-STEM group to make recommendations for awards, funds can be shifted from one group to another until all funds are exhausted.

V. Amount of Fellowship

The amount of the fellowship awarded to each recipient shall be as follows:

\$1,250 maximum award Student Stipend*

\$ 750 maximum award Student Travel

\$ 750 maximum award Mentor Award

\$1,250 maximum award Institution Match

\$4,000 Maximum SURF Award

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|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| *Student stipend- | Spring only | \$ 625 maximum award |
| | Spring & Summer | \$1,250 maximum award |
| | Spring & Fall | \$1,250 maximum award |
| | Spring, Summer & Fall | \$1,250 maximum award |

VI. Award Notification

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall notify each eligible applicant of his/her award. The award notice includes the student's name, address, faculty mentor's name, institution, and the actual amount the student is eligible to receive. The award notice also explains the Arkansas Department of Higher Education's disbursement procedures and conditions, as detailed in Rule 5.

ADHE shall notify the Presidents/Chancellors, Chief Academic Officers, Offices of Research and Sponsored Programs, and the SURF Panel of SURF awardees.

VII. Ineligible Notification

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall notify applicants who are determined to be ineligible and provide the reason for ineligibility.

VIII. No Funds Left Notification

Once all applicants have accepted his/her SURF award and all funds are exhausted, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall notify the remaining eligible applicants that all funds have been awarded via a "no award" notice.

RULE 4 – FELLOWSHIP SELECTION CRITERIA

I. All proposals will be reviewed by the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Panel that is selected by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The SURF Panel will use the following selection criteria for judging proposals.

| Grading Criteria | Possible Points | Points Awarded |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Student’s performance and accomplishments (G.P.A., activities, community service, etc.). | 10 | |
| Appropriateness of courses completed for proposed research. | 10 | |
| Mentor’s letter of support. | 10 | |
| Two letters of reference. | 10 | |
| Mentor has prior experience supervising students in the discipline. (New faculty should be considered, as well as faculty recently beginning involvement in research.) | 10 | |
| Appropriateness of proposed mentor’s previous experience for the proposed project. | 10 | |
| Research/scholarly activity/productivity by the mentor. | 10 | |
| The proposed research project. * | 30 | |
| TOTAL POINTS AWARDED | 100 | |

*Criteria for the awarding of points vary with the area of the endeavor. Criteria may include:

- ✓ Feasibility of the project, i.e., is the project reasonable for the proposed student with the available facilities?
- ✓ Is the proposed research/scholarly activity of value to the field of study?
- ✓ Is the project of sufficient difficulty to challenge the student?
- ✓ Will the project teach the student skills that are transferable to other research endeavors/ scholarly activities?
- ✓ Other criteria deemed appropriate by SURF Panel.
- ✓ Is there some justifiable reason to give this proposal consideration because the candidate is from a group under-represented in the area of endeavor such as women and minorities in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM)?

The SURF Panel shall meet and make recommendation of students to be awarded a SURF fellowship based upon the above selection criteria. Recommendation of awards shall be made until all funds are exhausted. The SURF Panel shall also select alternates to be awarded in the event a student does not accept his/her SURF award.

The Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education has the final responsibility for selecting fellowship recipients.

RULE 5 – FELLOWSHIP PAYMENT POLICIES

I. Limits of Payment

A. Disbursement of Fellowships

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall disburse fellowship funds to the institution designated on the student's application. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall send funds to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) or Financial Aid Office via electronic funds transfer or state warrant. Additionally, the ORSP or Financial Aid will be sent an Award Roster and Receipt Confirmation. The Award Roster lists the students to be awarded and the disbursement amounts. The Receipt Confirmation should be signed by the disbursement officer and returned to ADHE. The institution will disburse the grant funds to the student according to the institution's disbursement procedures.

B. Cancellation of the Fellowship

1. The award will be terminated for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Failure to maintain at least a 3.25 cumulative grade point average on a 4.00 scale.
 - b. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution.
 - c. Failure to conduct the research for which the SURF fellowship was awarded.
2. The recipient is responsible for notifying, in writing, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education of any change in status (i.e. change of address, email, transfer of research to another mentor, etc.). Failure to provide written notification may result in the cancellation of the fellowship for that term.

C. Military Service

Recipients who are members of the Arkansas National Guard or Armed Forces Reserve units who are called to active duty for reasons other than regular unit training and are unable to complete the current term will be allowed to repeat the missed term. In addition, they will be placed in deferred status until six months after release from active duty, at which time they must be re-enrolled and continue research with the same mentor.

D. Refunds

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education is entitled to a refund of the fellowship amount, for that semester, if the recipient of a fellowship withdraws, drops out, is expelled, falls below the minimum standards detailed in Rule 2, or does not conduct the research for which the SURF award was made.

RULE 6 – INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

I. College/University Responsibilities

A. Administrative Agreement

The chief executive officer of the eligible institution is responsible for designating one institutional representative to act as administrator of the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship and to receive all communications, forms, etc. This representative is responsible for verification, data and compliance with all program rules and regulations. The institution must comply with all rules and regulations in order to maintain continued eligibility status.

The Authorizing Institutional Official ensures that by signing the SURF application that the applicant has met all conditions of the Fellowship Eligibility Criteria in Rule 2.

B. Disbursement Records

The institution shall maintain information on the student indicating disbursement of fellowship funds.

C. Institutional Verification

The institution shall provide certification of full-time enrollment, as of the close of business on the eleventh day of classes. The institution must comply with OMB Circular A21 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions) and OMB Circular A110 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations) when managing SURF funds. Each institution shall establish a separate account for each student awarded a SURF fellowship.

Each Department\Division\Dean\Chair is responsible for ensuring that the student and mentor are conducting research as set forth in the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship proposal submitted to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

D. Deadlines for Disbursement of Funds & Refunds

Funds shall be disbursed to students and mentors in accordance with the institution's disbursement procedures according to OMB Circular A21 and OMB Circular A110. Any outstanding funds not disbursed by the end of the semester must be returned to ADHE within 15 days of the semester's end.

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education is entitled to a refund of the fellowship amount, for that semester, if the recipient of a fellowship withdraws, drops out, is expelled or does not conduct the research for which the SURF award was made. The Institutional Representative is responsible for issuing a refund to ADHE within 15 days of the semester's end.

E. Due Diligence

The institution will exercise due diligence in providing complete, accurate, and timely information as requested by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education on any Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship recipient or former recipient. In addition, the institution will exercise due diligence in complying with all the rules and regulations of the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall periodically review the SURF program.

RULE 7 – FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I. It is the recipient's responsibility to notify the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, in writing, of any change in status (i.e. change of address, email, transfer of research to another mentor, etc.). Failure to provide written notification may result in the cancellation of the fellowship for that term.

Change in the research project is not allowed for the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship.

II. Fellowship recipient is required to submit a one page abstract on the findings of his/her research upon completion of the project to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as follows:

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|------------|--------------------------------|
| May 1 | Spring term project completion |
| August 1 | Summer term project completion |
| December 1 | Fall term project completion |

III. Fellowship recipients are required to present the findings of his/her research at a state or national conference in his/her discipline or attend a meeting of experts in his/her discipline as directed by his/her mentor.

Failure by a fellowship recipient to comply with any of the above may result in forfeiture of his/her SURF fellowship funds.

RULE 8 – PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used in the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program:

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| APPROVED INSTITUTION | a public-supported or private, non-profit postsecondary institution with its primary headquarters located in Arkansas that is eligible to receive Title IV Federal student aid funds. |
| CITIZEN | a person who is a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident alien. If the recipient is not a U.S. citizen, but a permanent resident alien, the recipient must attach a copy of the permanent resident alien card to the application. |
| ELIGIBLE APPLICANT | any applicant who meets the eligibility criteria established in Rule 2. |
| FELLOWSHIP | an amount of money given to a student for a specified period of time that allows them to study and research a subject. |
| FULL-TIME STUDENT | 12 semester credit hours or its equivalent per semester. |
| INSTITUTIONAL MATCH | amount of funds the institution must match the student's stipend. |
| OMB Circular A110 | sets forth the uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations. |
| OMB Circular A21 | sets forth the rules governing the eligibility and calculation of costs in support of sponsored research, development, training and other works produced in agreement with the United States Federal Government, but does not attempt to identify or dictate agency or institutional participation in those works. |
| MENTOR | tenured or full-time faculty member. |
| MENTOR COST | salary, fringe benefits, materials, supplies and travel costs awarded to the mentor associated with mentoring the student. |
| SEMESTER | Spring, Summer or Fall terms. |
| STUDENT STIPEND | an amount of money awarded to the student to conduct his/her research. |

STUDENT TRAVEL

cost incurred by student to present the results of his/her research at a state or national conference or to attend a meeting of experts in his/her discipline.

SURF PANEL

shall consist of faculty or administrators of Arkansas public or private institution of higher education who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline to be reviewed. Other reviewers will be considered who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline to be reviewed and who have an affiliation with an Arkansas public or private institution of higher education or an education-related entity.