

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROGRAM (URAP) LAS Guidelines 2023-24

Purpose

The Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP) was created to support full-time DePaul faculty (tenure-line and term) in their pursuit of research, scholarship, and creative activities. This program has a dual purpose:

1. To provide financial assistance and valuable occasions for learning to undergraduate students by creating opportunities to assist and collaborate with faculty members who conduct research projects and are engaged in creative and scholarly activities.
2. To offer support to faculty engaged in the above activities consistent with the university's commitment to the pursuit of knowledge.

The URAP affords students a unique opportunity to become actively involved in the planning and implementation of research and scholarship, and in the dissemination of knowledge internal and external to the university community. This activity contributes to students' overall academic experience, and effectively prepares those who intend to pursue graduate-level or professional studies or careers in which they are required to develop and manage similar projects. The undergraduate assistants will provide faculty members at DePaul with support needed for their research endeavors.

This program effectively carries out components of the University's Strategic Goals for GROUNDED IN MISSION, THE PLAN FOR DEPAUL 2024: Elevate academic excellence and embrace a culture of creativity and discovery with meeting the following objectives:

- Objective 5.4. Increase support, incentives, and recognition for scholarly and creative work by faculty and students.
- Objective 5.4.C. Increase student participation in research and creative activities by providing incentives for faculty research supervision and competitive financial support for graduate and undergraduate research assistants.

Eligibility:

All full-time and part-time undergraduate students who have attained at least sophomore status (48 hours) are eligible to apply. Selection will be based on merit of the applicant and qualifications needed by faculty members as determined by the quality of the application. Full-time faculty are eligible to apply for assistants. Undergraduate assistants can be assigned to either individual faculty members, or two or more faculty who are collaborating on a project or activity.

Student Assistant Job Description:

This program is intended to provide students a substantive work experience; that is, student assistants should not be used as general clerical help. Assistants can help in areas such as, but not limited to, library research, data collection and analysis, preparation of manuscripts, etc.

The assistant may be eligible for up to four hours of internship credit, contingent on the approval of the department from which the student is seeking such. If faculty and departments wish to grant credit for students accepted into this program, they will need to enroll students in a related course/independent study. To earn Experiential Credit in the Liberal Studies program, the course must be approved for the EL requirement by the LSP or design a course and take it through the established approval process.

Student Funding:

In 2023, student assistants will be paid \$15.80 per hour. An assistant may work a maximum of 75 hours per quarter (\$1,185.00).

Deadlines:

The application deadline for student assistants who will work in the Summer or Autumn Quarters/semesters—is **April 15**. The deadline for assistant positions for the Winter or Spring Quarters is **November 3**. *These are college-level deadlines, set earlier than university-level deadlines to allow the LAS Research Committee to adjudicate applications. No application will be considered after the college deadline.*

Criteria for Approval of Faculty Requests for Assistants:

The URAP is understood as a learning opportunity made available to faculty members with well-designed research projects. Thus, the LAS Research Committee is first concerned with the representation of the faculty member's project and second with a clear explanation of the *substantive* role of the selected student applicant. In addition, the committee has been asked by Academic Affairs, which funds the URAP, to consider the equitable distribution of available assistantships, and give special consideration to first-time faculty applications and applications by untenured faculty members.

Application:

A faculty member and a pre-selected student will apply together. However, there may be cases in which a faculty member desires a specific skill set that is likely to be found in another unit of the university. In such cases the faculty member may contact the department for student recommendations, and then interview and subsequently apply with the selected student. In all cases, the process assumes that the faculty applicant has given the student a written representation of both the project and the expectations for student engagement, and that the student has had an opportunity to raise questions before agreeing to participate.

Enabling the largest number of faculty to have some level of assistance is a primary goal of the program. A faculty member may therefore apply for a given Undergraduate Research Assistant for 1, 2, or 3 quarters with one application, but may not receive support for each quarter requested. If a multi-quarter request is limited, the applicants may choose which proposed quarter to take the support. A faculty member may only apply for one assistant per quarter, but there is no limit to the number of consecutive quarters in which a faculty member may be awarded an assistant through the URAP.

Application Guidelines

Although the application asks for a relatively brief project description, available space should be used well. It is recommended that both faculty and student applicants develop their narrative portions of the application in advance and paste them into the application. In applying the evaluation criteria described below, the College Research Committee is primarily concerned with the quality and viability of the research project, and the value (to both student and faculty member) of the student's work.

Evaluation Criteria

Faculty

- Is the project description clear and coherent, avoiding unexplained references and disciplinary nomenclature that may limit understanding by non-experts?
- Does the project description provide a clear description of the research/scholarly or creative activity, to include its purpose, methodology, estimated schedule or timeline to completion, and its anticipated final form (e.g. article manuscript, etc.)?
- Does the project description make clear the expected skills, abilities, and/or technical proficiencies needed by the student who will support the work?
- Is the project description clear in explaining a rationale for choosing a particular student assistant?
- Are the anticipated responsibilities of the student assistant clear and appropriate? Is there a detailed and feasible explanation of the timeline under which the student will be working during the grant period?
- Does the project description make clear what the student will gain (subject-area knowledge, skill-set, etc.) from participating in the project?

Student

Is it evident from the student section of the application that the student applicant

- can describe the project in their own words, based upon prior discussion of intentions and outcomes with the faculty member?
- understands expectations for their own role in the project by description of the skills or technical facility they will provide?
- Has clear expectations for their own learning during execution of the project?

Evaluation of the Student Role:

Each quarter, as a condition of the grant, the faculty member must evaluate the performance and progress made by the student through work on the project. The student must evaluate the experience as a learning process. This is especially important in evaluating repeat applications for assistants by faculty members. Failure to submit evaluation forms will render recipients ineligible for future LAS grants.