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**Eagle Scholars Program for Undergraduate Research (Eagle SPUR)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

*What is the purpose of the program?*

The program is intended to provide funding support for independent research, scholarly, and creative activity conducted by an undergraduate student in collaboration with a faculty mentor. It is expected that students will devote at least 150 hours of work to the project during the semester in which funding is received.

*What students are eligible to apply?*

All full-time undergraduate students currently enrolled at the university with good standing may apply (part-time students will be considered under special circumstances); this includes those who are members of the Honors College or McNair Scholars Program. They must have completed appropriate CITI training as well as any necessary IRB or IACUC approval in order to receive funding.

*Can Eagle SPUR grants be used for research projects that are part of classroom requirements, such as in capstone courses?*

No, they are to be used exclusively for independent research and creative projects conducted with a faculty member. Students may receive academic credit for the work, but usually this would be accomplished through a directed study course (e.g., XXX492).

*When must the project be carried out?*

Again, it is expected that the work associated with the project will average 10 hours per week for a total of 150 hours. Usually these hours will be expended over the course of a semester, but on occasion, a different schedule is involved. If so, a rationale for the proposed schedule must be provided along with a clear presentation as to how the hours will be accomplished, especially in conjunction with other academic commitments.

*Can be projects done as part of Study Abroad programs?*

Yes, if the work is to be done while abroad. However, it is not permitted for students to participate in a semester long program with work on the project primarily taking place before leaving and after returning to campus.

*How many times may a student apply?*

Students may submit only one proposal during each semester’s call for proposals. Students may receive up to two Eagle SPUR grants while at USM, but they cannot be for the same project. The second grant, however, can be for a new aspect of the previous research, but how this is achieved must be outlined in the proposal.

*Can a team of students apply for a single research or creative project?*

Yes, but only one funding award will be made to the group. The application materials also must include a clear delineation of each student’s responsibilities in carrying out the project.

*Who may serve as mentors?*

All tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the university who are affiliates with the DCUR are eligible, and do not have to be from the applicant’s major department. A faculty member may serve as a mentor for more than one student project at a time. Instructors and visiting faculty may serve as mentors as long as a tenure-track faculty member is also formally associated with the project. Adjunct faculty and graduate students are not eligible.

*How does a faculty member become a DCUR affiliate?*

There is a link to an on-line application at the DCUR website: <http://www.usm.edu/research/cur>. There prospective affiliates will be asked to provide a brief description of their research agenda as well as a head shot photograph. If you have any questions concerning the process, please contact Jo Ann Johnson (601-266-5997).

*How does a student apply?*

The link with the full proposal application is available for download at the DCUR website:

<http://www.usm.edu/research/cur>. The proposal is limited to approximately 1350 words, and a set of guidelines about what is to be included in each section is available at the website as well. Specific requirements concerning length of text and font style must be followed. The proposal should be written for a general educated audience.

The completed proposal should be emailed to [cur@usm.edu](mailto:cur@usm.edu). Proposals must be received by 5 pm on the deadline posted for that round of competition; late proposals will not be accepted.

If there are any questions or issues, please contact DCUR at [cur@usm.edu](mailto:cur@usm.edu) for assistance.

Mentors must also submit a statement of support concerning the project. The form may also be found on the DCUR website. The mentor form should also be emailed to DCUR at [cur@usm.edu](mailto:cur@usm.edu).

*How will award winners be determined?*

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of three DCUR Faculty Affiliates, two of whom are generally familiar with research from the appropriate discipline and one who is not. A copy of the rubric to be used is available on the DCUR website. Final decisions concerning funding will be made by a quorum of the Eagle SPUR Proposal Review Committee. Notifications of decisions will be made by December 10 in the fall semester and April 30 in the spring semester.

*What may be included in the budget?*

Budgets may total up to $1000. All proposed expenditures must comply with USM policies and procedures as well as state law and should be fully explained in the budget justification of the proposal. Acceptable expenses include but are not limited to purchase of supplies, equipment, publications, and software; and photocopying.

It is expected that applicants will have investigated the potential for sharing equipment/computer software/books commonly available on campus; otherwise, justification for their inclusion in the budget must be provided.

Other sources of support for the project, including funding from the Honors College, McNair Scholars Program, or the mentor, must be described in the proposal.

*Can travel be a part of the budget?*

Travel to research sites for data collection is also supported as is travel to conferences to present the research that is being conducted during the semester in which the grant is being received. Applicants need to include the Travel Expenditures Estimation Form with their application. However, travel to conferences to present research, is *not* supported; students should apply to the Eagle Wings Program for funding for this purpose.

*Can a stipend be part of the budget?*

A stipend for the student is an eligible expense, although students should check with Financial Aid as to whether it will affect their financial aid package. Justification for the stipend, such as it allowing for a reduced number of hours worked at a job, must be given.

*How will awarded funds be disbursed?*

All funds allotted to an individual proposal will be placed in a development (DE) account of the faculty mentor at the beginning of the semester for which the funds are being awarded. The mentor will assume responsibility for overseeing spending of the funds. Travel expenses will generally be made as reimbursements, although advances are possible if requirements are met. Stipends will be made as a one-time payment at the end of the semester during which the research is being conducted.

Funds will not be disbursed until the student has completed CITI training and received any necessary IRB/IACUC Approval.

Any funds that are not used must be returned to the Drapeau Center for Undergraduate Research.

*What sort of reports must be filed with the DCUR?*

All Eagle Scholars are required to submit at the end of the semester during which the research was conducted a two-page report describing the results of the project funded by the grant as well as a summary of how monies were spent. Scholars are also required to present their findings at the next University of Southern Mississippi Undergraduate Research Symposium held after completion of the proposed project; if they believe they cannot do so, a request to be relieved of this requirement must be submitted and approved by the DCUR Steering Committee by the March 15 following completion of the proposed project. Eagle Scholars are also encouraged to consider additional venues, such as *The Catalyst* or a regional conference, and then notify DCUR when this occurs. Copies of the two-page report and the final product will be posted on Aquila.

*What other requirements are expected of Eagle Scholars?*

Eagle Scholars are also required to enroll in UNV392 during the semester in which the project takes place. The course will be of hybrid format with four in-person meetings and several on-line presentations with associated discussion boards. UNV392 carries zero credit hours and is tuition free.

*What if I still have other questions concerning Eagle SPUR?*

Please contact Marie Danforth ([m.danforth@usm.edu](mailto:m.danforth@usm.edu); 601.266.5629) or Jo Ann Johnson ([joann.johnson@usm.edu](mailto:joann.johnson@usm.edu); 601.266.5997).