Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research

Handbook

Northern Illinois University
Welcome!

Dear Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research Applicant,

We want to take this opportunity to introduce you to the Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research (USOAR) program. The fact that you have shown an interest in engaged learning distinguishes you as a student who is willing to go beyond the basic requirements of your degree program and begin an exciting process of inquiry and discovery. This is a rare opportunity that is provided only to those students who actively seek it out and who have already proven that they are dedicated students with a good academic record. In large measure you will get out of this experience what you are willing to devote to it in terms of your own effort and dedication.

Please use this handbook as a guide to all of your USOAR inquiries. If you find that you still have questions or concerns about the program after reading the handbook, feel free to reach out to a member of the USOAR Team.

USOAR Team Contact Information

Office of Student Engagement & Experiential Learning
Northern Illinois University
Altgeld Hall 100
815-753-8154
ugresearch@niu.edu
go.niu.edu/USOAR
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General Information

Program Description

USOAR is an effort by the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL) to provide funding for student-initiated research and artistry projects. Students must have a faculty sponsor willing to assist them with their project as necessary.

Projects Covered

Requests can be made for reimbursement of student expenses associated with research or artistry projects. This includes the cost of equipment and supplies as well as travel and conference fees.

Note: All requests for funding support shall include a clearly stated goal for the project, objectives that reflect the desired experiential learning outcomes and anticipated expenses.

USOAR Eligibility

Students requesting funding should be in good academic standing and must be a full time student (i.e. enrolled in at least 12 credit hours or more). All applications must be submitted in proposal format, available at: http://www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/undergraduate-research/usoar/apply.shtml

Application Process

All applicants are required to submit the following when applying for USOAR:

- USOAR Proposal Cover Sheet (Typed)
- Proposal with all sections included (Typed)
- Unofficial Transcript
- Scholar/Mentor Contract
- Letter of recommendation from faculty supervisor

These materials should be submitted to ugresearch@niu.edu by the application deadline for the semester. Information on the proposal and cover sheet can be found at http://www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/undergraduate-research/usoar/apply.shtml

Award Restrictions

Funding is available as reimbursement to students for project related expenses. Expense awards will range up to $2500. Eligible expenses include (but are not limited to):

- Materials and supplies specific to the project
- Direct project expenses (e.g. copying, mailing surveys, etc.)
- Travel expenses, domestic or abroad

A student may receive support for more than one project, as long as a student does not receive more than $2500 per year in expense support. For these purposes, an academic year will be considered to be Fall-Spring-Summer.
Study Abroad
Undergraduate USOAR recipients who are awarded funding for a study abroad experience must participate in a pre-departure orientation or meeting with the Study Abroad Office in order to receive their award. In the orientation or meeting, students will learn about safety, insurance, health records, and more when traveling abroad. Once the USOAR team receives confirmation of completion of pre-departure orientation or meeting from the staff in the Study Abroad Office, funds will be dispersed to the recipient. The USOAR Team recommends that study abroad recipients attend the pre-departure orientation or schedule a meeting as soon as he or she receives notification of the award to ensure that there is no delay in disbursement of funds. For more information on pre-departure orientation dates or to schedule a meeting with a Study Abroad Staff member, email niuabroad@niu.edu or call 815-753-0700.

Expectations and Responsibilities

Student Expectations
1. All participants must attend the USOAR Orientation in order to participate in the program. If you are unable to attend, please contact ugresearch@niu.edu to make other arrangements.
2. Complete letter of agreement. Turn in an electronic copy to ugresearch@niu.edu or a hard copy to Altgeld 100. Uphold the agreement with the Faculty Sponsor throughout the duration of the project.
3. Students taking part in the USOAR program are required to turn in a final narrative and expense report (with original receipts) and complete the online program evaluation at the completion of their project. Final report guidelines are listed below. A link for the program evaluation will be sent out to award recipients near the end of the program.
4. Students receiving USOAR funds are required to submit their final report through NIU’s institutional repository, Huskie Commons. More information on how to submit through the Commons will be mailed to recipients along with the final report and evaluation.
5. Finally, students funded through USOAR program are strongly encouraged to present at the annual Undergraduate Research & Artistry Day or Community Engagement Showcase that is held in April, or as a part of OSEEL’s Engagement Colloquia series.

Please note, failure to complete any one of these expectations could result in repayment penalties or decreased consideration for funding in the future.

Conducting Research and Service Learning
Participating in faculty-mentored research or service learning is a privilege. Respect the work and time your mentor is putting in by doing the same, and always behave in a professional manner. Your mentors are relying on you to be curious and independent. Ask the OSEEL staff for guidance if you are feeling lost, we are here to help!

Any student representing Northern Illinois University while participating in the USOAR program is expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects upon themselves and the University positively. All students are governed by the University Student Code of Conduct. Any violation of the Code of Conduct may result in appropriate disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, loss of privileges to participate in undergraduate research programs through OSEEL and/or restitution of funds.
**Email Communication**

Email is the main form of communication used by the USOAR team so it is important that all recipients check their email on a regular basis. Emails can be sent to ugresearch@niu.edu.

**Plagiarism**

As a student at NIU, USOAR award winners are members of an academic community that strives for academic honesty, integrity, and originality. All USOAR applicants are advised that presenting another’s work as your own, even if by accident, is a serious violation of university policy and the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct identifies the following as acts of academic dishonesty: “The term ‘plagiarism’ includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials” (p. 17). Suspected cases of plagiarism will be investigated and dealt with by the Program Director and the Office of Community Standards & Student Conduct.

**USOAR Program Evaluation**

At completion of your project, you will receive a link via email to complete an online evaluation of the USOAR program. Your evaluation of the USOAR program will be kept confidential. Please keep in mind that we may want to quote excerpts from your final report to share with others and to publicize the USOAR program. If you prefer that your name not be used, please indicate this on the evaluation.

**Funding Procedures**

**Budgets**

All applicants are asked to submit an itemized budget when completing the USOAR application. It is important that applicants are as specific as possible when submitting their budget, including the following information:

- Description of item (including the cost and quantity)
- Justification of why the item is essential for the project’s success
- Distinguish if the purchase will be made by the student or the Department
  - **Items purchased by the student directly**- examples include: travel, hotel, poster printing, registration for a conference, training cost, food, program cost for study abroad, etc.
  - **Items purchased by the department**- these will require NIU property tag with a few exceptions. Examples include: group travel, software, hardware, other equipment, books, lab safety gear, and data storage.

The USOAR review committee will then choose items essential to the proposed project that are included in the application and provide reimbursement for the selected items to the appropriate purchaser. Approved items will be included in the USOAR recipients’ award letter. Only approved items are allowed to be purchased using USOAR funding. USOAR recipients are given an opportunity to revise their budget after they receive their award letter indicating the final approved amount of funding for the project. Revisions are due to OSEEL staff by the time of the USOAR Orientation.
**Expense Report**

An expense report will be due at the completion of the project (explained below). Please keep in mind that following documents will be required to submit along with the expense report:

*Travel* – proof of purchase, original invoice or e-ticket must be attached. All travel receipts must correspond to original proposal.

*Conferences* – confirmation email from the conference or exhibition site must be included indicating student participation.

*Equipment* – only expenses for NIU goods and services indicated in the expense report would be allocated to department or faculty mentor. All other approved expenses will need to be purchased by the student.

*Supplies* – all original receipts must be turned in with the expense report at the completion of the project and must reflect your original proposal. **Unapproved purchases and items without a proper receipt will be charged to the students Bursar account.**

**Processing Funds**

Funds are disbursed as an Academic Award through the Financial Aid Office. Students who are signed up for Direct Deposit through the Bursars office will receive their award through the bank account that is on file with the Bursar’s Office. Students who do not have direct deposit setup, will receive funds in the form of a check that will be sent to the permanent address that is on file with the Financial Aid Office. Visit [http://go.niu.edu/DirectDeposit](http://go.niu.edu/DirectDeposit) for more information and to sign up for Direct Deposit. Information on the disbursement date is given during the USOAR orientation.

*Note: If a student has Direct Deposit as an NIU Student Employee, they will still need to sign up for direct deposit through Financial Aid. The two processes are separate. If you are unsure what bank account you have on file, contact the Bursar’s: Student Accounts department.*

**Final Report Submission**

Submission of a final report is a condition of the USOAR program. A final report will only be considered complete once the following items have been received by the USOAR team:

- **Cover Sheet**: Final reports will not be accepted without a cover sheet (Appendix A) signed by both the student and faculty supervisor.

- **Narrative report** (limit 5 pages) that should include the following sections
  - A summary of your project and the results/outcomes
  - A discussion of how effectively you accomplished your original objectives
  - A reflection of the impact that the USOAR program had on your academic experience

Final reports should be written using **12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 1” margins, left justified**. You should write your summary with a general audience in mind (i.e. faculty, students, and staff who may not be familiar with your particular field). If more than one student participated in this project, each student must fill out a separate cover sheet and narrative report.
You are welcome to include other materials in addition to your report (i.e. pictures, a published paper or final report written in conjunction with your faculty supervisor), but these should not take the place of your summary. If you have chemical or mathematical symbols you should submit jpegs of the figures that contain these elements.

The report must be signed by both the student and the faculty supervisor. If a student fails to submit a final report, he/she will be charged the full amount of the award and will be ineligible to apply for a future programs administered by OSEEL. Submission of the final report can be sent to ugresearch@niu.edu in PDF form or a hard copy can be submitted to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning in Altgeld 100.

Please use the guidelines below for final report formatting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cover Page</strong></td>
<td>▪ All final reports must be accompanied by the USOAR cover page.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ You and your faculty supervisor must sign the cover page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ If more than one student participated in this project, each student must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fill out a separate cover sheet (Note: The faculty supervisor only needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to sign one cover page).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Reports without a cover page will not be accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>▪ The main body of the proposal should be no more than 5 pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Margins</strong></td>
<td>▪ Margins should be 1”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Font type and size</strong></td>
<td>The type font and size for the proposal is Times New Roman, 12 pt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spacing</strong></td>
<td>▪ The proposal should be double-spaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justification</strong></td>
<td>▪ All items should be left justified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature</strong></td>
<td>▪ Literature citations within the text should be properly cited in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parentheses.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Please use an acceptable citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago Style, etc).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Budget Format</strong></td>
<td>▪ Students must provide a brief justification for the proposed expenses in</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the budget.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Students must also provide a line-by-line budget in a table. You may</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>create a budget in an excel worksheet and copy and paste it into your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proposal.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Budgets written only in narrative form will not be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>File format</strong></td>
<td>▪ Your document should be formatted as a Microsoft word document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ If you have chemical or mathematical symbols you should submit jpegs of</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>the figures that contain these elements.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Office of Research Compliance

IRB
The Internal Review Board (IRB) ensures that all research done through NIU follows specific guidelines and does not endanger any of the participants. NIU holds its researchers to extremely high standards so that the integrity and safety of NIU is not jeopardized by any research. Depending on the research you are conducting, you will need to undergo either the IRB process regarding Biosafety, IACUC, or Human Subjects. A brief description of each is provided below, and more detailed information can be found on the NIU website through the Office of Research Compliance. Determine if you need to fill out any of these forms before you start your research because the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning will not release your funds until you have IRB approval. For more information, visit the website (http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/).

Biosafety
If you are participating in research involving recombinant DNA, and/or pathogenic substances, you will have to go through the Biosafety review process. For more information, visit the website (http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/biosafety/index.shtml).

IACUC
IACUC focuses on NIU’s want to ensure the safety of any live, vertebrate animals used in university research. If any of your research involves animals, you will have to submit the IACUC form to prove that the animals are not put in any unnecessary harm. For more information, visit the website (http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/animal_research/index.shtml).

Human Subjects
Any research involving human participants needs to be approved via the IRB process. Even if you are conducting surveys, getting the approval will probably be necessary. For more information, visit the website (http://www.orc.niu.edu/orc/human_research/index.shtml).

Presenting Research

Acknowledging USOAR
Any student representing the USOAR program while presenting at a conference is expected to acknowledge the USOAR program on their poster or in their conference presentation. All students receiving funding from USOAR are encouraged to present at URAD, CES, or a colloquia series put on by the Office of Student Engagement & Experiential Learning.

Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day and Community Engagement Showcase (URAD/ CES)
Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day (URAD) is an annual showcase and celebration of the outstanding research and artistry projects that undergraduate students have participated in throughout the academic year. The Community Engagement Showcase (CES) is held in conjunction with URAD and showcases outstanding community-based engagement initiatives.
Project Production

Putting together a presentation takes a lot of time and energy, so we encourage both students and faculty mentors to start the process early. OSEEL staff will provide workshops on presentation options during the spring semester, which are also available online through the URAD website (go.niu.edu/URAD). You have the option to present your work in a poster, exhibit and digital media display or 15-minute table talk. Each project is judged twice, and awards are given to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place projects in two categories: Arts, Education, Health, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AEHHSS) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). In addition, a People’s Choice Award is given out based on audience votes.

Printing

All posters can be printed through Creative Services or your specific department, free of cost. Please keep in mind that the Creative Services team is always very busy around the time of Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day, so finish your poster as early as possible to ensure it is printed on time. It is also important that your poster is error-free when you send it to them, so have multiple people, including the OSEEL staff, your faculty mentor, and your peer mentor proofread it. USOAR participants are not expected to present at Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day (URAD); however, it is highly recommended. URAD is held in the Holmes Student Center, Duke Ellington Ballroom in April.

Many of the departments have their own printing services as well. They are often not as busy and have more time to sit down with you and go through your poster if you seem to be encountering problems. Do not rely entirely on this however, and give them plenty of time and notice ahead of time.

Additional Information

Engage PLUS

Engage PLUS is an optional process that allows students an opportunity to request consideration for academic transcript notation for co-curricular engaged learning activities. Students are required to submit a request for pre-approval of identified activities and, upon completion of the activity, students are required to submit a full-petition for transcript notation consideration of activities based on six categories: Artistry, Career Related Work Experiences, Experiential Learning, Leadership, Service-Learning, and Undergraduate Research.

Programs such as USOAR may be eligible for Engage PLUS notation. Students can learn more about how to apply by visiting http://niu.edu/plus.
**Huskie Commons**

Huskie Commons is Northern Illinois University's institutional repository. Institutional repositories collect, preserve, and disseminate the intellectual output of a university in digital form via the web. At present, Huskie Commons includes an assortment of materials from scholars within the Northern Illinois University Community. More information on Huskie Commons can be found online at [http://commons.lib.niu.edu/](http://commons.lib.niu.edu/).

**Library Resources**

In order to write your research proposal, you will need to find published research articles that provide background on your topic. The Founders Memorial Library offers a variety of research resources. Some of these resources include: the NIU online catalog, interlibrary loan, requesting services (NIUILLIiad), scholarly article databases, and subject specialists.

- The NIU online catalog is used to quickly find appropriate books, magazines, articles, etc on the inputted information. For example, if your research topic is on groundwater contamination caused by agricultural pollution, you could go to the library catalog ([http://vufind.carli.illinois.edu/vf-niu/](http://vufind.carli.illinois.edu/vf-niu/)) and type in “groundwater contamination” into the search field. The online catalog then searches for relevant materials based on the search parameters.

- Interlibrary loan is used when you would like to check out a book, magazine, or other source, but is not found at the NIU library. You must then file an NIU ILLIad request ([https://niu.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/JNA/logon.html](https://niu.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/JNA/logon.html)). Make sure to have all pertinent information about the source that you are requesting. Once your request has been processed, the library staff will email you when your request has been filled.

- The library also has article databases that contain articles that have been published in various scholarly journals and other sources. Log onto [http://libguides.niu.edu/find](http://libguides.niu.edu/find) to search for articles by subject. Then search for your specific topic through the search field.

- Subject specialists are extremely important because they understand the fundamentals for their given subject and are able to assist you in finding appropriate research material for your proposal.

If you have any questions, there is help online through the “Ask-A-Librarian” chat window or contact your subject specialist.
Appendix A

Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research (USOAR)
FINAL REPORT COVER SHEET

*Please Note:* If more than one individual worked on this project, **each USOAR student will need to submit a separate cover sheet.**

**Student Information:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Student:</td>
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<td>Major:</td>
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<td>Minor:</td>
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<td>Z-ID:</td>
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<td>Current Address:</td>
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<td>Preferred Phone #:</td>
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<td>Preferred Email Address:</td>
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</table>

**Faculty Supervisor Information:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Faculty Supervisor:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Department:</td>
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<td>Faculty Phone:</td>
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<td>Faculty Email:</td>
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</table>

Student Signature: ________________________ Date: __________

Mentor Signature: ________________________ Date: __________
Appendix B

Photo Release Form

I, ________________________________ (your first & last name) hereby give full permission to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning and Northern Illinois University to use photographs and videos taken of me in the course of participating in program-related activities and events. I understand that I will not be compensated for use of these photographs and videos and that there may be promotional products developed. I also understand that these pictures may be displayed on the website.

______________________________
Student Name:

______________________________
Student Signature:

______________________________
Date: