Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry & Research (USOAR): Program Information

Northern Illinois University

Contact: ugresearch@niu.edu
Welcome!

Dear USOAR Scholars,

We want to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research (USOAR) program. You will be considered for the 2016 USOAR cohort. The fact that you have shown an interest in research and have been admitted to the USOAR program 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. You are being given 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.

We hope that you will make good use of this opportunity. Your mentors are dedicated faculty who are willing to take time to help you learn about their discipline, research skills, and the specific project on which you will work. Your mentors can be wonderful resources for you as you continue your college career and beyond. I hope that you enjoy your USOAR experience!

OSEEL Staff Information

Renique Kersh, Ph.D., Director
rkersh@niu.edu; 815-753-8152

All OSEEL staff can be reached at the following address:

OSEEL Office (www.oseel.niu.edu)
Altgeld Hall, Room 100
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115
815-753-8154
ugresearch@niu.edu
General Information

**Program Description**

USOAR is a program that funds student-generated research projects, whether the study is conducted on campus, somewhere else in the United States or overseas. USOAR seeks proposals from undergraduate students for projects which will involve them in independent artistry or research, under the supervision of members of the faculty and staff at NIU.

Students may request up to $2,500 to conduct independent research and/or artistry projects. Funds may be requested to support independent artistry and research carried out during part or all of the period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016.

To apply for a USOAR grant, students need to share their idea for a research or artistry project with a faculty member. Once the faculty member has approved the idea, students must complete a proposal and submit it to ugresearch@niu.edu. Please be sure to include all of the necessary forms and documentation.

**Summary of Program Requirements**

USOAR Scholars must complete the following during the course of their research experience:

- USOAR contract signed by student and faculty supervisor
- All required forms
- A final narrative report and final expense report
- Participation in the 2016 or 2017 (depending on project timeline) Undergraduate Research & Artistry Day
- Completion of USOAR End-of-Program Survey

Failure to complete the requirements listed above may result in a portion of the scholar’s stipend being retracted.

**Program Objectives**

The goals of USOAR program are to:

- Engage undergraduate students in faculty-mentored research
- Provide a positive learning environment through hands-on experience
- Help students pursue their goals and future fields of study
- Promote visibility of NIU undergraduate research and artistry activity
- Give students the opportunity to meet other driven and determined young people
- Give students the opportunity to present at Undergraduate Research Day, so that the students gain experience putting information together in the correct scientific format and presenting their research
Program Policies and Procedures

USOAR Eligibility
All USOAR students must:

- Be currently enrolled at NIU working on their first undergraduate degree
- Be in good academic standing with the University (in order to be competitive, it is recommended that students maintain a 3.0 GPA)
- Have completed a USOAR proposal that includes finished research proposal, budget and timeline.
- Have identified faculty mentor/supervisor willing to provide guidance to student project
- NOT be on academic probation
- NOT be graduating in May unless they are returning to NIU for graduate school in the fall semester

USOAR Proposals
USOAR applications are accepted in October and February. USOAR proposals can be found by visiting www.niu.edu/usoar.

USOAR Proposal Review Process
Each of the six undergraduate degree-granting colleges have established a process, coordinated by the Dean’s office, for reviewing proposals from students according to the USOAR guidelines. Each college has developed a process for a faculty group to rank the submitted proposals. After ranking proposals in their college, the college committees will forward all eligible proposals to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning.

Proposals will then be reviewed by a special, university-wide committee appointed for this purpose by the CUAE. This committee will then make final decisions on funding for all eligible USOAR proposals.

Priority will be given to proposals which:

- Have a clearly designed plan for addressing the problem, question, or issue which motivated the proposal;
- Include a thorough outline of budget for independent artistry or research;
- Include a timeline for carrying out the artistry or research involved; and
- Give evidence that participation in the project will provide a substantial benefit to the student’s undergraduate academic experience.

See Appendix E for a copy of the score sheet used by the USOAR Selection Committee.

Orientation
All students who receive funding for their USOAR projects are required to attend a mandatory orientation session. The dates for orientation will be emailed to students with their acceptance letters. At orientation, students can expect to fill out the following forms:

- OSEEL Agreement and Release Form (see Appendix A)
- Photo Release Form (see Appendix B)
- Code of Conduct Agreement (see Appendix C)
At orientation, pictures of USOAR award winners will be taken in preparation for the website. Please dress accordingly.

**Note:** Admission to the USOAR program is not complete until all forms are completely filled out, signed, and turned in to the Office of Student Engagement & Experiential Learning. We may refuse to award your full stipend if we do not have the required forms.

**Scholar/Mentor Contracts**
Scholars and mentors are asked to discuss and sign a USOAR Program Contractual Agreement Form. This form must be submitted to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning before the proposal deadline. This form can be found in Appendix D.

**Grant Disbursements and Restrictions**
Currently USOAR grants are awarded in amounts up to $2,500. Grants can be used for travel (airfare, cabs, buses, etc.), conference registration, supplies, or equipment.

Students may **not** use funds to pay survey participants or research assistants. In addition, funds may **not** be used as a stipend to pay the student or any other person that may assist with the USOAR project.

If a student has direct deposit set up through NIU, the USOAR grant will be directly deposited into their account. In the event that direct deposit has not been set up, USOAR grants are posted to the award winners’ bursar accounts.

**Progress Report**
Students who receive a USOAR award will be required to complete a progress report at the mid-point of their projects.

If the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning determines that sufficient progress has not been made to complete the research/artistry project, a face-to-face meeting will be scheduled with OSEEL staff. If a student fails to complete a progress report, a face-to-face meeting will be scheduled.

**Reapplying for USOAR**
Students can apply for up to two (2) USOAR awards. Students will not receive funding for a USOAR proposal if they have received two (2) USOAR awards prior.

**Expectations and Responsibilities**

**Time Commitment**
Students who receive USOAR grants are responsible for constructing a schedule in collaboration with their mentor that will allow them to complete their project in a timely manner. Schedules will vary according to the work that needs to be completed. You may have more work during some weeks than other in order to complete required tasks.

**Conducting Research**
Participating in faculty-mentored research 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 Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research (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 OSEEL (Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning), which heads the USOAR Program. Proper email etiquette MUST be followed. 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 Proposal Guidelines

USOAR Proposal
The research proposal focuses you and your work before getting started. It shows the USOAR Selection Committee that you are knowledgeable about your proposed project, what it will entail, its purpose, what you will be doing, etc. It also provides a good base for the information you will later have to put on your poster for Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day.

Deadlines
Students should submit all materials for USOAR to ugresearch@niu.edu. Fall submissions will be accepted until 11:59pm CST on Friday, October 2, 2015, and spring submissions will be accepted until 11:59pm CST on Friday, February 12, 2016. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is completed by this deadline. Paper applications and applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

Proposal Guidelines
Talk to your faculty sponsor before you prepare your application. Be sure to follow the guidelines below; failure to follow them will disqualify your application. Documents should be saved and emailed to ugresearch@niu.edu using standard file types, such as .doc, .docx and .pdf. A complete application consists of the following. See the following pages for detailed instructions:

- Cover sheet
- Abstract
- Project description (limit 3 pages)
- Impact on academic experience
- Timeline of activities
- Itemized budget and budget justification (1 page)
- Literature cited
- Unofficial Transcript
- Scholar/Mentor Contract
- Letter of recommendation from faculty supervisor

Research Proposal Formatting
The research proposal focuses you and your work before getting started. It shows the USOAR Selection Committee that you are knowledgeable about your proposed project, what it will entail, its purpose, what you will be doing, etc. It also provides a good base for the information you will later have to put on your poster for Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day.

The USOAR Selection Committee consists of individuals from a variety of academic disciplines, and not necessarily in your field of study, so avoid buzz words, identify acronyms, and write your project description to an education but not necessarily expert audience.

Please use this list to check proposals for formatting. Only complete, correctly-formatted proposals will be considered.
All proposals must be accompanied by the USOAR proposal cover page. If more than one student is participating in a USOAR project, each student must fill out a separate cover sheet. Proposals without a cover page will not be considered for funding.

The main body of the proposal should be no more than 3 pages.

Margins should be 1”

The type font and size for the proposal is Times New Roman, 12 pt.

The proposal should be single-spaced

All items should be left justified

Literature citations within the text should be properly cited in parentheses. Please use an acceptable citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago Style, etc).

Students must provide a brief justification for the proposed expenses in the budget.

Students must also provide a line-by-line budget in a table. You may create a budget in an excel worksheet and copy and paste it into your proposal. Budgets written only in narrative form will not be accepted.

Your document should be formatted as a Microsoft word document. If you have chemical or mathematical symbols you should submit jpegs of the figures that contain these elements.

Research Proposal Outline

Abstract

The abstract should be a brief description of your project objectives and expected results. The abstract should be written for an educated but not expert audience. Use of technical language or discipline-specific jargon is strictly prohibited. Failure to heed this requirement will be detrimental to your evaluation scores.

Project Description (Limit 3 pages)

The project description should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken, using the five headings (A-E) below. It should be no more than 3 single-spaced pages long, no smaller than 10-point type, with 1-inch margins.

Please note: While you should consult your faculty sponsor in writing your project description, it should be written by you, in your own words, and not copied from a website, article or other work. Plagiarism is cause for immediate disqualification.

Background and Context: Explain the present state of knowledge, understanding or creative experimentation in the field, with proper citations of pertinent literature where appropriate. (See Literature Cited, section III). Make it clear why you want to do this project, and why it needs to be undertaken to fill a gap in knowledge.
Statement of Significance and Impact: Explain the significance of your project as it contributes to the advancement of learning in your field (i.e. the big picture), to the enrichment of our cultural and aesthetic heritage, to the public welfare (i.e. the greater good) and/or to other research in your lab.

Statement of Project Objectives: Clearly and concisely state the research problem/question or creative concept that will be addressed during the period of the proposed project. Remember: This award is for you to carry out a specific, well-designed, original research, scholarly, or creative project.

Methods: Describe in clear and understandable terms your general plan of work in order to fulfill your stated goal.

Outcomes: What are your expected results or the expected range of results? What happens if your data does not yield the results you expected? How will you interpret “other” results? For creative projects, what will be the final “product” of the proposed project? Possible “products” are a report, a publishable article or chapter, a performance, a policy recommendation, a painting, etc. Be specific. An outcome of your USOAR project should be a poster/display at Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day in April.

Literature Cited (This is not included in your 3 page limit):

Include a list of references that are cited in your proposal, especially in section A. Use standard professional format such APA style for your literature citation.

Impact on Academic Experience

Indicate how the proposed independent artistry or research is expected to enhance our academic experience.

Timelines of Project Activities (This is not included in your 3 page limit):

Provide a timeline of research activities throughout the spring session. Include specific benchmarks to achieve throughout the semester to indicate that you are on task. This timeline should be on a weekly or bi-weekly. Timelines written in narrative form will not be accepted.

Itemized Budget and Justification:

How will the USOAR award money be used for your project? On this page, list your budget items, which may total no more than $2,500. If the budget exceeds $2,500, indicate on the application form if you will be able to obtain the additional support which is needed to complete the project. The budget justification section should include an explanation and justification of each item in your budget. The award may be used to purchase supplies, pay for travel expenses, or cover other costs associated with conducting the proposed project.

The USOAR award is to be used for the original project that is submitted and approved. You are required to keep original invoices and an expense report. Funds remaining at the completion of the project will be returned to the university either by charging the Bursars account back or by personal check.
The budget may NOT include any salary or wages for the student researcher, faculty sponsor, survey participants, or other personnel. All commodities and equipment will remain at NIU when the project is completed.

Please list all items that will be included in your budget including:

**Travel:** Include a reasonable estimate for plane fares, food, lodging, registration fees, etc.

**Equipment:** Please note that any equipment not consumed in the project, such as laptops or digital cameras, is university property, and must be returned to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning when the project is completed.

**Consumable materials:** This may include cost of printing, postage and office supplies

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### Sample Budgets:

**Unacceptable:** Part of the money will be used for books, and the rest will be used for lab supplies.

**Good:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel to and from Boston</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two nights at hotel in Boston</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying and printing surveys</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals while in Boston</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals for lab experiment</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** $2,500

**Budget Justification:** The majority of the funds, $800, will be used to purchase chemicals for the lab experiment I will be conducting. $100 will cover the cost of survey preparation (xeroxing, color pictures, etc.). $500 is needed for transportation to and from Boston, where I will be conducting my lab experiment. $500 is needed to cover the cost of the hotel stay while I am in Boston and another $300 will be used to cover the cost of my meals. Computer analysis of data and final report production requires the purchase of Metaverse 4.0, at $300.

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**Copy of Unofficial Transcript:**

You can download your unofficial transcript from MyNIU.
Scholar/Mentor Contract (Signed by both parties):

We will accept an unsigned electronic copy of this form only if it is sent from the faculty mentor’s NIU email address. If we receive this contract from any other email address, we will be unable to accept it.

Letter of Recommendation from Faculty Supervisor

Faculty supervisors’ letters of recommendation must include the following:

- A description of how you know the student (how long and in what context)
- A candid and confidential assessment of the student’s ability to successfully complete the proposed research
- A discussion of your specific contributions to the project and your mentoring strategy
- A statement of commitment of your time and appropriate resources to the proposed project

The completed form should be sent from the faculty supervisor’s NIU email address to ugresearch@niu.edu by the proposal deadline.

Please note: Receipts for travel expenses should be included with the final report. Each grant recipient will be expected to file a final report describing the creation and results of the project within six weeks of the completion of the project or the end of the funding period. 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 billed for any award monies received, and will be ineligible to apply for a future grant.

Additional Proposal Information

Submitting a USOAR Proposal

Each proposal should be submitted to ugresearch@niu.edu. Students must indicate which college they are submitting their proposal to. Students with a double major involving work in two different colleges may only indicate one college on their proposal.

In the event that a joint proposal is being submitted by students with majors in two different colleges, it is expected that they will indicate only one of the colleges on the proposal. Students who are undecided as to the college of their major will select a primary supervisor, and the proposal will be assigned to the college with which that person is affiliated. It is generally expected that the primary supervisor will be a member of the regular faculty, but the college of the student’s major may determine that other staff members with appropriate expertise can serve in this role.

Independent Study or Academic Credit

A proposal may relate to an independent study experience which carries academic credit, such as a capstone project, an internship, or a special topics course which involves intensive one-on-one work with a faculty or staff member. However, a proposal need not involve any academic credit as long as the research or artistry involved will be under the direct supervision of a faculty or staff member. The following restrictions should be noted:

- A proposal to carry out the work in a regularly scheduled academic course, without any component of independent study, will not be supported.
A proposal which involves academic credit through a Study Abroad experience will not be supported unless the student provides convincing evidence that he or she will carry out a significant program of independent research or artistry during the Study Abroad experience.

A proposal to attend a professional conference will not be supported unless the student provides convincing evidence that he or she will present a paper or other record of artistic or scholarly achievement at the conference.

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).

Travel Abroad
Students traveling abroad are required visit the Study Abroad Office before funding is released. For more information, visit the website (http://www.niu.edu/studyabroad/).

Final Report
Students who receive USOAR awards will have six (6) weeks from the completion of their project to complete and submit a final report. Reports must be turned in to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning located in Altgeld Hall, Room 100.

Submission of a final report is a condition of the USOAR award. Students who fail to complete and submit a final report will be required to refund the full amount of their award to NIU.
A final report will only be considered complete once the following items have been received by the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning:

- **USOAR Evaluation**: 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.

- **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 discussion of the impact that USOAR had on your academic experience

Final reports should be written using **12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced**. 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). You are welcome to include other materials in addition to your report (i.e. a published paper or final report written in conjunction with your faculty supervisor), but these should not take the place of your summary.

- **Expense Report**: Students must fill out the Expense Report spreadsheet, which can be found on the [Current USOAR Students](http://www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/research/2012_urad.shtml) page of the USOAR website. Original receipts for travel expenses MUST be included with the final report.

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 billed for any award monies received, and will be ineligible to apply for a future grant.

**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.

**Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day**

All USOAR participants are expected to present at Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day (URAD). URAD is scheduled for Tuesday, April 19, 2016 in the Holmes Student Center, Duke Ellington Ballroom. In the past, there have been over 100 participants, all of whom present posters regarding their research. For more information, please visit the website [http://www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/research/2012_urad.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/research/2012_urad.shtml).

**Research Poster Production**

Putting together your poster can be a lengthy process, so start the process early. Use your proposal as a basic guideline, since it contains the parts that you will have to have on your poster. We would highly recommend that you edit the sections from your proposal throughout the year so that at the end they are up to date and you do not have to re-write all of your material. Also at the beginning of the year, talk to your mentor about what is required for each part of the proposal, so that from the start you are including all the necessary parts in your writing. Again, this will smooth the process when it comes time to put your poster together.
Templates for your Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day poster are available on the website (http://www.niu.edu/engagedlearning/research/2012_urad.shtml). It is best to use these templates as the base of your poster, because all of the proportions are set for the correct Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day poster size. Make sure that your poster is approved by your faculty supervisor before having it printed.

**Printing**

NIU has its own printing service that you can use to have your poster printed. However, the Media Services team is always very busy around the time of Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day, so get your poster to them EARLY! It is also extremely important that your poster is error-free when you send it to them, so have it proofread.

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**

**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 (NIUILLiad), 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/) 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). 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 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

USOAR Agreement and Release Form

This Agreement is between the undersigned student Northern Illinois University (NIU) for participation in the USOAR program.

Student Name: 

Faculty Sponsor: 

Date: 

Student’s Obligations:
By participating in the USOAR program, a student agrees to:

1. Participate fully in the academic program by attending classes, remaining at the host institution for the full academic term, carrying at least the designated course load, and completing examinations;
2. For travel abroad, assume full legal and financial responsibility for the stay abroad;
3. Reimburse NIU for all costs if student withdraws from or cannot complete the USOAR program;
4. Respect and abide by the laws and customs of the host institution and/or site, the NIU Code of Student Conduct, and all other reasonable standards of conduct related to Student’s education program promoted by NIU, its employees, agents, consortium partners, and partner institutions;
5. Accept termination of participation in the program take responsibility for transportation costs home (if traveling abroad) if Student’s conduct is determined to be detrimental to the best interests of the student, the USOAR program or NIU, such a decision to be at the sole discretion of the NIU program coordinator. Student acknowledges and agrees that he/she may be required to leave the USOAR program at the sole discretion of the University’s agents and representatives, and may be referred to the appropriate University officials for further disciplinary or other action and that, in such circumstances, a refund will be made to NIU for any unused portion of the USOAR funds.

Waiver, Release and Indemnification

Student states that s/he understands that certain risks are inherent in field work travel, and away from NIU, the City of DeKalb, out of state or out of the United States, and that s/he fully accepts those risks. These risks may include, but are not limited to, such things as war, quarantine, civil unrest, public health risks, criminal activity, terrorism, exposure to communicable diseases, ill effects of unfamiliar food and water, incidents related to ground, air or water transportation, adverse weather conditions, accident, injuries or damage to property, and other physical, mental, and emotional injury.

Student states that s/he fully understands the above risks and the scope of the activities involved in the program and that s/he agrees to assume the risks of the participation in the program, including the risk of catastrophic injury or death. Student states that, for and in consideration of acceptance in the program, Student agrees to indemnify, hold harmless, release and forever discharge Northern Illinois University, its Trustees, employees, agents, and cooperating institutions and their offices and agents from any and all claims and expenses, including reasonable attorney’s fees, for any injury, loss, or damage to personal property, including catastrophic injury or death, related to the program abroad or suffered by Student (including those related to travel to and from the program site).

Student states that s/he agrees that information in the Student’s University records, including disciplinary and academic records, may be available to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning with the understanding that the information will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law.

Student 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: ________________________________
Appendix C

Code of Conduct Agreement Form

Any student representing the Northern Illinois University while participating in any Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning program and while participating in any event 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 as printed in the NIU Code of Conduct (http://www.niu.edu/communitystandards/Student_Code_of_Conduct/NIUSSC_FINAL.pdf).

Any violation of the Code of conduct may result in appropriate disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, loss of privileges to participate in OSEEL programs and restitution of funds provided for student to participate in the program. In addition, all student fellows attending conferences and workshops representing their respective departments must follow the procedures as prescribed below.

Participation
Students are expected to participate fully in the USOAR program by attending all programs and events as outlined by the program when feasible. If participating as a part of a group, the group will seek to attend as many different sessions as possible in order to obtain the greatest amount of information and/or resources.

Proper Dress
Students must dress appropriately for any program events, based on the guidelines provided by the program coordinators, directors, organizers, and conference materials. There will be no clothing that allows the stomach, cleavage, armpits, or underwear to show. There will be no “tasteless” T-shirts, sleeveless, muscle shirts, or tank tops. Shirts and shoes will be worn at all times. There will be no hair rollers, bandanas, baseball caps, house slippers, etc. worn outside to any event at any time for any reason. Any questions about proper attire should be directed to the advisors or directors prior to leaving for the activity, event, and/or conference.

1. All fellows are reminded that they are on University Business for the entire length of travel conducted for the USOAR program.
2. All fellows are responsible for their personal conduct.
3. Illegal drug use is strictly prohibited.
4. Gambling in any form at any time during an NIU-sponsored trip is strictly prohibited.
5. Weapons will not be taken, used, carried, or possessed concealed or otherwise at any time during any NIU-sponsored travel and/or event.
6. There shall be no graffiti, vandalism, or defacing of University or other public property. Any damage must be paid for by the individual responsible.
7. All participants must attend all mandatory sessions for the USOAR program.
8. Student fellows, advisors, directors, and coordinators will be guided by the Code of Conduct and will obey all university, local, state, and federal laws, policies, and guidelines.

I, _____ (your first & last name) agree to the above code of conduct and will abide by it.

Student Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________
Appendix D

Scholar/Mentor Contract

Student Name(s) (Please type or print):

Faculty Supervisor (Please type or print):

Title of Project:

This agreement is designed to promote understanding and commitment to the role, responsibilities and expectations of both student scholars and research mentors who participate in USOAR program.

Students: To fulfill your responsibilities and remain in the USOAR program, you must:

1) Participate with your designated faculty supervisor (and fellow team members, if any) to develop, understand and substantially complete a research or artistry project.
2) Participate in formal programming as scheduled by staff and designated as required.
3) Complete a final narrative report and final expense report and submit them to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning no later than six weeks after completion of the research/artistry project.
4) Notify your faculty supervisor AND the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning of any change in research focus or desire to change a research mentor.
5) Immediately address personal difficulties that arise during your research experience with the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential staff as problems arise.

Mentors: Faculty mentors are crucial to the success of the USOAR program. Each faculty member is committed to assist one or more students on research projects. The faculty mentor agrees to:

1) Provide learning resources and necessary tools for the research/artistry project.
2) Meet with the student to plan and complete the project.
3) Discuss aspects of academic and research life with student while working with the student on research.
4) Assist the student with preparation of project materials for presentation.
5) Attend major research presentations that the student makes on the NIU campus.
6) Notify OSEEL staff as needed of student progress, performance, change of research focus, or any problems in the mentoring relationship.

This contractual agreement is a binding agreement between the Research Mentor and the Scholar and specifies the responsibilities of the scholar to the USOAR program. Scholars are expected to show progress and meet the terms in this agreement.

Student Signature:  
Date:  

Mentor Signature:  
Date:  

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## Appendix E

### USOAR Proposal Evaluation Score Sheet

Rate each proposal using a 1-5 scale (1 being poor, 3 being acceptable, and 5 being excellent) for each criteria listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear description of the problem/question/issue</td>
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<td>Clearly designed plan for addressing the problem/question/issue (e.g. research design, theoretical framework, implications for the discipline)</td>
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<td>Timeline allows for successful completion of the project.</td>
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<td>The budget is itemized, justified and appropriate</td>
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<td>Provides evidence that participation will provide a substantial benefit to the student’s academic experience</td>
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<td>Faculty statement speaks directly to the student’s ability to carry out the proposed artistry or research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student’s academic record supports his/her ability to complete the project.</td>
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<td>Proposal is formatted according the guidelines</td>
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<td>Reviewer’s overall enthusiasm for proposal</td>
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