

Summer Research Fellowship (SRF)

Application Evaluation Rubric

Applicant Name: _____

Reviewer: _____

Application Score _____ / 40

Proposal Score _____ / 25

Total Score: _____ / 65

Scoring Scale

5 = Exceptional | 4 = Strong | 3 = Adequate | 2 = Limited | 1 = Weak

Part I Application Scoring

The Application section of the rubric emphasizes the qualities most predictive of success in undergraduate research fellowships: purpose-driven research, intellectual curiosity, adaptability, collaboration, and potential for future impact.

Question 7 (15 points)

How do you see your studies, research, and future career contributing to improving the lives of others? What issue inspires this commitment?

Score	Criteria
13-15	Presents a compelling sense of purpose; clearly connects studies, research, and career goals to meaningful societal impact; identifies a significant issue and demonstrates thoughtful understanding and personal commitment.
10-12	Clear career goals and service orientation; explains societal relevance with some specificity; demonstrates motivation and awareness of impact.
7-9	General discussion of goals and impact; connections between research and societal benefit are present but underdeveloped.
4-6	Vague goals; limited explanation of societal contribution or motivating issue.
0-3	Little evidence of purpose, impact, or commitment.

Reviewer Considerations

- Clarity of long-term vision
 - Commitment to improving others' lives
 - Understanding of broader significance
 - Alignment between research interests and future goals
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Question 8 (10 points)

Describe a time when an unexpected result, mistake, or misunderstanding led you to explore a new direction.

Score	Criteria
9-10	Demonstrates exceptional intellectual curiosity, adaptability, and reflection; clearly explains actions taken and insights gained.
7-8	Strong example showing problem-solving and learning from challenges; reflects on outcomes effectively.
5-6	Adequate example with some evidence of learning and adaptation.
3-4	Example provided but lacks reflection, ownership, or clear outcomes.
0-2	Minimal evidence of resilience, curiosity, or learning.

Reviewer Considerations

- Growth mindset
 - Intellectual curiosity
 - Initiative after setbacks
 - Reflective capacity
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Question 9 (10 points)

Describe a time you collaborated with people from different backgrounds, perspectives, or areas of expertise.

Score	Criteria
9-10	Demonstrates meaningful collaboration across differences; clearly articulates contributions and learning; shows openness to diverse perspectives.
7-8	Strong collaboration example; explains role and lessons learned.

5-6	Adequate collaboration experience but limited discussion of impact or learning.
3-4	Limited evidence of meaningful collaboration or contribution.
0-2	Little evidence of teamwork, inclusion, or learning from others.

Reviewer Considerations

- Ability to work across disciplines or perspectives
- Respect for differing viewpoints
- Contribution to team success
- Learning and growth from collaboration

Question 10 (5 points)

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

Score	Criteria
5	Adds substantial new information that strengthens the application and demonstrates strong fit with SRF goals.
4	Provides useful context or additional qualifications not discussed elsewhere.
3	Relevant but largely repeats information already presented.
1-2	Limited relevance or added value.
0	No response or information unrelated to program goals.

Reviewer Considerations

- Added value beyond previous responses
- Self-awareness
- Fit for fellowship community
- Potential contribution to cohort

Overall Section 2 Rating

Total Score	Recommendation
36-40	Outstanding
31-35	Strong

26-30	Competitive
20-25	Promising but needs further evidence
Below 20	Not competitive

Optional Holistic Adjustment (+/- 2 points)

Reviewers may award up to:

- +2 points for exceptional authenticity, intellectual engagement, or unusually compelling alignment with the fellowship mission.
- -2 points for poor writing quality, failure to answer prompts, or significant consistency concerns.

Part II Proposal Scoring

The proposal section of the rubric is designed for both applicants pursuing independent research projects and applicants contributing to an existing faculty research project. Reviewers should evaluate the quality of the proposed learning experience, intellectual engagement, ownership, and potential impact regardless of project type.

1. Significance of the Project (5 Points)

Score	Description
5	Clearly articulates an important question, problem, or area of inquiry. Demonstrates strong intellectual merit and meaningful potential impact.
4	Project is clearly important and well justified, with minor areas needing further development.
3	Project is relevant but significance is only partially developed.
2	Limited explanation of why the project matters.
1	Significance is unclear or absent.

Score: ____ / 5

2. Research Plan and Feasibility (5 Points)

Score	Description
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5	Presents a well-designed, realistic, and achievable plan appropriate for the 10-week program. Activities, methods, and resources are clearly described.
4	Plan is generally clear and feasible with minor gaps.
3	Plan is adequate but lacks some detail or raises feasibility questions.
2	Plan is underdeveloped or difficult to evaluate.
1	Plan is unclear, unrealistic, or incomplete.

Score: ____ / 5

3. Ownership and Intellectual Engagement (5 Points)

Score	Description
5	Demonstrates exceptional intellectual curiosity, initiative, and ownership. Clearly identifies a unique contribution. For faculty-led projects, the applicant's role is substantial and well defined.
4	Shows strong engagement and a clearly articulated role.
3	Demonstrates engagement but ownership could be more clearly defined.
2	Applicant's contribution or role is only partially explained.
1	Proposal focuses largely on others' work with little evidence of applicant ownership.

Score: ____ / 5

4. Expected Outcomes and Deliverable (5 Points)

Score	Description
5	Identifies a meaningful and well-defined scholarly, creative, or professional deliverable that reflects the applicant's individual contribution.
4	Deliverable is appropriate and reasonably well described.
3	Deliverable is identified but lacks specificity or connection to the project.
2	Deliverable is vague or minimally developed.
1	Deliverable is absent or unclear.

Score: ____ / 5

5. Connection to Future Goals and Impact (5 Points)

Score	Description
5	Provides a compelling explanation of how the project supports future academic, professional, leadership, or service goals and contributes to positive change.
4	Strong connection to future goals and impact.
3	Connection is present but somewhat general.
2	Limited discussion of future goals or impact.
1	Little or no connection to future goals or impact.

Score: ____ / 5

Funding Recommendation

- ☐ Highly Recommend
- ☐ Recommend
- ☐ Recommend if Funding Allows
- ☐ Do Not Recommend

Score Interpretation

22-25: Outstanding candidate with exceptional potential for research, learning, leadership, and impact.

18-21: Strong candidate with clear potential for success in the fellowship.

14-17: Promising candidate whose proposal would benefit from additional development.

Below 14: Proposal does not yet demonstrate sufficient clarity, feasibility, ownership, or alignment with fellowship goals.