

SURF Proposal Prompt – 2016

This proposal prompt is most relevant for SURF L&S and SURF Rose Hills Independent applicants. SURF Rose Hills Experience applicants can still benefit from this sheet, but the fact that Rose Hills Experience is specifically about working on faculty research means that the application is different.

Your research proposal should describe the research you intend to complete this summer. Sections A-D should be no longer than five pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins). It should include:

A. Research Question / Statement of Purpose (175-200 words)

- What specific topic will you be working on and why is it important to the field?
- This section enables you to give the reviewers an overview of your project. Keep in mind that other sections will ask to build upon this overview in more details (background, methodology, and rationale).

B. Background and Justification (1.5-2 pages)

- What is already known about the field of research you will be working on (be sure to cite references from the literature when applicable)?
- How does your research project fit in with what is being done currently in the field and how does it build upon knowledge on the topic or fill in gaps in the field?
- Relate this section to the ideas in your statement of purpose.

C. Project Plan / Research Methods / Timeline (1.5-2 pages)

- What are the main challenges of the project and what methods will you use to address them?
- What are the week-by-week research tasks that will add up to a solid research plan? How will you know if your hypotheses (science/social science) or hunches (humanities) are correct?
 - For hard sciences proposals, the project plan should include your “aims” (2-3 usually) which describe the main action items of your project and the methods you will use for each. A timeline can be tied in directly to each of the aims, or separately at the end of the project plan section.
 - For social sciences/humanities, your project plan should be broken up into Phases with specific threshold goals and correlated to a timeline of 8 weeks.
- Include a brief timeline of when each phase of the work will be done. Most of your timeline will address the summer, but your timeline should

take your project through all its phases: preparation, data collection, analysis, and write-ups

- Be practical about what is feasible in 8 weeks.
- Your proposal should be understandable by a lay academic audience.
- If you will use monetary resources beyond your SURF stipend, include a description of this funding in this section.

D. Qualifications (max. 1/2 page)

- What do you hope to gain out of the experience, and why is it interesting to you?
- Why are you qualified to perform this research?
- What background do you have in the field (coursework, previous lab experience/fieldwork/language, other relevant skills)?
- Have engaged in similar research previously?
- Do you have a history of working with your research mentor?
- For projects involving access to people or institutions, describe the access/permissions you have already obtained.

E. Bibliography

This section should contain proper citations for background and related work.

F. Appendix (optional).

You may upload or link a photograph or other file --maximum 2 pages in length -- if it is essential to your proposal.

G. Additional support (optional).

- Use this section to describe other resources (including other grants, scholarships, faculty funds, personal funds) you have applied for or received to support this project. In this section you can also describe other people or organizations that will be critical to your success and the implementation of your summer research timeline. Describing additional support is recommended for social science projects or humanities projects involving fieldwork or archival access. Many projects require you to enlist the facilities, services or personnel of other institutions. (A study of kindergarten teachers, for example, could require prior approval of the principal.)
- To show your preparation, you may include a (maximum one page) document including the names, phone numbers and e-mail

addresses of key people you have contacted whose cooperation will be critical to your. Also attach letters of agreement from these people if you have them. The letters should be very specific about what resources are being offered (e.g. use of facilities, introductions to specific groups of people, etc.), and ideally on letterhead.

- Be sure to get help for your proposal from faculty members, post-docs, and/or the graduate students that you will be working with. They should be able to answer many of the questions above and assist you in proof-reading and editing your proposal.

For more hints on how to approach your proposal, see the "Resources" menu of the SURF web site (<http://surf.berkeley.edu>), especially the "advisors", "other resources", and (if applicable to your project) the "human subjects" tabs.