

URS Thesis Application Instructions

Section 1: General Instructions

1. This document contains application/proposal expectations, requirements, and examples.
2. Download the official Application Planning Template and use it to draft your proposal text.
3. Complete the actual application in our portal at <https://tx.ag/2526URSThesisApplication> by the specified deadlines.
4. Direct all questions to the Office of Undergraduate Research (UGR) staff at ugr@tamu.edu.

TIP: Remember to reference the [official program schedule](#) when writing the timeline portion of the application.

Important Note About Application Deadlines

Priority Deadline: If you are required to enroll in a course related to your participation in the URS thesis program, you must submit your complete application by August 8, 2025 at 9:00 AM to ensure your application can be reviewed and accepted by August 25, 2025, the first day of fall 2025.

Official Deadline: If you are not required to enroll in a course related to your participation in the URS thesis program, you must submit by September 5, 2025 at 9:00 AM Central Time so your application can be reviewed and accepted prior to the official program kick-off date of October 1, 2025.

Section 2: Proposal – Project Summary

Section 2.1: Project Summary Instructions

REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

In **250-300 words**, describe the overarching research project over the course of the eight-month program and how you propose to accomplish the objectives of the research project. The project summary should contain:

1. A statement of your motivation, problem, and research question.
2. A justification and importance of your research topic.
3. How does your project differentiate itself in the current research field and how does it build on previous research in your broader discipline? Make sure you understand the previous research that has been done in your broader discipline and in your specific subfield. Be specific throughout.
4. The expected outcome(s) of the research project and its associated objectives.

TIPS FOR CREATIVE WORKS:

Creative Works theses combine critical and creative modes. In the critical mode, you should explore previous research in your field and concentrate on how your project applies innovative methods to existing mediums and/or uses established modes to develop new knowledge through its application. This research will help you design a specific motivation, problem, or question you want to answer through your Creative Artifact. As part of the creative mode, you should develop a Creative Artifact that is appropriate for the genre or medium that you are exploring. Your Creative Artifact should answer your research question and will be further developed through exhibition and reflection throughout the academic year. The Creative Work thesis is the combination of your analysis, artifact, and reflection.

Creative Works project summaries must also answer the following questions:

5. How does your anticipated Creative Artifact build on previous research in your genre or medium?
6. What processes or medium-specific tools will it incorporate; why?
7. What form will the anticipated Creative Artifact take and what new knowledge will it produce?

Section 3: Proposal – Introduction

Section 3.1: Introduction

REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

In **350-500 words**, expand on your common research theme and why it is an important object of scholarly inquiry in the context of your research field. The Introduction usually requires a discussion of your literature review and a summary of the pertinent previous research in your field that shows the relationship between your project(s) and the material you cite. In the Introduction, be sure that you are:

1. Using in-text in a citation style appropriate for your discipline to indicate your academic indebtedness to previous research (ex: ACS, AMA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, etc.). Failure to use appropriate in-text citations will result in your proposal being returned to you for revisions.
2. Demonstrating that you have surveyed the state of knowledge in your research area and that you understand how your outcomes will make an important contribution to your field.
3. Introducing your thesis statement.

Section 4: Proposal – Objectives/Goals

Section 4.1: Objectives/Goals Instructions

REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

In **75-100 words**, describe your research objectives and goals clearly and succinctly. State your hypothesis, research question, or motivation so that a reader from any research background can understand what it is you are trying to accomplish. Articulate how your research contributes to the ongoing discussion in your research field.

Do not explain your methodology or theoretical framework in this section. Here you will describe the purpose, scope, rationale, and motivation for this research.

Section 5: Proposal – Methodology/Theoretical Framework

Section 5.1: Methodology/Theoretical Framework Instructions

REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

In **100-200** words, propose how you will tackle your research question and what research methodologies you will employ that will ensure the evidence you will procure is warranted for the research you are conducting. In this section, describe the approach, techniques, and procedures you will take to complete your project. Describe the resources you need to do your research (e.g., laboratory, library or other space, documents or books you need to reference, databases you need access to) and the people you will interact with during the research process. Describe the terminology that explains the disciplinary standards you will employ in your project. This section should align with the steps you describe in your customized timeline on the following pages. **IN ADDITION:**

FOR ARTS, HUMANITIES, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES:

In addition to the above, describe what theoretical framework drives the lens through which you will carry out your research (e.g., Historical, Feminist, Literary, Ethnographic, Post-memory, etc.).

FOR CREATIVE WORKS:

In addition to the above, describe how the Creative Artifact will be developed as an outgrowth of your research methodology and concentrate on how your project applies innovative methods to existing mediums and/or uses established modes to develop new knowledge through its application.

Section 6: Proposal – Bibliography/References/Works Cited*Section 6.2: Bibliography/References/Works Cited Instructions***REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:**

Include a list of at least four references for *all* the literature cited in the text of your proposal. This might also include your literature review and text that you intend to consult. Choose a citation style appropriate for your discipline under the advisement of your Faculty Advisor. Ensure that each citation contains all required components, such as author, title, publisher, date, source, and page numbers (if applicable). **A minimum of four scholarly, peer-reviewed sources are required.**

Section 7: Contingency Plan

Section 7.1: Contingency Plan Instructions

REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

Students are required to apply with a contingency plan that describes how the URS project will be completed if you are unable to follow the scope of the original project proposal due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness, supply chain issues, lost or corrupted data, etc. The purpose of this contingency plan is to help you complete the URS thesis program on time and to fulfill graduation or other program requirements, such as Honors distinction requirements.

Depending on the project, this contingency plan could address, but is not limited to, the following:

- Lack of physical access to research space, data, or other resources
- Inability to obtain equipment, permission, data, or other resources
- Partial or incomplete data, trials, experiments, reviews, analyses, design, etc.
- Limited and/or restricted travel
- Inability to hold in-person meetings
- Virtual project completion if moved fully online

In **200-250 words**, give a detailed description of a contingency plan that will guide you in the case that you experience disruptions and/or unanticipated impacts on your URS project and thesis. Explain how you will adjust your project and thesis writing timeline as if you were to experience unforeseen circumstances.

Section 8: Timeline

Section 8.1: Timeline Instructions

REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:

The Timeline section is meant to help you plan to effectively carry out your research goals over the course of the academic year. Design your research, writing, and communication goals as if this timeline were a class syllabus. Keep in mind the program requirements below* and think about what you need to accomplish each WEEK, providing as much detail as possible. List action items and other milestones for the project; list deliverables in paragraph format or bulleted list (see examples for accepted formats).

Timelines that fail to address the specificity of project tasks, action items, and deliverables on a week-to-week basis will be returned for revision.

Program Goals

FALL 2025 SEMESTER†

1. Complete the Orientation Module by November 4 at Midnight
2. Attend one October group check-in meeting (October 21-24)
3. Attend one November group check-in meeting (November 11-14)
4. Complete the Thesis Formatting Module by November 15 at Midnight
5. Complete one fall progress report (December 4 at Midnight)
6. (optional) register for UGST 405, Thesis Writing course

SPRING 2026 SEMESTER†

1. Attend 1 January group check-in meeting (January 20-23)
2. If you plan to present at the URS Symposium, register by January 25 at Midnight
3. Attend 1 March group check-in meeting (March 17-20)
4. Complete 2 installment submissions (February 1 at Midnight and March 1 at Midnight)‡
5. Complete 2 spring progress reports (February 3 at Midnight and March 3 at Midnight)‡
6. Make 1 public presentation and submit 1 presentation report (April 15 at 5:00 PM CT)§
7. Complete the final thesis submission and receive Faculty Advisor approval (April 1 at 9:00 AM CT)

[†University Honors Students:](#)

Be sure to register for the Research section of UGST 497 each semester to fulfill Capstone requirements.

[§Public Presentations:](#)

Public presentations can take place in either fall or spring between October 6 and April 15 to meet the April 15 deadline to submit the Public Presentation Report.

Section 8.2: September and October Goals**RESEARCH GOALS:**

- If you require research compliance approval and/or other required training, have you contacted the office of Research Compliance & Biosafety? Do you need to attend a Research Compliance Informational? Are there any trainings you need to complete or schedule?
- Identify any additional training you need and when you will complete it.
- Provide a list of dates for when you are contacting and obtaining access to resources you need for your project. Think about scheduling use of laboratory equipment, library or other physical spaces, requesting documents, books, or databases you need to reference, and people you will interact with during your research. Do you need to order anything ahead of time? Do you need to request permission to use any materials or resources for your project (e.g., data, figures, images, etc.).
- Pick a citation manager software to help organize your research and literature review/background materials. The University supports EndNote, RefWorks, Zotero, and Mendeley and has guides on their use: <https://tamu.libguides.com/citingandwriting>

WRITING GOALS:

- Begin an outline of your thesis (think about your research question and approach, refine your thesis statement).
- What will you begin writing first? Explain the organization of your thesis and when you plan to write your chapters/sections. Have you planned or outlined the headings and subheadings for your chapters/sections?

COMMUNICATION GOALS:

- Meet with your Faculty Advisor to determine the frequency of meeting times throughout the semester and what you will accomplish at each meeting. It is advised to meet weekly with your Faculty Advisor and discuss research progress as well as written thesis content.
- Discuss when and where you will present your work publicly.
- Familiarize yourself with URS program materials, including the Canvas Community Modules, Thesis Manual and Policy Guide, the Thesis Formatting Guide, program webpages, the relevant template you will be formatting your thesis in, and URS Program Schedule. These can be found on our Resources page: <https://launch.tamu.edu/undergraduate-research/urs/resources>

Section 8.3: November and December Goals**RESEARCH GOALS:**

- Plan on a week-to-week basis how you are defining future directions for your research (you may be conducting an extensive literature review, conducting experiments, building prototypes, analyzing data, etc.). How is what you are reading, analyzing, or comparing helping you refine your research question?
- What will you focus on in this time block? What do you still need to read, analyze, compare, build, or collect? What do you need to be thinking about over Winter Break?
- What do you need to gather to be able to continue reading, analyzing, or comparing your research over Winter Break?

WRITING GOALS:

- Update your thesis statement and/or research problem/question based on your current research progress.
- Update your methodology based on your literature review, analyses, or comparisons, and discussions with your Faculty Advisor.
- Update your outline for your thesis. Do you need to make any changes to it based on your reading, procedures, experiments, analyses, etc.? Do you need to adjust your project timeline in any way to address the changes?
- Have you discussed with your thesis reviewer any formatting questions you have?
- What are your writing goals for Winter Break?

COMMUNICATION GOALS:

- Has the direction of your project changed in any way that might require research compliance approval and/or training? Are you having regular conversations with your Faculty Advisor to ensure you are conducting legal and ethical research?
- Address if you will be discussing research progress, written thesis content, or both with your Faculty Advisor.
- Identify a venue for your public presentation. If you need to register or secure funding ahead of time, have you done that? If not, when will you?

Section 8.4: January and February Goals**RESEARCH GOALS:**

- Research goals for January and February are highly dependent upon project, discipline, and Faculty Advisor expectations, lists of deliverables and milestones are the result of discussions with Faculty Advisor(s). (See examples.)

WRITING GOALS:

- Plan your writing progress with thesis installment word count requirements in mind; visit the University Writing Center for help with writing goals and proofreading.
- How are you setting up your argument in relation to the existing dialogue or publications in your field?
- Have you decided which of your sources are pertinent? Do you need to gather and review additional source material? Are there any changes to the way you manage your data, sources, or citations?
- Revisit and revise your thesis outline as necessary.

COMMUNICATION GOALS:

- Has the direction of your project changed in any way that might require research compliance approval and/or training? Are you having regular conversations with your Faculty Advisor to ensure you are conducting legal and ethical research?
- What is your plan for your Faculty Advisor to review the written content for both thesis installment deadlines in this period?
- Confirm with your thesis reviewer formatting questions that need to be resolved.

Section 8.5: March and April Goals

RESEARCH GOALS:

- Research goals for March and April are highly dependent upon project, discipline, and Faculty Advisor expectations, lists of deliverables and milestones are the result of discussions with Faculty Advisor(s). (See examples.)

WRITING GOALS:

- Have you finalized the content of your thesis document? Have you made sure the arguments, analyses, and/or comparisons you presented in your chapter(s)/section(s) connect to your thesis statement?
- Do your subheadings reflect the content of your thesis? Remember: Readers use subheadings to navigate your document. Can your reader easily follow your research story?
- Have you addressed any holes in your argument with your Faculty Advisor?
- What are the future directions for this research? How will you incorporate these future directions into your thesis?

COMMUNICATION GOALS:

- **You no longer have time to receive research compliance approval.** Are there any challenges or concerns that you need to discuss with your Faculty Advisor or UGR staff?
- Set a deadline to send your final thesis to your Faculty Advisor before turning it into Canvas by April 1. This needs to be at least two weeks before the April 1 deadline. Remember: Revisions usually take longer than you think. You may need multiple rounds of revisions before your Faculty Advisor is satisfied—PLAN AHEAD.

Section 9: Acknowledgements

Section 9.1 Research Compliance Acknowledgement

Faculty advisors who mentor undergraduates in the URS thesis program are solely responsible for advising and verifying student research compliance, research ethics, and necessary training. Faculty advisors are required to review and approve all aspects of URS applications and final theses, including the student's Research Compliance Acknowledgement.

Regulatory research committee (IRB and/or IBC and/or IACUC) approval is required **before** research activities involving human subjects, animals, or biohazards can commence. This requirement applies to activities conducted at Texas A&M and to activities at non-Texas A&M facilities and institutions. In both cases, students are responsible for working with Texas A&M's office of [Research Compliance & Biosafety](#) to ensure and document that all Texas A&M compliance obligations are met **before** the research begins. Students and faculty advisors are encouraged to reach out to the appropriate research compliance committee **as early as possible**.

The Research Compliance Acknowledgement section of the URS application is necessary to document the following:

1. Faculty advisor(s) approval of the proposed research
2. Student awareness and action to address any and all compliance issues for research involving human subjects, animals, and biohazards with the office of Research Compliance & Biosafety while conducting research

Resources: Research Compliance & Biosafety

- [Research Compliance and Integrity Toolkit](#)
- [Contact Information](#)

Required Research Compliance Acknowledgement

I acknowledge and certify that all research compliance requirements related to this proposal have been addressed with your faculty advisor(s) prior to submission. If any approvals or training are needed, I agree not to collect any data until approvals have been obtained and required training has been completed. I understand that if the scope of the proposed research project changes, those changes must be addressed with my Faculty Advisor and the office of [Research Compliance & Biosafety](#) prior to implementation.

Section 9.2 Honor Code

Students in the URS thesis program must be in good standing at the university while they are in the program, at the time of graduation distinction audit, and through graduation to be eligible for the Undergraduate Research Scholar honors transcript distinction.

Students who receive the F* sanction for academic misconduct at any time from entry to Texas A&M University through graduation are ineligible to participate in the URS program or receive the Undergraduate Research Scholar honors transcript distinction.

Students who have been found responsible for a Honor Code or Student Conduct Code violation and sanctioned with suspension or expulsion at any time from entry to Texas A&M University through graduation, or any sanction that has resulted in their not being in good disciplinary standing while they are in the program, at the time of graduation distinction audit, and through graduation are ineligible to participate in the URS program or receive the Undergraduate Research Scholar honors transcript distinction upon final resolution of their case.

Students may not be awarded the Undergraduate Research Scholar honors transcript distinction retroactively after completing the Academic Integrity Development Program.

Required Honor Code Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the Honors and Student Conduct Code Agreement. I acknowledge that any type of honor or student conduct code violation from Student Rules will result in a review and possible dismissal from the URS thesis program, if I am accepted. Additionally, I acknowledge that any type of honor or student conduct code violation after completion of the program will result in a review and ineligibility to receive the Undergraduate Research Scholar honors distinction on my official transcript.

Section 9.3 Program Expectations Agreement

The management of this program relies on Texas A&M Student Rules, and as the Student Rules website states, “each student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and to comply with the Texas A&M University Student Rules.”

Given the variety of submission deadlines and mandatory meetings part of this program, you are likely to engage with Student Rule 07. All students should be familiar with Student Rule 07 as well as the program's meeting and assignment requirements before engaging with the program. Students who do not meet program expectations and do not provide university-excused absences will face possible dismissal from the program.

Additionally, Student Rule 20 and Student Rule 24 are particularly important for this program, as it holds a university-level honors distinction. Students in this program are held to the highest standards and are expected to adhere to the Aggie Code of Honor and Student Conduct Code. All students should be familiar with Student Rule 20 and Student Rule 24 before engaging with the program.

Finally, all students in this program should be familiar with the University's guidelines on research misconduct, research integrity, and research ethics and compliance from the start. All individuals associated with Texas A&M University are responsible for maintaining our high standards of scholarly integrity.

Required Program Expectations Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the Program Expectations Agreement. I acknowledge that my thesis is written in progression, and I must comply with the Undergraduate Research Scholars thesis program timeline and deadlines. I also acknowledge that if I do not meet the program eligibility requirements or obtain the necessary waiver forms, I will not be accepted into the program.