Think of your research grant application as a package; it has many elements to help you make your case that your project is interesting and innovative and that you are the right person to do it.

The entire application package must be submitted online. Applicants will upload the proposal, budget (if required), and any supporting documents through the online submission system. Once the student has submitted her/his portion of the application, the faculty sponsor will receive an email with instructions for submitting her/his endorsement. For more information on how to apply, see http://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/ayurg (Academic Year URG) or http://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/summerurg (Summer URG).

PARTS OF THE URG PACKAGE

1. **Project Proposal**: Your project proposal should be two-pages, single-spaced. It should be targeted to speak to a group of educated people who are not necessarily specialists in your field. Please see our “Crafting a Research Proposal” guide for a fuller explanation of this crucial part of your package. Bibliographies and other appendices do not count toward the two-page limit.

2. **Faculty Endorsement**: All applications require a written endorsement from a faculty sponsor. In the endorsement, your sponsor is asked both to comment upon the merits of the proposed project and to give her/his opinion of your ability to carry out the research. **Well in advance of the deadline, you should be meeting regularly with your advisor to work through the ideas and logistics of your proposal.** S/he is an important resource for developing your project plans and can write a much more effective endorsement when well informed of what you want to do. The endorsement is due shortly after the grant deadline (within twenty-four hours for Academic Year Grants and within three days for the Summer URGs), so it is very important to give faculty a draft of your proposal and other materials well in advance. They can write a better endorsement if they are not under tremendous time constraints. You should also encourage them to review the “Faculty Guidelines” tab of the Academic Year or Summer URG web pages, so that they are fully informed about expectations and requirements.

3. **Budget**: A budget is required only for Academic-Year URG applications. The budget should itemize the research expenses for which you are requesting funding—e.g. necessary travel (airfare, lodging, food), photocopies, compensation for research subjects (rate x number of subjects), lab kits, equipment rental, etc. The level of detail in the budget simply needs to reflect your understanding of the logistical aspects of the project. Grants cannot be used for the purchase of durable equipment over $100 or for the purchase of books or other materials available through NU libraries or Interlibrary Loan. **Summer URG applicants should include a budget only if the proposed project involves international travel.** If you will be travelling internationally, you may request additional travel support by including an itemized budget for your roundtrip international airfare. URG will typically provide additional funds of up to 50% of the cost of the international flight. The budget should be placed as an appendix at the end of your project proposal.

4. **Appendices and Additional Materials**: While the text of your proposal cannot exceed two single-spaced pages, additional materials can be added as appendices to help clarify aspects of your project. Your proposal should stand on its own, so don’t bury any critical information in the appendices, but you can use appendices to provide an additional level of
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detail. Whether to include additional information, and what kind, will depend on the particulars of your project. Some projects need few or no additional materials; for others, supporting documents are essential. The list below will help you decide what additional information might strengthen your application.

*Bibliography*- All applications benefit from the inclusion of a bibliography (or list of works cited). A bibliography is an efficient way of demonstrating to reviewers that your proposed research is grounded in existing scholarship and that you are familiar with literature relevant for your project. The bibliography should include any published books or articles that you cite in your proposal. Use whatever style guide is common in your field.

*Diagrams, Images, Charts*- Some types of information can be conveyed more clearly and concisely through visual representations, but these can be difficult to fit within the limited space of a proposal. Follow the conventions of your field (e.g., chemists typically should include target chemical molecules in the text of the proposal rather than in an appendix), but it’s often perfectly acceptable to include such things as appendices. Make sure to label them and direct the reader to e.g., “See appendix 1.” Use visuals sparingly; only include things that help the reader better understand what you want to accomplish with your project.

*Surveys and Questionnaires*- If you plan on using surveys or questionnaires in your research, include a copy of them in your URG application. Such materials will help the evaluation committee better understand the specific kinds of information that you will generate to answer your research questions.

*Interview Questions*- If you will be conducting interviews, your reader will want to know what questions you plan to ask. As with surveys and questionnaires, including a copy of your interview questions (or a list of sample questions) will help the reader better understand what information your research methods will generate.

*Interview Appointments*- If you will interview particular individuals whom you can identify in advance, include e-mail confirmations that interviewees have agreed to meet with you during your proposed research dates. The committee does not need specific times and locations, but simply a commitment from the people with whom you will work that they are, in fact, planning on meeting with you. This information is particularly important if you are conducting research abroad and/or have never been to the research site, or if you are meeting with government officials or professionals who often face time constraints.

*Statements from Local Contacts*- Letters and emails supporting your research (intellectual, logistical, etc.) from contacts in the local area are important for projects done away from campus. These materials show the committee that you have developed connections to allow you to have access to data or communities. The letters may take the form of research permission from another institution’s library or archives. They may simply be invitations from professors or other institutional affiliates (like NGO workers, local government officials, etc.) to come and conduct research in a foreign locale. If your research depends upon assistance from such individuals or organizations to help you recruit research subjects, it will be especially important to demonstrate that you have established necessary contacts.

*Archival Bibliography*- If you request funds to work in an archive or special collections of a library, be sure to include not only a letter from the archivist confirming that
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you will have access to the materials, but a detailed list of which materials you will consult. You won’t know exactly what you will find until you get there, but your reader wants to know what types of materials you expect to find. Consult archivists or local librarians while you are developing your project proposal to help you prepare a list of archival documents or collections you intend to consult at specific locations.

*Reading List*- If your research will involve a large amount of primary source reading (e.g., for a literature project), let your reader know what, specifically, you plan to read.

*Samples (Creative projects only)*- If you are doing a creative project, you may submit samples of your previous work so that the committee can better assess the merits of your proposed creative project.

5. IRB Approval- If you will work with human subjects in interviews or experiments, your project must receive approval from the IRB (Institutional Review Board) before you undertake the research. URG funds will not be released until IRB has approved your project.

*Academic Year URG applicants* must 1) complete the required human subjects research training and 2) apply for IRB approval BEFORE submitting a URG application. You do not need to have IRB approval before you apply for a URG, but you must have completed their application process. During our submission process, you will be asked to enter your IRB case number; without it, you will be unable to submit your application. The IRB process can be lengthy, so start early.

*Summer URG applicants* must 1) complete the human subjects research training and 2) attach proof of training completion to the URG application. You are NOT required to submit your IRB application prior to applying for a Summer URG. Instead, students who are awarded Summer URGs and need IRB approval will be required to attend a mandatory workshop on the Evanston campus to complete their IRB applications after funding decisions are announced.

If you are unsure if your project needs IRB approval, you should check with the IRB staff. The IRB is the sole authority on whether a project needs to go through the IRB process or not – do not base your decision on the experiences of friends or even your advisor.

Need help with IRB? You can find answers to many of your questions on the IRB website (http://irb.northwestern.edu/). The IRB staff is happy to advise you before you submit your study, and we highly recommend taking advantage of this help as you prepare your IRB application. Check their website for drop-in hours, or contact Kathleen Murphy, IRB Manager, at kemurphy@northwestern.edu.

Need help with your URG application package? Contact us at undergradresearch@northwestern.edu to set up an appointment, or come to our weekly drop-in hours every Wednesday from 2:00-4:00pm at the Office of Undergraduate Research, Rebecca Crown Center, West Tower at 633 Clark St.