

URCA Associate Application Packet 2026-2027

Application Deadline: Monday, April 6, 2026

Submit by Email to: Amelia Pérez, PhD, RN, CNE (URCA Coordinator) aperez@siue.edu

Evaluation Process: Submitted proposals will be evaluated by the URCA Board. Each proposal will be assigned two reviewers. Reviewers present their evaluations to the entire URCA board at the evaluation meeting and each board member votes individually on each proposal. Board members will not vote on proposals from their own departments or for which they are serving as faculty mentors. An evaluation rubric will be used by board members for the evaluation process and can be found at the end of this document on pages 5 and 6.

Notifications: Applicants will be notified of the decision on their proposal by early May.

Requirements:

- Sophomore or Junior level standing undergraduate student at the time of application. Applicants maybe Senior level as long as they remain a full-time student and do not graduate before completing a full academic year in the URCA Associate program.
- Must have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above at the time of application and the entire length of participation in the URCA Associate program.
- Conduct research or a creative project in the student's major or minor field of study. Must have a full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty mentor in that field of study.
- Maintain adequate progress toward the completion of the URCA project and attend URCA sponsored meetings and events.
- Enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at SIUE (minimum 12 credit hours) for the entire length of the participation in the URCA program.
- Obtain necessary approvals (such as with IRB, Animal Care, Hazardous Material or field sites) **before** beginning the research project or creative activity. The faculty mentor can assist the URCA Associate in this process.

URCA Associate Application Checklist and Guidelines:

The following information must be submitted with your application. Use the checklist and information below to ensure that your application is complete. Submit your application materials by **Monday, April 6, 2026** to: aperez@siue.edu

- **URCA Application document with signatures** (*see page 4 of this document*)
- **Abstract**
 - Approximately 150 words in length
 - The abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the proposal in plain language. The information in the abstract needs to be concise and well organized.

- In the abstract and throughout the proposal, be sure to use language that is understandable to individuals outside of your discipline. Avoid use of abbreviations without first writing out those abbreviations. Proposal reviewers are from a wide variety of fields so explaining terms that are very specific to your field will help the reviewers better understand your project.

- **Proposal Narrative**

The proposal narrative should be 3 to 5 pages in length, have page numbers, and include the following headings:

- **Background and Significance**

- Significance of the problem
 - This is where you make an impact of what is the current problem or issue that warrants the need of your proposed project or creative activity, why is this important.
- Literature review
 - What has been found in the literature and what is still needed. Here you identify the gap in the literature why your project or creative activity is needed)
- Purpose
 - Include a purpose statement for your project. The purpose of the project is....
- Hypothesis or research question(s)
 - Include the hypothesis or research question(s) for the project.
 - Make sure your hypothesis or research question is consistent with the purpose of the project.

- **Methods**

- Procedures and Materials
 - Include a step-by-step description of all the activities of your proposed research project or creative activity. Be sure to explain your role in the project, especially if your work is part of a larger one being carried out by your faculty mentor.
 - The following should be included in this section:
 - Study or project design
 - Proposed population or sample
 - Sampling methods and proposed sample size
 - Materials and instruments and how these will be acquired and used
 - Steps for data collection or artistic creative activity development
 - Procedures for data analysis or evaluation of creative activity
- Timeline
 - Proposed scheduled timeline of activities
 - Provide time frames for activities throughout the project
 - Include the time frame for when you and your faculty mentor will be submitting for necessary approvals prior to implementing the project (IRB

approval, etc...). Allow adequate timing as these approvals can take a few weeks for review and approval.

- Be sure that project activities are spread out reasonably over the two semesters of the academic year (Fall and Spring)
 - *Posters will be printed by the middle of March for the April Undergraduate Scholars Showcase that you will be presenting your project in, so be sure to have the project finalized before then.*
- **Expected Outcomes**
 - Provide a summary of expected outcomes of your project and what impact this could potentially make in your field of study.
 - Discuss potential limitations that could be present during your project.
- **Budget Justification**
 - Proposed itemized budget table
 - Justification for expenditures (can be explained within the table next to each item)
 - The budget has two main categories:
 - Up to \$500 in materials and supplies needed for your project
 - Up to \$400 in travel funds to travel to a conference to present your finished work. Travel funds may include airfare, mileage, lodging, parking, and/or conference registration.
 - Items listed on the budget should conform to SIUE purchasing practices. The university owns site licenses for certain types of software and has purchasing agreements in place for certain materials and supplies. Budget items should only include things that are allowed to be purchased with state funds (URCA funds are university state funds and are subject to state purchasing rules). Work with your faculty mentor and department budget person to ensure that the budget follows state purchasing policies.
 - ***Important note:** the \$500 equipment fund will likely not be available until September, so any work that requires use of funding should be planned for mid to late September and after. **Project materials are paid directly with a university P-card only. Do not buy materials out of pocket for reimbursement.***
- **References**
 - Be sure to cite references within the proposal narrative
 - Include a reference list at the end of the proposal
 - You will need to use the reference style used in your discipline (APA, MLA)

URCA Associate Application

Student Name: _____ SIUE ID 800#: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Faculty Mentor(s): _____

Project Title: _____

Will this URCA project satisfy your department's Senior Assignment requirement? Yes ___ No ___

Academic Major: _____ Credit Hours Completed: ___ GPA: _____

Special clearances/approvals required for the project:

Human Subjects Animal Care Hazardous Materials
Field sites Other (Describe) _____

Summary of Project Budget: _____

Departmental Administrator Name in charge of purchasing: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

(In the case of mentors from different departments, select one mentor's department to be in charge of purchasing)

Upon submitting this proposal, I verify that this writing is my own and pledge to fulfill all of the expectations of the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Program to the best of my abilities. I understand that failure to do so may result in return of URCA Associate Award funds to the University and forfeiture of academic credit and honors recognition.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

I am able, willing, and committed to providing the necessary facilities and to take the time to mentor this student during this project. I verify that this student is capable of undertaking this proposed project. I also commit to helping the student receive necessary approvals and clearances (such as IRB, Animal Care, Hazardous Material or field sites) for this study prior to beginning work on the project.

Faculty Mentor Signature: _____ Date: _____

This project is within the mission and scope of this department, and the department fully supports the faculty mentor and student during this project.

Department Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

I support this proposed faculty-student scholarly activity as within the mission of the College/School.

Dean Signature: _____ Date: _____

URCA Associate Proposal Evaluation Rubric
(For Use by URCA Board Member Reviewers)

Student proposals can receive up to four points in each of the five areas listed below for a maximum of 20 points. The scoring rubric for each area is displayed. A proposal must have an overall score of 12.5 or more to be considered eligible for funding.

	4	3	2	1
Importance of Topic	Background and significance are clearly described. Clearly demonstrates a need for the project based on review from the literature. Purpose statement is clearly stated. Hypothesis or research questions are consistent with purpose (as applicable). Recognizes contribution of project to the field of study.	Background and significance are described. Somewhat demonstrates a need for the project based on review from the literature. Purpose statement is stated, but not fully clear. Hypothesis or research questions are somewhat consistent with purpose (as applicable). Recognizes contribution of project to the field of study.	Background and significance are vaguely described. Minimally demonstrates a need for the project based on review from the literature. Purpose statement is not relevant to findings from the literature. Hypothesis or research questions are not consistent with purpose (as applicable). Limited recognition of contribution of project to the field of study.	Background and significance are limited. Does not demonstrate a need for the project based on review from the literature. Purpose statement is not relevant to findings from the literature. Hypothesis or research questions are not consistent with purpose (as applicable). Recognition of contribution of project to the field of study is not evident.
Methods	The methodology is appropriate and innovative. Procedures, materials, and timeline are clearly explained. Budget is feasible for the project.	The methodology is appropriate and interesting. Procedures, materials, and timeline are explained. Budget is feasible for the project.	The methodology is appropriate and acceptable. Explanation of procedures, materials, and timeline is limited in some of areas. Budget is feasible for the project.	The methodology is not clearly stated and is unacceptable. Explanation of procedures, materials, and timeline is minimal. Budget justification is not clear.

	4	3	2	1
Foundation	Applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the project. The proposal is firmly rooted in disciplinary foundations. Recognizes expected outcomes of the project and potential limitations.	Applicant demonstrates moderate understanding of the project. The proposal is rooted in disciplinary foundations. Somewhat recognizes expected outcomes of the project and potential limitations.	Applicant demonstrates limited understanding of the project. The proposal is not clearly linked to its disciplinary foundations. Recognition of expected outcomes of the project and potential limitations is limited.	Applicant demonstrates minimal understanding of the project. Disciplinary foundations are not evident. Recognition of expected outcomes of the project and potential limitations is minimal.
Expectations	The extent of the proposed study is reasonable and realistic in terms of purpose of the project and time and resources available.	The extent of the proposed study is moderately reasonable and realistic in terms of purpose of the project and time and resources available.	The extent of the proposed study may be reasonable and realistic in terms of purpose of the project and time and resources available.	The extent of the proposed study may not be reasonable or realistic in terms of purpose of the project and time and resources available.
Grammar, Formatting, References	The proposal has 0 to 3 grammatical errors. The proposal is clear and easy to read and follow. References are relevant and up to date. Used reference style of field (APA, MLA) on reference list and in-text citations.	The proposal has 4 to 6 grammatical errors. The proposal is clear and easy to read and follow in most areas of the paper. References are relevant and up to date. Used reference style of field (APA, MLA) on reference list and in-text citations, but with some errors or missing information.	The proposal has 7 to 10 grammatical errors. The proposal is not clear in some areas and is difficult to read and follow. Some of the references are not relevant to the topic of the proposal and/or are outdated. Used reference style of field (APA, MLA) on reference list and in-text citations, but with multiple errors or missing information.	The proposal has more than 10 grammatical errors. The proposal is not clear and is difficult to read and follow. Most of the references are not relevant to the topic of the proposal and/or are outdated. Did not use reference style of field (APA, MLA) on reference list and in-text citations.