

# Interdisciplinary Research Teams (IRT) Application Guide

**Deadline: November 8, 2024 @ 11:59pm**

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# What is the Interdisciplinary Research Teams (IRT)?

**CALIT2** and UROP have partnered to offer the Interdisciplinary Research Teams (IRT) program, which provides graduate and undergraduate students the opportunity to work together in teams on projects that are interdisciplinary in nature. One graduate student lead will mentor 2-4 UCI undergraduate students on the project. 

## What counts as interdisciplinary?

Graduate and undergraduate students are encouraged to work collaboratively, bringing their interests and experience from multiple disciplines to solve problems through an interdisciplinary lens.

Undergraduate students on a team must be from at least two different schools or two different departments within a school. **Preference is given to teams with students from different schools.** Examples of different schools include the Claire Trevor School of the Arts and the Charlie Dunlop School of Biological Sciences. Examples of different departments within a school include Biomedical Engineering and Civil and Environmental Engineering within the Henry Samueli School of Engineering.

## How does IRT support a project?

As part of an Interdisciplinary Research Team, students can apply for funding to support their project. You can request up to **\$3,000** for your project, and all funding must be expended by the end of May 2025.

## How do we access the funds?

Funds will not be directly distributed to the awardees. **Graduate students must submit purchase orders to CALIT2.** Detailed instructions will be provided to the awarded graduate student leads on how to submit purchase orders for supplies to CALIT2, who will approve and will handle all purchases.

# Who Can Participate in IRT?

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We welcome **all** current UCI graduate and undergraduate students who are participating in a graduate student mentored interdisciplinary research project or creative activity.

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## Eligibility & Requirements

- ✓ All applicants must be enrolled at UCI as degree-seeking graduate or undergraduate students through at least spring quarter 2025.
  - ✓ Graduate student must have a UCI Faculty Advisor approval.
  - ✓ All applicants must be part of a graduate and undergraduate student team working on a project that is interdisciplinary in nature.
  - ✓ Must be in good academic standing (2.0+ GPA)
- 

## Who should submit the application on behalf of the team?

- **The Graduate Student lead must be the one to complete and submit the application through their own online application account.** While the undergraduate team members should be involved in writing the proposal and personal statements, the application must be submitted via the graduate student's account.

## How many IRT applications can I submit?

- **One.** There is a maximum of one award per team and student.

**All IRT recipients are required to present their research at the UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium in May or CALIT2's Symposium in June.**

# How Do I Prepare My Application?

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**Your online application must include the following:**

**1**

## Graduate Student Lead Information

- Name
- UCI email address
- Phone Number
- Major(s), Class Level, Graduation Date
- Undergraduate Co-applicant Names, UCI e-mail addresses, Schools, and Majors

**2**

## Faculty Mentor/Advisor Information

- Name
- UCI email
- School
- Department

**3**

## About Your Project

- Project title
- Indicate the total funds requested (up to \$3,000)
- Indicate UROP funding history
- Indicate if your project involves human or animal subjects
- Indicate if any undergraduate students on the team also applied for funding through the Research Experience Fellowship application in Fall 2024

**4**

## Required Documents

- Proposal
- Personal Statements
- Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form

# The Proposal

## What is a proposal?

A proposal describes your project and should convince the reviewers of its significance and the need for funding.

## What should I Include in my proposal?

### Thesis, Purpose, Objective, & Approach

Describe your purpose with a clear research question. Why is this project significant? How is it interdisciplinary in nature? Thoroughly discuss the significance of your project, how it advances knowledge, and its potential impact on society. Describe the work you have already completed, what you plan to accomplish, and your intended outcomes.

### Responsibility

What is your role and the role of each of the members on your team? Discuss your specific duties for the project. Are you working in a lab or conducting an independent project? Describe how your work is independent from that of your faculty mentor/advisor's. Explain how you will interact with your faculty mentor/advisor and other research personnel throughout the project.

### Timeline

Create an outline of your specific research process, including what needs to be completed (e.g., data collection, analysis, trainings, meetings). Include a schedule—by week, month, or quarter—of project tasks and deadlines. Discuss the progress you have made so far, where you are in your project, and expectations that you can complete the work within by the end of May. List specific goals to ensure that the project is progressing efficiently.

### References

What resources will you use? List the books, articles, and any other outside sources you used in preparing your proposal or that have contributed to your research.

### Itemized Budget


What expenses are you requesting funding for? Include an itemized budget of projected expenses for the length of your IRT project. Consult with your Faculty Mentor/Advisor, if needed, about your expenses before developing your budget. Be aware that there are limits to what can and cannot be covered ([see pg. 7](#)).



While the graduate student submits the application, all applicants should **collaboratively** prepare a **single proposal document**. The proposal must describe the responsibilities of **each group member**.

# What Expenses Are Covered by IRT?

Students can request up to \$3,000 to support their project. Please be aware that there are limitations on what expenses can be covered. A requirement of this application is to create an itemized budget; therefore, it's essential to be cautious about what can and cannot be covered.

Many books, software packages, and other resources are freely accessible to you through the university as a UCI student, therefore these items cannot be covered. The [UCI OIT website](#) contains information on available software, and you should check the UCI Libraries website for books and other reference materials that may be available for free. 

**Below is a detailed guide on what expenses are covered, not covered, and rarely covered:**

## Can be covered

- ✓ Animals
- ✓ Chemicals
- ✓ Copying/printing
- ✓ Facilities rental
- ✓ Mailing/postage
- ✓ Mileage (to conduct local research)
- ✓ Other critical related costs
- ✓ Presentation materials, such as a Symposium poster
- ✓ Reference materials not available for free
- ✓ Software
- ✓ Supplies

## Not covered

- ✗ Benefits for project participants
- ✗ Conference registration fees
- ✗ Gift cards/gift incentives, cash or otherwise
- ✗ Items that can be borrowed for free or rented at a much lower cost
- ✗ Major hardware purchases
- ✗ Membership fees
- ✗ NO CASH or CASH EQUIVALENT PAYMENTS to benefit participants, researchers, & others from the project
- ✗ Salaries, honoraria and stipends to compensate for project-related work
- ✗ Standard laboratory expenses
- ✗ Travel (UROP Travel Awards can provide limited funding to undergraduates for qualified expenses; see the UROP website for information)

# Formatting the Itemized Budget

## How do I format my itemized list of projected expenses?

Use the format in the sample below for your budget. Clearly explain any expenses that could be seen as unusual. Include the total cost of your project and specify the amount you are requesting from CALIT2.

Sample IRT Proposal Budget		
Item	Budgeted Amount	Explanation and Justification for Expense
512GB Solid State Drives	\$300	Storage of experimental data.
Copying/printing	\$500	Materials needed in experiment design.
Website builder software	\$800	Includes domain and hosting costs for 1 year. Not available via UCI.
Organic solvents for reaction and chromatography	\$680	Supplies needed to gain results.
Proper Waste Disposal	\$700	
Poster for Symposium	\$120	
Total Budget	\$3,100	
<b>Total Requesting from CALIT2</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	

**All purchases must adhere to university policy. Note that some equipment, such as laptops and similar hardware (rarely approved and only if mission-critical to the project), remain the ownership of Calit2/UCI and must be returned in June.**



Need an example of a Interdisciplinary Research Teams proposal? Check out the **sample proposals**.





# Formatting Your Proposal

Use the information below to help you format your proposal. Content and organization varies by field of study. Talk to your faculty mentor to determine how you should organize your proposal (this includes citation styles e.g., APA, MLA, and Chicago).

## Names of all undergraduate researcher(s) and mentor(s)

- ✓ At the top of the document



## Page Count

- ✓ Typically 3-5 pages
  - If you need to write more that's okay, but keep it concise



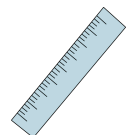
## Spacing

- ✓ Double spaced



## Margins

- ✓ 1" margins



## Font

- ✓ 11-point or larger type
- ✓ Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial



## Document

- ✓ Size: 8.5" x 11"
- ✓ File type: MS Word or PDF



Your proposal will be reviewed be evaluated by Calit2 faculty and staff.



# The Personal Statement

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## What is a personal statement?

A personal statement describes your relationship to the project.

## What should I include in my personal statement?

Please address the following in essay format (e.g. do not include headings below in your essay):

1

### Interest and Motivation for Research or Creative Activity:

- Describe your academic or professional interest in conducting research or this creative activity.
- Explain what sparked your curiosity or passion for this specific research topic or creative activity.

2

### Personal Connection to the Project:

- Share any personal experiences, values, or life events that uniquely connect you to this project.
- Discuss any personal motivations or values driving your commitment to this project.

3

### Alignment with Goals and Impact:

- Explain how pursuing this project will help you move toward your academic, career, and/or personal goals. Discuss the skills, knowledge, or experiences you aim to gain from the project.
- Discuss the impact your project can make in your field and community.

4

### Background and Experience:

- Highlight your background and experience related to this project, including any previous relevant accomplishments.
- Include information about any previous research projects, coursework, internships, or relevant activities.



The graduate student lead and each undergraduate team member must write their **own personal statement**. All personal statements must be combined into **one PDF or Microsoft Word file** that will be uploaded to your group's online application. Please include each student's name at the beginning of their statement.

# Formatting Your Personal Statement

Use the information below to help you format your proposal.

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## Name

- ✓ At the top of the document



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## Page Count

- ✓ Typically 1-2 pages



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## Spacing

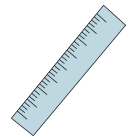
- ✓ Double spaced



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## Margins

- ✓ 1" margins



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## Font

- ✓ 11-point or larger type
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## Document

- ✓ Size: 8.5" x 11"
- ✓ File type: MS Word or PDF



# Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form

## What is the Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form?

The Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form indicates that you agree to create your proposal with your team and mentor the undergraduate students named on the proposal. In an effort to increase the value and impact of the IRT experience for the undergraduate students, we expect you to be proactive, both in defining expectations for the project and in guidance and oversight of the project. You are agreeing to engage in mentoring activities with your team throughout the year.

## What steps do I need to take to complete the form?

- 1 Graduate student meets with undergraduate students** to review proposal.
- Graduate student indicates if they have completed the **UCI Mentoring Excellence Program** (recommended, not required).
- 3 Send the Form Electronically:**
  - Graduate student sends the "Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form" electronically to their faculty mentor/advisor to obtain their approval (electronic signatures required) for completion.
- 4 Faculty mentor/advisor completes the form:**
  - Your faculty mentor/advisor signs off on the form to indicate that they approve you to pursue this project and sends the completed form back to you.
- 5 Submit the Form:**
  - You submit the form electronically along with your application by the application deadline.



Provide your faculty mentor/advisor with this form as soon as possible so they can sign and return to you before the application deadline. Click [here](#) to access the Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form.




# Conducting Ethical Research


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## Does your project involve human and/or animal subjects?

Projects involving human and/or animal subjects must adhere to UCI's Research Protections standards.

Students should consult with their Faculty Mentor to determine if **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** or **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)** approval is needed. 

## Does UROP have detailed guidelines to help me?

Yes. Review the **UROP Research Protections Instructions** for detailed guidelines, including instructions on how to complete the IRB Exempt Self-Determination Tool for projects involving human subjects. 

Contact UROP if you or your Faculty Mentor have questions about this process.



Click **here** to access the UROP Research Protections Instructions



# Resources

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We've compiled a list of resources that are meant to support your experience with the 2024 Fall IRT application. Happy clicking!

## Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form

- The **Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form** indicates that you agree to mentor the undergraduate students named on the proposal and that your faculty mentor/advisor approves you to pursue this project.

## Sample Proposals by School:

- Explore **sample proposals** from various schools.

## UCI OIT Website:

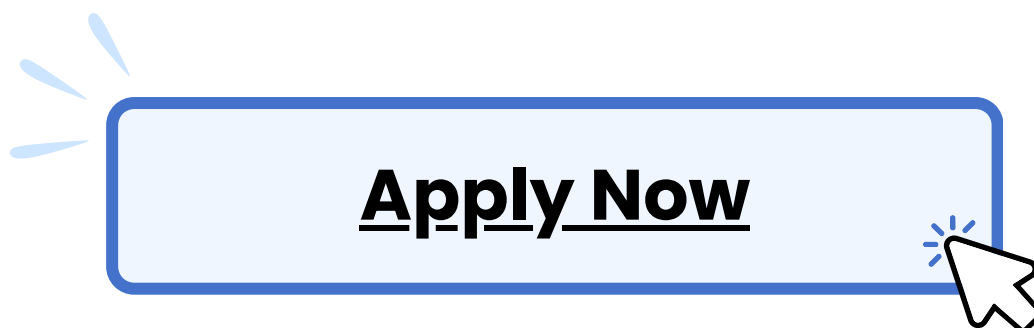
- Visit the **UCI OIT website** to see what software is available for free.

## UCI Writing Center:

- **Schedule an appointment** to get feedback on your personal statement and proposal, even if you are in the brainstorming stages.

## UROP's Research Protections Instructions:

- **Determine whether your project requires review** by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). If needed, receive guidance on procedural details, including the use of the IRB Exempt Self-Determination Tool for projects involving human subjects.




# IRT Information Sessions

<b>Interdisciplinary Research Teams - DUE: November 8</b>		Learn about the IRT program, which funds team projects led by a graduate student with 2-4 undergraduates from different schools or departments.
<b>IRT Application Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thu 10/17/2024 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (In Person)</li> </ul>		

<b>REF &amp; IRT Proposal &amp; Personal Statement Walk-In Hours by UCI Writing Center</b>		Receive feedback on your proposal and personal statement from UCI Writing Center Staff. No appointment required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wed 10/23/2024 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (In Person)</li> <li>• Thu 10/24/2024 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (In Person)</li> </ul>		

**UCI** Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program




  
Scan or click here for details & register to attend

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What should I consider when creating a budget?**

IRT awards will provide research-related supplies and expenses specifically for the IRT project during this academic year. Graduate students who will be conducting research beyond this year should only include items that will be used this year. Please review the sample budget in this guide for details on allowable and non-allowable expenses. The maximum amount that can be requested is \$3,000.

## **How will I receive my funding?**

One student representative from each team must submit purchase orders to Calit2 based on the approved budget that was submitted as part of the proposal. Calit2 will approve and purchase the items for the team. Funds will NOT be transferred to the student or department. All funds must be expended by May.

## **Can I apply for IRT funding for the same project if we received it last year?**

No, not if the project is the same. IRT projects should be able to be completed within the academic year. If you can demonstrate a new, distinct project related to your research, you can apply for IRT again. Be sure to provide clear objectives and justify why further funding is necessary to continue your research or creative activities in a different type of project.

## **Is there another opportunity to obtain funding for project-related expenses through UROP?**

The UROP Fall Research Experience Fellowship (REF) is the other UROP opportunity for undergraduate students to receive funding for project-related supplies and expenses. It has the same deadline as IRT in the fall.

## **Can we apply for IRT and REF at the same time?**

Yes, teams may apply for both IRT and REF but can only receive funding for one application. Teams not awarded for IRT will be considered for REF. Note that while graduate students should apply for IRT, one undergraduate student from the team should be the one to apply to REF.



## **Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)**

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### **How can I increase my chances of receiving funding?**

Ensure that you submit the strongest application possible: consult with your faculty mentor to write a well-justified and detailed Proposal and Personal Statement. Ensure that your budget is realistic and clearly outlines the necessity of each expense. Go to the UCI Writing Center to receive feedback on your documents. While we strive to fund as many worthy projects as possible, the Calit2 and UROP award budgets are limited and if awarded, you may not receive the maximum amount requested. The final funding decision is based on a variety of factors considered by Calit2. You will increase your chances by following our Guide closely to submit the best application you can.

### **If a group project is awarded funding or recognition, do all members need to present at the UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium?**

Awarded IRT teams must present their research at either the IRT symposium or the Undergraduate Research Symposium in the Spring quarter. Graduate student mentors can present with their team at the IRT symposium. If presenting at the Undergraduate Research Symposium, the undergraduate students on the team should be the presenters. Graduate students can attend the presentation to support their team, but should not be a presenter, as this is an undergraduate symposium.

### **Does the graduate mentor have to be the lead applicant?**

Yes! For IRT, the graduate mentor must be the one who submits the application on behalf of the team. They must create their own account within the application system and submit the application via their own account.

### **Am I automatically registered to present at the UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium?**

No, teams that choose to present at the UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium must register separately in early April.