

Reconceptualizing the Student Research Assistant Program (SRAP)



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

Purpose for Changes

1. To align program with campus priorities on career readiness and experiential learning.
2. To improve support for students as well as faculty involved with the program (sponsors and committee reviewers).



Process behind Redesign

Faculty Input: All current and former SRAP Sponsors dating from 2022 were emailed an anonymous Qualtrics survey requesting input on the purpose, goals, challenges and potential of the SRAP program. The survey was open from September 15-October 3, 2025.

Survey: The survey questions were designed by the Co-Directors of the Office of Undergraduate Research with feedback from Dean Karen Owen, Dr. Brian Mosier, and the SRAP Committee.

Content: The survey consisted of 15 Likert Scale, ranking, and open-ended questions to gather quantitative and qualitative input from faculty.

Respondents: 54 individuals responded to the survey

Review and Recommendations: Dean Karen Owen, AVP of Innovation and Research Dr. Brian Mosier, and the SRAP Committee reviewed the survey results and made recommendations regarding the purpose and goals of SRAP and the 3 revised rubrics.



What's New (starting SPRING 2027)

Program name: *UWG Catalyst Program*

Framework: Codification of 3 fundable categories of projects: Career Readiness, Experiential Learning, and Research.

Goals of program: Revised with objective of identifying work students will do more precisely.

Rubrics: 3 rubrics have been designed to align with each of the 3 project categories.

Application process: All applications will go directly through the Smartsheet portal—no separate uploading of materials needed.

What's the Same

Timeline: AY and Summer program applications will open in early Spring.

Level of Funding: The level of funding has not been impacted by this redesign.

Program Oversight: The Office of Undergraduate Research oversees this program and its implementation.

Committee Review: All applications are reviewed by the program committee, comprised of faculty and staff from across disciplines.

Support for Students: Program objectives remain focused on supporting student success.

Application location: All application portals are housed on the Office of Undergraduate Research webpage.



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Purpose and Goals of UWG Catalyst Program

Current Purpose and Goals of SRAP	Revised Purpose and Goals of the UWG Catalyst Program
“The <u>purpose</u> of the Student Research Assistant Program is to encourage student participants to complete their college careers at the University of West Georgia. It achieves this through enhancing their learning experience, increasing their research and career skills in their chosen fields of study, and engaging them in activities and mentoring relationships that improve their quality of student life.”	“The <u>purpose</u> of the UWG Catalyst Program is to enhance student learning in their field of study through faculty and staff mentorship and experiences in a way that helps them complete their college careers at UWG. This program connects theory to practice by empowering students to apply concepts and skills learned in the classroom to real-world contexts.”
In addition to reducing undergraduate attrition rates, SRAP projects are intended to meet at least one of the <u>following goals</u>: 1. Contribute in some significant way to the quality of life on campus. 2. Advance a recognized academic or research project. 3. Promote the University of West Georgia and enhance its reputation.	<u>Goals</u> of the UWG Catalyst Program: 1. Advances a research, creative endeavor, or experiential project aligned with the student’s field of study and development of skills or knowledge related to that field” 2. Utilize coursework and skills to actively enhance the academic and social experience for members of the campus community and/or the communities UWG serves” 3. Promote and enhance student expertise and practical/hands-on opportunities at UWG and/or in the community”



Revised Framework

- The UWG Catalyst Program offers 3 fundable categories of projects: ***Career Readiness, Experiential Learning, and Research***
- Faculty select the most appropriate category for their project proposal and apply using the corresponding form.
- The application prompts applicants to describe the project within the funding category.
- Rubrics align with the funding category to streamline the review process.



Revised Application Process

- All applications will go directly through the Smartsheet portal—no separate uploading of materials needed.
- Word limits are part of Smartsheet platform.
- UWG Catalyst Program application (DRAFT)



What the Catalyst Program Committee Reviews



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Career Readiness Assistant Proposal

Applicant Information:

First Name:	Nathan (TEST)	Last Name:	Lawres (TEST)
Program:	Anthropology (TEST)	Department/School:	School of Social Sciences (TEST)
College/School:	College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences		
Email Address:	nlawres@westga.edu		

Project Information

Project Title:	TEST OF THE STUDENT CAREER READINESS ASSISTANT SUBMISSION SYSTEM
Project Description:	
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- Textboxes from the Smartsheet application map over to create a single document pdf with responses.
- Each textbox corresponds to the application question and follows the order of the application.
- The rubrics align with the questions and answers on the application Smartsheet and pdf mapping document.



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Revised Rubrics

Criterion 1: increased focus on work students will do, the mentoring provided, and project's alignment with funding category (NB: this criterion changes to reflect funding category of project).

Criterion 2-4 are the same for each rubric.

Criterion 2: codifies alignment with program goals.

Criterion 3: strengthens and clarifies requirements for detailed budgets.

Criterion 4: strengthens and clarifies requirements for detailed timeline and budget.



DRAFT Revised Rubric

Funding Application Evaluation: Career Readiness Support	
	Score
Criterion 1: Alignment with the following Career Readiness Objectives: the project identifies the role of the faculty mentor, identifies the work the student is doing, clearly articulates relevant skills the student will develop through the project and how those skills align with the project tasks and goals, clearly articulates how skill development aligns with concept of career readiness, and clearly articulates the work habits required for the project - <i>Score 3 (Totally Aligned):</i> The application completely aligns with all four objectives. - <i>Score 2 (Highly Aligned):</i> The application clearly demonstrates alignment with three of the four objectives. - <i>Score 1 (Moderately Aligned):</i> The application shows clear alignment with two of the four objectives. - <i>Score 0 (Not Aligned):</i> The application aligns with one or less of the stated objectives.	
Criterion 2: Alignment with Program Objectives: advances a research, creative endeavor, or experiential project aligned with the student's field of study and development of skills or knowledge related to that field; utilize coursework and skills to actively enhance the academic or social experience for member of the campus community and the communities UWG serves; promote and enhance student expertise and practical/hands-on opportunities at UWG and in the community. - <i>Score 3 (Totally Aligned):</i> The application completely aligns with all three goals of the program. - <i>Score 2 (Highly Aligned):</i> The application clearly demonstrates a strong alignment with two of the three goals of the program. - <i>Score 1 (Moderately Aligned):</i> The application shows clear alignment with one of the three goals of the program. - <i>Score 0 (Not Aligned):</i> The application lacks alignment with the stated goals and objectives of the program.	
Criterion 3: Alignment with Budget Appropriateness Protocols: proposal clearly outlines a budget, provides a well-defined plan for spending funds to a prescribed schedule, explicitly states how the budget supports student work, provides justification for all budget line items (student labor, materials, and supplies) - <i>Score 3 (Totally Aligned):</i> The application completely aligns with all four budget protocols. - <i>Score 2 (Highly Aligned):</i> The application clearly demonstrates alignment with three of the four budget protocols. - <i>Score 1 (Moderately Aligned):</i> The application shows clear alignment with two of the four budget protocols. - <i>Score 0 (Not Aligned):</i> The application aligns with one or less of the budget protocols.	
Criterion 4: Alignment with Feasibility and Accountability: proposal provides a clear timeline for either project completion or meeting benchmarks for ongoing projects, proposal clearly articulates how both the student and faculty mentor contribute to project workflow, clearly identifies the skills the project will foster in the student - <i>Score 3 (Totally Aligned):</i> The application completely aligns with all three feasibility and accountability areas. - <i>Score 2 (Highly Aligned):</i> The application clearly demonstrates alignment with two of the three feasibility and accountability areas. - <i>Score 1 (Moderately Aligned):</i> The application shows clear alignment with one of the three feasibility and accountability areas. - <i>Score 0 (Not Aligned):</i> The application does not align with any of the feasibility and accountability areas.	
TOTAL	

The total score can be calculated by adding the scores for each criterion, with a maximum possible score of 12. Applications can be categorized as follows based on their total scores:

- **Score 9-12 (Highly Recommended):** The application aligns well with the objectives, is feasible and appropriate, and adheres to the prescribed timeline and accountability standards.
- **Score 5-8 (Moderate Consideration):** The application may need some improvements in alignment, feasibility, or timeliness.
- **Score 0-4 (Not Recommended):** The application does not meet the requirements and objectives outlined in the project description.

This rubric will be used to assess and prioritize applications for funding, ensuring that the chosen projects align with the goals and objectives of the opportunity.



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Questions?

Dr. Lisa Connell

Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research

lconnell@westga.edu



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