UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS THESIS MANUAL & POLICY GUIDE

Instructions concerning the Undergraduate Research Scholars honors distinction and the preparation of undergraduate research theses at Texas A&M University

2020-2021

LAUNCH: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

LAUNCH
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

WELCOME TO THE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Dear Undergraduate Research Scholars:

During the next two semesters, undergraduates in this program will have an exceptional opportunity to engage in high-impact research experiences by working closely with Texas A&M University faculty, staff, and students. Undergraduate Research Scholars will find themselves challenged in many ways, but will develop knowledge and skills that go beyond what is offered in a classroom setting. LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research (UGR) is here to help undergraduates achieve their goals.

The title of "**Undergraduate Research Scholar**" is a stand-alone honors distinction awarded to students who meet the requirements presented in this Thesis Manual & Policy Guide. Undergraduate Research Scholars are required to describe the results of their faculty-mentored research and scholarly work in a formal written thesis. Undergraduate Research Scholars' theses will be electronically submitted and indexed in the permanent Undergraduate Research Collection of the OAKTrust Digital Repository at Texas A&M University, where they will be accessible worldwide. Theses must be presented in a uniform scholarly manner, professionally designed and properly documented, and must accurately represent each Undergraduate Research Scholar's creative and intellectual studies. Theses should also exemplify the highest level of scholarship as they will be available to the general public and be seen as a representation of the quality of research endeavors at Texas A&M University.

This Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis Manual & Policy Guide is designed to assist Undergraduate Research Scholars and faculty advisors in the preparation of theses by providing uniform standards of style and format while allowing enough flexibility to satisfy the accepted practices of different academic disciplines. This Manual & Guide has been adapted from the Thesis Manual published by the office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) at Texas A&M to emphasize the expectation that the resulting Undergraduate Research Scholar's thesis meets the same high standards for format and style as a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. Previously submitted theses are available for view in the **Undergraduate Research Scholars Capstone Collection** in the Texas A&M Libraries OAKTrust Repository.

Thanks & Gig 'Em,

LAUNCH: UGR Staff

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Introduction

Undergraduate Research Scholars and faculty advisors are responsible for the quality of the content within the thesis and are expected to meet regularly to assess the strength and validity of the research content and methodology. LAUNCH: UGR will review theses for format alone and provide feedback on thesis formatting and style. **LAUNCH: UGR will not comment directly on the content of the project.**

The Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis will be the primary product of this program and must:

- Be written in progression over the fall and spring semesters
- Be approved by the office of Research Compliance & Biosafety prior to the start of any data collection if the project involves the use of human subjects, vertebrate animals, or biohazards and pathogens
- Reflect original work done by an undergraduate under the mentorship of a Texas A&M faculty advisor that is presented in a scholarly, well-integrated, and properly documented manner

LAUNCH: UGR provides a number of resources to students in the URS thesis program:

- Thesis Manual & Policy Guide
- Thesis Formatting Guide
- Thesis Templates
- Common Mistakes Guide
- Optional Thesis Writing Course in the spring semester (**COLLEGE STATION** and **GALVESTON**)
- eCampus Community
- Scholars Thesis Submittal System (STSS)
- OAKTrust Digital Repository
- Workshops and Resource Sessions
- Drop-in Help Sessions
- Scheduled Appointments: ugr@tamu.edu
- Additional Resources through the University Writing Center

Contact LAUNCH: UGR:

- Henderson Hall (HEND) 114
- Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM
- (979) 845-1957
- ugr@tamu.edu
- https://ugr.tamu.edu
- https://launch.tamu.edu

Program Benefits

Priority Registration

All Undergraduate Research Scholar applicants approved by faculty advisors before October 5 will receive priority registration for the spring semester so that they can better manage classes and research scheduling. Students with registration holds on their accounts will not receive priority registration. Any questions about priority registration can be directed to ugr@tamu.edu.

Recognition, Transcript Distinctions, and Graduation Regalia

Upon graduation, you will be recognized as an Undergraduate Research Scholar. This stand-alone distinction will appear on your official transcript and in the graduation program. **This distinction does not appear on your official transcript until <u>after</u> you graduate.**

You will also receive an Undergraduate Research Scholars medallion as official graduation regalia. Medallions are distributed at the LAUNCH Recognition Ceremony at the end of the spring semester. If you are unable to attend the Recognition Ceremony, medallions are also distributed at graduation. If you are not a graduating senior in May 2021, you will receive your medallion the semester you graduate. Email ugr@tamu.edu with questions about the LAUNCH Recognition Ceremony or regalia.

Monitor graduation updates at graduation.tamu.edu during the COVID-19 pandemic for the most up-to-date information regarding commencement and regalia.

Publication

All Undergraduate Research Scholars Theses are published to the Undergraduate Research Scholars Capstone Collection in the Texas A&M Libraries OAKTrust Repository. Once your thesis is deposited in OAKTrust, it will be available for viewing by the public. You and your faculty advisor have the opportunity to place a 2-year hold (also known as an embargo) on your thesis if you are seeking publication in an academic journal or intend to submit the work for patent consideration.

When the embargo expires, LAUNCH: UGR staff will contact your faculty advisor to confirm that the thesis can be released. Talk to your faculty advisor prior to the final thesis submission about the availability of your thesis to the public and whether or not to make your thesis available immediately. During this process you will learn about academic publishing, your rights as a researcher, and copyright law.

Email ugr@tamu.edu with questions about thesis holds (embargos) and the publication of your thesis to OAKTrust.

Thesis Writing Course

LAUNCH: UGR offers an optional 1-credit hour writing intensive (W) Thesis Writing Course in the spring semester. This course is available to students on the **COLLEGE STATION** and **GALVESTON** campuses. Limited seats are available in the course.

The **COLLEGE STATION** course is taught by Dr. Sarah M. Misemer, Associate Director for Undergraduate Research, and features topics such as:

- Thesis Writing
- Academic Publishing
- Copyright and Digital Citizenship
- Research Presentations

The most up-to-date information about this course will be found in Howdy.

Travel Award and Poster Voucher Requests

LAUNCH: UGR is able to offer limited financial support to students in the program.

Conference and Travel Reimbursements

LAUNCH: UGR can offer up to 21 travel awards for up to $300.00 to students on the **COLLEGE STATION** campus. These awards are available on a first-come, first-served basis for conference registration and travel expenses to make a public presentation of the Undergraduate Research Scholars project at a national or international conference or meeting.

Contact us at ugr@tamu.edu before making a purchase to verify that the expenses can be covered.

Before scheduling travel, monitor Texas A&M University travel guidance and policies during the COVID-19 pandemic at https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/travel.html. Only authorized travel will be eligible for reimbursements. During the 2020-2021 program, LAUNCH: UGR is accepting virtual conference registration for travel reimbursement.

IMPORTANT: This travel award will be processed through the office of Scholarships & Financial Aid. Reimbursements are posted to Texas A&M University student accounts in the form of a scholarship. **If students have a balance due to their student account, this payment will be applied toward that balance. Students receiving need-based financial aid should be aware that this travel award may result in revisions to their financial aid package.** Students can set up direct deposit through Howdy on the Finance tab.

We will accept requests for travel award reimbursements through April 12, 2021 as funds are available.

Travel Award Reimbursement Eligibility Requirements for URS Students

Your conference must occur between October 12, 2020 and April 12, 2021.

Proof of acceptance into a conference is required to hold a travel award.

If your travel award hold has been approved by LAUNCH: UGR, you must submit your receipts and completed reimbursement form to LAUNCH: UGR no later than 1 week after the last day of your conference or you will forfeit your hold on a travel award.

If you are unable to provide proof of acceptance into a conference, you will not be guaranteed a travel award. Instead, you will be put on a waiting list until proof of acceptance is received by LAUNCH: UGR.

Expenses* covered include normally reimbursable expenses such as:

- Conference Registration
- Housing / Hotel
- Airfare
- Fuel / Gas
- Parking

*NOTE: Reimbursable expenses are contingent on current Texas A&M University travel policies. Only authorized travel will be eligible for reimbursements. Before scheduling travel, view the most up-to-date policies at https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/travel.html.

Procedures for Requesting Travel Award Reimbursements

- Confirm travel is authorized by the university.
- Email ugr@tamu.edu to check on travel award availability.
- If awards are available, you will be asked to provide information about your conference and anticipated expenses.
- Once your information has been reviewed by LAUNCH: UGR, you will receive notification of whether or not your travel award hold has been approved.
- If you have been granted a hold on a travel award, you must submit your receipts and completed reimbursement form to LAUNCH: UGR no later than 1 week after the last day of your conference or you will forfeit your hold on a travel award.
- If you forfeit your hold on a travel award, you will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list.
- Travel awards are not guaranteed to those on the waiting list.

GALVESTON students should contact the Galveston Chair of Undergraduate Research at undergraduateresearch@tamug.edu regarding the process for conference and travel reimbursements. Up to 8 travel awards for up to $300.00 may be offered for students on the Galveston campus.

Poster Vouchers

LAUNCH: UGR will provide poster printing vouchers for up to one 48 in. x 48 in. glossy paper poster print for a maximum of up to 150 students on a first-come, first-served basis through the College of Architecture Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk.

Voucher Availability is dependent on ITS Help Desk hours, as well as university COVID-19 policies. Once you are ready to print your poster, email ugr@tamu.edu to request a voucher.

NOTE: You may apply for either, but not both, the poster printing voucher and travel reimbursement for your public presentation.

Program Structure

Requirements at a Glance

Fall	Spring
1. Attend the program orientation 2. Attend 1 start-of semester group meeting with assigned thesis reviewer 3. Attend 1 of 4 drop-in resource sessions 4. Attend 1 end-of-semester group meeting with assigned thesis reviewer 5. Complete 1 progress report	1. Attend 1 of 4 thesis formatting workshops 2. Complete 2 installment submissions 3. Complete 2 progress reports 4. Make 1 public presentation and submit 1 presentation report* 5. Complete the final thesis submission and receive faculty advisor approval

***COLLEGE STATION**, **DENTAL HYGIENE**, and **QATAR** Students: Public presentations can take place in either fall or spring between October 12 and April 12. **GALVESTON** Students: Public presentations can take place in either fall or spring between October 12 and April 23.

General Expectations

- Respond to program emails within 3 business days. All program email correspondence will be sent to your official Texas A&M Gmail account.
- Add ugr@tamu.edu and your assigned Thesis Reviewer's email address to your *Safe Senders List* so that program emails do not go to your Spam or Junk Folders.
- Receive Research Compliance Approval (if applicable to your project) before collecting data.
- Notify LAUNCH: UGR staff of any absences or missed assignments, as well as provide documentation of a university-excused absence. **No late work will be accepted without a university-excused absence.** See the Texas A&M Student Rules website for a list of university-excused absences*, including religious holidays. Missing mandatory events or assignments without a university-excused absence may result in your removal from the program. Documentation for missing a program deadline or mandatory event should be emailed to ugr@tamu.edu. Advance notice of university-excused absences is encouraged when possible.

***University-excused Absences:** Student attendance policies may change during the COVID-19 pandemic. Monitor Student Rule 7 and the official Texas A&M Coronavirus website for updated attendance policies. Students who test positive or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 are required to self-report. To receive an excused absence, student must comply with the documentation and notification guidelines outlined in Student Rule 7. While Student Rule 7, Section 7.3.2.1, indicates a medical confirmation note from the student's medical provider is preferred, for Fall 2020 only, students may use the Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form in lieu of a medical confirmation. Students must submit the Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class within three business days after the last date of absence.

Expectations for Teams

All teams include a primary contact (PC) who was designated during the application process. The primary contact serves as primary point of contact for all submissions and correspondence in the URS program. All team members should familiarize themselves with both team member and primary contact responsibilities to ensure that all program requirements are met.

Team Member Responsibilities at a Glance

	Application	Mandatory Events	Reports and Installments	Final Thesis
All Team Members	**Part 1 (Online Form) and Part 2 (STSS)**	**1 Program Orientation** **2 Small Group Meetings with Assigned Thesis Reviewer** **1 Resource Session** **1 Thesis Formatting Workshop**	**3 Progress Reports (eCampus)** **1 Presentation Report (eCampus)**	**Final Thesis Part 2 (STSS)**
Primary Contact Only	-	-	**2 Thesis Installments (eCampus)**	**Final Thesis Part 1 (eCampus)**

Responsibilities of All Team Members

- Provide equal contributions to the URS project and thesis.
- Attend all mandatory events.
- Turn in all progress reports individually.
- Make a public presentation. Teams may present either together or individually, but each member is required to make a public presentation.
- Submit their own presentation report to the eCampus Community.
- Communicate and delegate corrections as only the primary contact will have immediate access to the "graded" document.
- Submit final advisor-approved thesis to the Scholars Thesis Submittal System (STSS). This is Part 2 of the Final Thesis Submission process.

All team members are not required to submit thesis installments; HOWEVER, <u>if for some reason the primary contact is unable to submit an installment submission, another team member is required to submit the assignment by the specified deadline</u>.

Responsibilities of Team Primary Contacts

- Submit all installment documents. Only the primary contact is required to submit installments.
- Notify team members when installment documents are returned for revisions, delegate corrections, and resubmit the revised document. Only the primary contact will have immediate access to the "graded" document in eCampus.
- Contact another team member to submit the installment and/or revised document by the specified deadline if for some reason the primary contact is unable to submit an installment submission.
- Submit Part 1 of the Final Thesis Submission process to eCampus.

If you have any questions about procedures for URS teams, please contact LAUNCH: UGR staff at ugr@tamu.edu.

Mandatory Events

All Undergraduate Research Scholars are required to attend **five mandatory events**:

1. Program Orientation*
2. Initial Small Group Meeting with Assigned Thesis Reviewer
3. End-of-semester Small Group Meeting with Assigned Thesis Reviewer
4. One Resource Session
5. One Thesis Formatting Workshop

The purpose of mandatory events is to familiarize all students with program policies, expectations, and resources. Event details, descriptions, and RSVP links can be found in the *Full Program Schedule* section of this Thesis Manual & Policy Guide.

*QATAR Students**: Due to our differences in time zones, students on the Qatar campus will be assigned an Orientation Test through the eCampus Community in lieu of attending the synchronous orientation.

Policy on Missing Mandatory Events

University-excused Absences are required for missing mandatory events. Submit documentation of university-excused absences to ugr@tamu.edu.

Assignment Submissions

Policy on Incomplete or Late Assignments

No incomplete or late assignments will be accepted without a university-excused absence and appropriate documentation.

Submit documentation of university-excused absences to ugr@tamu.edu.

Progress Report Submissions

Three Progress Reports assignments will be submitted through the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Research Scholars eCampus Community over the course of the program:

1. Fall Progress Report 1 due on November 30
2. Spring Progress Report 1 due on January 25
3. Spring Progress Report 2 due on March 1

The purpose of these report assignments is to monitor student progress and to prompt students to think more deeply about their research, writing progress, and available resources/opportunities.

Thesis Installment Submissions

Two Thesis Installment assignments will be submitted through the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Research Scholars eCampus Community during the Spring semester:

1. Installment 1 due on January 25
2. Installment 2 due on March 1

The purpose of these installments is to prompt students to write their theses throughout the duration of the program and to ensure proper formatting of the thesis documents.

Final Thesis Submission

The final thesis submission on April 12 is a two-part process:

1. Submitted first to the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Research Scholars eCampus Community for a brief formatting check.
2. When approved by your assigned thesis viewer after April 12, continue your submission in the Scholars Thesis Submittal System (STSS) to receive faculty advisor approval.

The final thesis is the culmination of the URS program and is the document that will be eventually published in the Undergraduate Research Scholars Capstone Collection in the Texas A&M OAKTrust Repository.

Public Presentation and Presentation Report

All Undergraduate Research Scholars are required to present their research projects to the public to satisfy the public presentation component of the program. Students may present in poster, oral, or other formats at national, international, or other conferences/symposia. Many students take advantage of other on-campus presentation opportunities, however, ***presenting to a lab or classroom is not acceptable***. Contact LAUNCH: UGR at ugr@tamu.edu if you have questions about whether or not your presentation venue meets program requirements.

All Undergraduate Research Scholars should include the Undergraduate Research Scholars logo on posters or PowerPoint presentations. Logo files in multiple formats are available for download on the URS Resources page on the LAUNCH website.

All Undergraduate Research Scholars must submit a Presentation Report to the eCampus Community by the specified deadline* to receive credit for making a public presentation.

*COLLEGE STATION, **DENTAL HYGIENE**, and **QATAR** Students: Public presentations can take place in either fall or spring between October 12 and April 12.

*GALVESTON Students: Public presentations can take place in either fall or spring between October 12 and April 23 as students at Texas A&M University at Galveston are expected to present at the Student Research Symposium on the Galveston campus in mid-April. For more information about the Symposium at Galveston, visit https://tamug.edu/Research/Symposium.

Undergraduate Research Scholars Symposium

All students from **COLLEGE STATION**, **GALVESTON**, **QATAR**, and **DENTAL HYGIENE** campuses are invited and highly encouraged to present at the URS Symposium hosted by LAUNCH: UGR in College Station.*

The LAUNCH URS Symposium fulfills the URS thesis program requirement for students to do a public presentation and also offers you a chance to receive direct constructive feedback on your research projects and presentation skills. The LAUNCH URS Symposium features both poster and oral presentations by current Undergraduate Researcher Scholars in a variety of disciplines.

Both oral and poster presentations are attended by faculty, staff, post-docs, and graduate students who are invited to be active listeners and provide feedback on research projects and presentation skills. Undergraduate students in LAUNCH: Honors and LAUNCH: Learning Communities programs will visit presentations and will be assigned reflection activities to help them discover their own research interests and develop their communication skills. Volunteers for the LAUNCH URS Symposium will include the LAUNCH Undergraduate Research Ambassadors, Learning Communities' Peer Mentors, and LAUNCH staff members.

Why Present at the URS Symposium?
- It's free and on-campus!
- Fulfills URS public presentation requirement
- Will help hone your presentation skills for future research presentations—faculty, postdocs, and graduate students will be participating as active listeners and oral session moderators to provide you constructive feedback.
- Timeslots are self-selected—no need to worry about missing class or work, and you can invite your faculty advisor well in advance to your session!
- Oral and poster session formats are available.
- Print your poster for free on us with one of our poster vouchers.**

***NOTE:** Monitor the LAUNCH: UGR website for updates on whether the URS Symposium will take place in-person or virtually due to COVID-19 conditions.

**NOTE: Voucher Availability is dependent on ITS Help Desk hours, as well as university COVID-19 policies.

Additional Program Information

Research Compliance and Ethics

https://rcb.tamu.edu | https://vpr.tamu.edu

Research performed by undergraduate students must comply with all federal, state, and Texas A&M University rules and regulations. Undergraduate students are expected to obtain the same approvals and receive the same training as graduate, faculty, and staff researchers performing equivalent work.

Faculty research 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 acknowledgement of research compliance verification. The steps to clear your research compliance status are the following:

1. Discussion with Faculty Advisor
2. Submission of application with completed research compliance acknowledgement (appears in application template)
3. Approval by advisor and LAUNCH
4. Once accepted, if your project changes, notify faculty advisor BEFORE you collect any data to determine if you need compliance training or approval
5. Submission of final thesis with completed research compliance acknowledgement (appears in thesis template)

Direct questions about obtaining compliance to the appropriate RCB committees:

- **Human subjects:** Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- **Vertebrate animals:** Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- **Biohazards and pathogens:** Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)

Your faculty advisor should know whether your URS project requires research compliance approval and will be able to guide you through the approval and training process. If you are unsure about whether or not your project needs compliance approval, talk to your faculty advisor as well as the Research Compliance & Biosafety (RCB) office.

Texas A&M University's Division of Research, through the RCB office, is responsible for providing training and support to faculty, students, and staff in regulatory requirements for research. The offices seek to promote and ensure the highest standards for research compliance across the university. For more information, visit the RCB website.

Approval and Training

You must obtain necessary approvals from the appropriate committee and complete any specialized training **before collecting any data**.

You and your faculty advisor must work directly with the RCB office to receive any required approvals. If you think that you need additional training or certification, ask your faculty advisor for clarification. If

your project changes during the course of the program you may need to seek approval. Check regularly with your faculty advisor to determine whether you need to have compliance approval. You must acknowledge that you have appropriate approvals, if required, and provide protocol numbers in your final thesis before your faculty advisor approves your document.

NEW University SAP 15.99.99.M0.04, Responsible Conduct for Research

This SAP establishes University requirements for the training of students and postdoctoral researchers involved in University-related research, regardless of funding. Any undergraduate student who participates in research must complete online RCR training within 60 days from their initial involvement in the research activity. See the full SAP.

Availability of Theses to the Public

After your final thesis has been approved by both the faculty advisor and LAUNCH: UGR staff, it will be uploaded to the Undergraduate Research Scholars Capstone Collection in the OAKTrust Repository, where it will be freely available to the public. Upon submission of the final thesis in April, you and your faculty advisor have the chance to select and approve the appropriate embargo option for the work through the STSS. Therefore, theses will be deposited into OAKTrust based on the embargo option that was approved by the faculty advisor during the final thesis submission process.

During a two-year hold, the thesis will not be made public, allowing for time to seek publication in an academic journal or submit the work for patent consideration. If a hold is placed on a thesis, LAUNCH: UGR staff will contact the faculty advisor after two years to confirm that the thesis can be released. Each Undergraduate Research Scholar must discuss with their faculty advisor whether to make the thesis available immediately or to place it on hold for two years. **If no response is received from either party after two years, the thesis will be released.**

NOTE: No changes can be made to the thesis document once it has received final approval by the LAUNCH office and your faculty advisor even after the embargo expires.

Thesis Copyright

Undergraduate Research Scholars will own the copyright to the Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis. This means that the original work in the thesis can still be submitted for publication in a scholarly journal. Because the OAKTrust Digital Repository is legally classified as a publication, care must be taken not to violate United States copyright laws. If an Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis contains any material (pictures, figures, tables, text, etc.) taken from other copyrighted sources, the student and faculty advisor are responsible for determining if a letter of permission from the copyright holder should be included as a statement within the document or as supplemental material to allow its use in the thesis. This is true even if you are an author of the material. Ultimately, if a permission statement is required by the copyright holder, it must be included in the thesis and proper credit (dictated by the letter of permission) must be given in the text. The appropriate place for this attribution is the Acknowledgements page.

If you have already published material that you subsequently want to include as part of your Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis, you should be aware of the agreement that you signed when the material was accepted for publication. At that time, you may have assigned copyright to someone

else (a journal, for example) as publisher, and you may no longer possess rights. Publisher agreement forms can be modified before they are signed so that you retain the right to include the material in your thesis. When negotiating with the publisher, remember to inform them that the thesis will be available publicly available online. If you have not retained the right to use the material in the thesis, written permission must be obtained from the copyright holder to include the material in the thesis.

Proper credit, as instructed in the letter of permission, must be given in the text. A copy of the letter of permission should be included in the Appendix section in the thesis. The permission granter should also be acknowledged in the Contributors section on the Acknowledgements page in the thesis.

Useful Links

- http://copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf
- http://policies.tamus.edu/17-01.pdf
- http://tamu.libguides.com/copyright
- https://creativecommons.org

Required and Recommended Technology

Required: The URS thesis templates are available in Microsoft Word and LaTeX format. If you are using the Microsoft Word templates, you will need latest version of Microsoft Word for Desktop. If you are using the LaTeX template, you will need to create an account with Overleaf.com.

Recommended: Use of citation management software is highly recommended. Requirements for each software varies.

Technology Support

Common Issues and Resolutions

- **Updates:** Keep both your computer and your installation of Microsoft Office up-to-date for the best template experience.
- **Web vs. Desktop:** Use caution when editing your template on Microsoft Office 365 for web (accessed through a browser or mobile app). Use of Microsoft Office for desktop (installed to your computer) is recommended for editing. Some advanced features built into the templates are not available on the web and may become corrupted if edited on the web.
- **Google:** Never open or edit your template using Google Docs. Google Docs and Microsoft Word are not compatible. We recommend using Google Drive as method for file transfers only. We recommend using Google Docs with the intention of copying and pasting your writing as plain text into your Microsoft Word thesis template.

Updating Operating Systems

- View the Texas A&M University minimum computer requirements.
- Visit WhatsMyOS.com to find out which operating system you have.
  - Purchase the latest copy of Windows from Texas A&M University.
    - View the system requirements for the Windows 10 operating system.
  - Upgrade your Mac to the latest macOS for free.
    - View the system requirements for the macOS Catalina operating system.

Installing the Latest Version of Microsoft Office
- [Find out which version of Microsoft Office you have.](#)
- [View the system requirements for Microsoft Word](#).
- [Access your FREE Texas A&M University Office 365 account using your NetID and password](#).
- Click the "Install Office" drop-down menu at the top right corner.
    - Install the entire Office Suite, including Microsoft Word, by selecting "Office 365 Apps."

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at [aggiehonor.tamu.edu](#).

Useful Links
- Student Rules: https://student-rules.tamu.edu
- Student Rights and Responsibilities: http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rights
- Attendance: http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07
- Conduct Code: http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule24
- Governing Research: http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/15.01.01.M0.04.pdf
- Authorship: http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/15.99.03.M1.02.pdf
- Ethics and Responsible Conduct: http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/15.99.03.M1.pdf
- Human Subjects: http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/15.99.01.M1.pdf
- Biohazards: http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/15.99.06.M1.pdf
- Vertebrate Animals: http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/15.99.07.M1.pdf
- Intellectual Property: http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/17.01.99.M1.pdf

20.1.2.3.9 University Rules on Research

Students involved in conducting research and/or scholarly activities at Texas A&M University must also adhere to standards set forth in University Rule 15.99.03.M1 - Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship.

20.1.2.4 Special Note on Group Projects

If someone in a group commits academic misconduct, the entire group could be held responsible for it as well. It is important to clearly document who contributes what parts of the joint project and to know what group members are doing and how they are getting the material they provide.

University Libraries

https://library.tamu.edu | https://www.tamug.edu/library

https://qatar.library.tamu.edu | https://dentistry.tamu.edu/studentlife/library-resources.html

The University Libraries provide subject librarians to assist you with your bibliographic searches, as well as webpages and workshops on how to use the most common bibliographic and database tools. Take advantage of all the resources the library has to offer, including training with citation software (EndNote or RefWorks) that will make writing your thesis much easier. If you are not using one of these programs to organize your citations, you will be amazed at how they simplify the reference process.

University Writing Center

https://uwc.tamu.edu

The University Writing Center (UWC) offers face-to-face or online consultations with certified consultants for writing or public speaking projects. During the consultations, you will receive personalized advice and assistance based on your project and your needs. UWC staff will work with you on any type of writing, at any stage of the composing process, including developing and organizing content, understanding assignments or the demands of specific genres, and perfecting prose by editing and proofreading. For public speaking, you can ask for assistance with developing and perfecting outlines and content, or with designing slides, handouts, or posters. You can even practice your presentation!

Check out our curated collection of UWC resources for journal style theses.

Dissertation and Thesis Assistance (DATA)

https://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Graduate-Students/DATA-(Dissertation-Article-and-Thesis-Assistance)

UWC also offers the DATA program to Undergraduate Research Scholars. Students in the DATA program are paired with a UWC consultant for multiple meetings. The consultant's job is to help the writer improve writing skills, but the repeating appointments allow the consultant to get to know the student and the project more thoroughly.

Vital Program Resources

Undergraduate Research Scholars can expect to encounter the following websites—many requiring a Texas A&M NetID and Password—throughout the program:

1. https://ugr.tamu.edu
2. https://ecampus.tamu.edu
3. https://scholarsthesis.tamu.edu
4. https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/3367
5. https://gateway.tamu.edu/office365
6. https://google.tamu.edu
7. https://calendar.tamu.edu/ugr/urs.php
8. https://ers.tamu.edu
9. https://tamu.zoom.us

1. LAUNCH: UGR Website

https://ugr.tamu.edu

The LAUNCH: UGR website contains the most up-to-date information and resources you need to be successful in the URS program. Under the *Undergraduate Research Scholars (thesis)* tab you will find a program schedule overview, more details about the NEW Journal Style Thesis Templates, links to resources such as the Common Mistakes Guide, and a FAQs page to answer your common questions.

2. eCampus Community

https://ecampus.tamu.edu

The Undergraduate Research Scholars eCampus Community will be your gateway into the Undergraduate Research Scholars program. From the eCampus Community you can check deadlines, review requirements, and receive assistance from other research scholars. The eCampus Community is where you will submit thesis installments and progress reports, and receive feedback on your documents from LAUNCH: UGR staff. Further instruction on utilizing the eCampus Community, such as how to upload documents, will be provided over email, and briefly discussed at Orientation.

3. Scholars Thesis Submittal System (STSS)

https://scholarsthesis.tamu.edu

The Scholars Thesis Submittal System bookends your program experience—you use it to apply for and to complete the program. STSS is the same portal graduate students use to submit their dissertations for publication, and it is also used to process URS Applications and Part 2 of the Final Thesis Submission. At the end of the URS program your STSS profile will be used to publish your thesis and create your profile in the OAKTrust Digital Repository.

4. OAKTrust Digital Repository

https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/3367

The OAKTrust Digital Repository is where your thesis will be published either at the completion of the URS program, or after your thesis embargo expires. You can reference URS theses from past years to get ideas about how to style your thesis and to motivate you to complete the program!

NOTE: Thesis templates change each year and this is the first year the Journal Style templates have been offered, so your thesis templates may differ from those of years past. Always follow formatting guidelines present in the current year's thesis templates and Thesis Formatting Guide.

5. Microsoft Word

https://gateway.tamu.edu/office365

Students have access to Office 365 at no additional cost. This includes the Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote for up to five computers, tablets and mobile devices. Office 365 users also receive 1 TB of storage in Microsoft's OneDrive.

Web vs. Desktop: Use caution when editing your URS thesis template on Microsoft Office 365 for web (accessed through a browser or mobile app). **Microsoft Office for desktop (installed to your computer) is required to properly edit the templates.** Some advanced features built into the templates are not available on the web and may become corrupted if edited using Word in Microsoft 365 for web or if edited on a mobile device.

Never open or edit your thesis template using the browser or mobile version of Office 365. Instead, download a copy of the desktop version of Microsoft Word to your personal computer from your Aggie Account Gateway:

- Login to https://gateway.tamu.edu/office365 using your NetID and Password.
- Look for the "Install Office" button at the top right.
- Select "Other install options."
- Select "Install Office."

NOTE: Remember to keep both your computer's operating system and your installation of Microsoft Word up-to-date for the best URS thesis template experience. If you have questions about the system and software requirements for the URS thesis program, or are experiencing technical difficulties with the thesis templates, contact us at ugr@tamu.edu.

6. Google Applications

https://google.tamu.edu

Gmail

All program correspondence will be handled through your official Texas A&M Gmail account. Be sure to check your email regularly as you are expected to respond to program emails within 3 business days. You will receive official program emails from ugr@tamu.edu and your assigned Thesis Reviewer. Be sure to add these email addresses to your *Safe Senders List* so that program emails do not go to your Spam or Junk Folders.

Google Drive and Google Docs

Many students and teams use Google Drive and Google docs to collaborate, prepare, and edit content for their thesis documents. However, Google Docs and the Microsoft Word thesis templates are not completely compatible. **Never open or edit your thesis template using Google Docs.** We recommend using Google Docs with the intention of copying and pasting your text (select the **Keep Text Only** option) into your Microsoft Word thesis template.

7. URS Campus Calendar

https://calendar.tamu.edu/ugr/urs.php

Use the URS calendar to keep track of all deadlines, events, and workshops. You can add these events to your personal calendar by clicking the name of the event and then the *Add to My Calendar* button.

8. Event Registration System (ERS)

https://ers.tamu.edu

Register for all URS events using ERS. This system helps us keep track of which events and workshops are in high demand and reserves you a spot. ERS event links are available in the URS Weekly emails and in eCampus announcements.

9. Zoom Web Conferencing

https://tamu.zoom.us

All virtual meetings will be held via Zoom. Login with a Texas A&M NetID and Password will be required. You may be asked to verify your identity by showing your Student ID and/or providing your UIN.

Choosing a Thesis Style and Template

There are two thesis style options:

1. Traditional Style Thesis (multiple chapters/sections)
2. Journal Style Thesis (one medium-length or several short-length manuscripts)

Traditional Style Thesis

There are 5 **traditional style** thesis templates to choose from:

1. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) – Microsoft Word
2. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) – LaTeX/Overleaf.com
3. Liberal Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences – Microsoft Word
4. Creative Works – Microsoft Word
5. Dental Hygiene* – Microsoft Word

*The DENTAL HYGIENE template is only available for and must be used by students enrolled at the Caruth School of Dental Hygiene.

Journal Style Thesis

There are 2 **journal style** thesis templates to choose from:

1. IMRAD – Microsoft Word
2. Customizable Headings – Microsoft Word

Unsure about which Thesis Style to choose—Traditional or Journal?

- Consult the NEW Journal Style Thesis page on the LAUNCH website
- Consult your faculty advisor

Where to Access the Templates

Visit the URS Resources Page on the LAUNCH website to download the appropriate template for your discipline and to access the LaTeX template through Overleaf. Please contact us at ugr@tamu.edu for inquiries about templates.

Be sure to review the *Required and Recommended Technology* section of this Thesis Manual & Policy Guide for tips and warnings before downloading a template.

Thesis Styles and Templates at a Glance

✓ = required ☐ = optional	Traditional Style Thesis	Journal Style Thesis
Preliminary Pages (must be in the order seen below)		
Title Page	✓	✓
Research Compliance Certification	✓	✓
Table of Contents	✓	✓
Abstract	✓	✓
Dedication	☐	☐
Acknowledgements	✓	✓
Nomenclature	☐	☐
Thesis Content (must be in the order seen below)		
Introduction (all-inclusive)	✓	✓
Body Structure (varies by template)	Multiple Body Chapters or Sections **Required**	Minimum 1 Medium-length Manuscript **Required** ***OR*** Multiple Short-length Manuscripts **Required**
Conclusion (all-inclusive)	✓	✓
References	All-inclusive References Section **Required**	Individual References Subheading per Manuscript **Required**
Optional Supplemental Content		
Appendix(ces) (all-inclusive)	☐* *Creative Artifact Section **Required** for Creative Works Template Users.	☐

Full Program Schedule

LAUNCH: UGR offers a variety of activities to assist in the completion of the program. Many of these events will have a virtual component for the 2020-2021 URS program. These activities provide essential information for writing a thesis and making presentations.

Check eCampus announcements and the URS weekly emails for the most up-to-date information about which events may be in-person.

Fall 2020 Semester

Program Orientation (mandatory)

- Monday, October 12, 2020 from 8:45-9:30 PM via Zoom
- Register Here: https://ers.tamu.edu/register.aspx?scheduleid=33355
- Zoom Details Available in the Registration Portal
- QATAR ONLY: Online assignment due to the eCampus Community by October 15 at noon (CST)

  Event Description: The purpose of the Program Orientation is to familiarize all students with program policies and expectations. The event is mandatory for all Undergraduate Research Scholars.

  COLLEGE STATION, GALVESTON, and DENTAL HYGIENE students must attend the synchronous Zoom meeting. QATAR students must complete the online assignment in the eCampus Community to fulfill the Program Orientation requirements.

Start-of-Semester Fall Small Group Meeting with Assigned Thesis Reviewer (mandatory)

- Dates and times vary. Choose one one-hour session to attend from the multiple offered sessions between October 14-21, 2020. These meetings will be held via Zoom.

  Event Description: The purpose of this meeting is to familiarize students with their assigned thesis reviewers, provide reminders about program expectations and deadlines, and discuss any questions students have about the program and thesis writing process.

Resource Session (mandatory)

Students will select and attend at least one resource session. The purpose of these sessions is to make URS students aware of available resources that will help them be successful in the URS program. **Attending one Resource Session is mandatory**; however, students can attend multiple sessions if desired.

NOTE: If a student has a university-excused absence for all of the resource sessions he/she/they must submit documentation of the university-excused absence to ugr@tamu.edu and receive LAUNCH-office approval to attend an equivalent resource session as a makeup assignment.

1. *Research Compliance Session*
   - Friday, October 23, 2020 from 3:00-4:00 PM via Zoom
   - Register Here: https://ers.tamu.edu/register.aspx?scheduleid=33356
   - Zoom Details Available in the Registration Portal

   Event Description: If your Undergraduate Research Scholars thesis project involves humans, animals, and/or biohazardous materials and you are unsure whether or not your project needs research compliance approval, talk to your faculty advisor and come to this drop-in session to talk to representatives from the Research Compliance & Biosafety office.

2. *Research and Data Management Session*
   - Monday, October 26, 2020 from 10:00-11:00 AM via Zoom
   - Register Here: https://ers.tamu.edu/register.aspx?scheduleid=33357
   - Zoom Details Available in the Registration Portal

   Event Description: Sound data management practices can ensure long-term usability of your data, increase your productivity, and promote collaboration. This interactive workshop will teach you how to think about your data so that you can manage it more easily throughout your research process. A representative from the University Libraries will cover best practices for workflows, file management, documentation, storage, and preservation.

3. *POWER Writing Productivity Session*
   - Friday, November 6, 2020 from 2:00-4:00 PM via Zoom
   - Register Here: https://ers.tamu.edu/register.aspx?scheduleid=33359
   - Zoom Details Available in the Registration Portal

   Event Description: How do you begin to write your thesis? How do you increase the efficiency and productivity of your writing? This workshop, hosted by a POWER Consultant from POWER Writing Support Services, will give you tips and tricks to gain mastery over your writing and help you become a more productive writer and researcher.

4. *Citation Software Session*
   - Tuesday, November 10, 2020 from 3:00-4:00 PM via Zoom
   - Register Here: https://ers.tamu.edu/register.aspx?scheduleid=33360
   - Zoom Details Available in the Registration Portal

   Event Description: Undergraduate Research Scholars theses include dozens, and in some cases hundreds, of references. Citation Software, such as Zotero, Endnote, Mendeley, RefWorks, etc. exist to make citing a breeze. A specialist from the University Libraries will be available to help students choose the citation software that is most appropriate for their research project, and will present an introduction to bibliographical software packages.

End-of-Semester Fall Small Group Meeting with Assigned Thesis Reviewer (mandatory)

- Dates and times vary. Choose one one-hour session to attend from the multiple offered sessions between November 18-30, 2020. These meetings will be held via Zoom.

  Event Description: The purpose of this meeting is to prepare students for the spring semester, provide reminders about program expectations and deadlines, and discuss any questions students have about the program and thesis writing process.

Fall Progress Report (mandatory)

Submit the Fall Progress Report to the eCampus Community. See the *Progress Reports* section in this Manual to pre-prepare your answers to copy and paste into the eCampus submission portal. No late work will be accepted without a university-excused absence. Please refer to Student Rule 7 in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

- **Deadline:** Monday, November 30, 2020 at noon
- **Where:** eCampus Community

Spring 2021 Semester

This schedule is subject to change due to Texas A&M University COVID-19 policies. Check the LAUNCH: UGR website, eCampus announcements, and the URS Weekly Emails for the most up-to-date information.

Thesis Formatting Workshop (mandatory)

Students will select and attend one Thesis Formatting Workshops from the four available options.

- **Option 1:** Monday, January 11, 2021 from Time TBD via Zoom
- **Option 2:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 from Time TBD via Zoom
- **Option 3:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 from Time TBD in via Zoom
- **Option 4:** Thursday, January 21, 2021 from Time TBD in via Zoom

  Event Description: The purpose of the Thesis Formatting Workshop is to familiarize all students will the thesis formatting guidelines found in the Thesis Formatting Guide. Students will choose one of four available options to attend. All URS students must attend one of the synchronous Zoom meetings.

First Installment Thesis Help Drop-in Session (optional)

- Friday, January 22, 2021 from 2:00-4:00 PM in Location TBD

  Event Description: LAUNCH: UGR staff will be available to answer general questions and to help with thesis formatting.

Writing Abstracts Workshop (optional)

- Friday, January 22, 2021 from 4:00-5:00 PM in Location TBD

  Event Description: Want to publish your research? A great abstract is not only a requirement for the Undergraduate Research Scholars program, but your abstract also serves as the "resume" for your research to outside viewers and prospective publishers. Since writing an abstract is an unfamiliar process for those who are new to research, we want to teach you the basics.

First Installment and Spring Progress Report 1 Deadline (mandatory)

Submit and pass the First Installment and Spring Progress Report 1 assignments. See the *Installment Submission Guidelines* section in this Manual to prepare your Installment document. See the *Progress Reports* section in this Manual to pre-prepare your answers to copy and paste into the eCampus submission portal. No late work will be accepted without a university-excused absence. Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

- **Deadline:** Monday, January 25, 2021 at noon
- **Where:** eCampus Community

LAUNCH URS Symposium Presenter Registration Deadline (optional)

If you are searching for a public presentation venue or would like an opportunity to receive feedback on your presentation before a different conference, consider registering to present at the URS Symposium on February 24, 2021.

- **Deadline:** Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at noon
- **Where:** Online Form TBA. Monitor the LAUNCH: UGR website for registration details.

Presentation Skills Workshop (optional)

- Tuesday, February 16, 2021 from 4:00-5:00 PM in Location TBD

  Event Description: At this workshop, you will learn the DOs and DON'Ts of giving a presentation. We will give you tips about the best way to present a poster, as well as instruct you on how to effectively use a PowerPoint presentation.

Presentation Practice Session (optional)

- Tuesday, February 23, 2021 from 3:00-5:00 PM in Location TBD

  Event Description: Practice makes perfect - Present your research to LAUNCH: UGR staff and the Undergraduate Research Ambassadors and we will help you put the finishing touches on your presentation!

Public Presentation at the LAUNCH URS Symposium (optional)

- Wednesday, February 24, 2021, All Day in Location TBD

  Event Description: Attend the URS Symposium to listen to your peers' research presentations and help them improve on their research and presentation skills.

Second Installment Thesis Help Drop-in Session (optional)

- Friday, February 26, 2021 from 3:00-5:00 PM in Location TBD

    Event Description: LAUNCH: UGR staff will be available to answer general questions and to help with thesis formatting.

Second Installment and Spring Progress Report 2 Deadline (mandatory)

Submit and pass the Second Installment and Spring Progress Report 2 assignments. See the *Installment Submission Guidelines* section in this Manual to prepare your Installment document. See the *Progress Reports* section in this Manual to pre-prepare your answers to copy and paste into the eCampus submission portal. No late work will be accepted without a university-excused absence. Please refer to Student Rule 7 in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

- **Deadline:** Monday, March 1, 2021 at noon
- **Where:** eCampus Community

Public Presentation and Presentation Report Deadline (mandatory)

All URS students are required to make a public presentation and submit the presentation report to the eCampus Community. For the public presentation, see the *Public Presentation and Presentation Report* section in this Manual for acceptable venue requirements. For the presentation report, see the *Presentation Report* section in this Manual to pre-prepare your answers to copy and paste into the eCampus submission portal.

- **COLLEGE STATION**, **QATAR,** and **DENTAL HYGIENE** Deadline: Monday, April 12, 2021 at noon
- **GALVESTON** ONLY Deadline: Friday, April 23, 2021 at noon

Final Thesis Help Drop-in Sessions (optional)

- Thursday, April 8, 2021 from 3:00-5:00 PM in Location TBD
- Friday, April 9, 2021 from 3:00-5:00 PM in Location TBD

    Event Description: LAUNCH: UGR staff will be available to answer questions about the final thesis submission process and to help with final thesis formatting.

Final Thesis Submission Deadline (mandatory)

Submit your Research Faculty Advisor-Approved Final Thesis document in two stages. See the *Installment Submission Guidelines* section in this Manual to prepare your final thesis document. No late work will be accepted without a university-excused absence. Please refer to Student Rule 7 in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

- **Deadline:** Monday, April 12, 2021 at noon
- **Where:** Both eCampus Community **and** Scholars Thesis Submittal System

Stay on track to graduation and attend the LAUNCH Recognition Ceremony to pick up your medallion.
If you cannot attend, contact us to find out our current policies for picking up medallions for graduation.
If you are not graduating in May, you will receive your medallion at the reception that corresponds with
your graduation semester.

Monitor graduation updates at graduation.tamu.edu during the COVID-19 pandemic for the most up-to-
date information regarding commencement and regalia.

**Registration required for all events. Students may register for URS events using the ERS links above or
by going to https://ers.tamu.edu/default.aspx. Monitor URS Weekly Emails, eCampus Announcements,
and the URS Resources page for up-to-date registration links.**

Assignment Guidelines

All progress reports, the presentation report, and all thesis installment submissions will be submitted
through the eCampus Community. The eCampus Community serves as a place for all Undergraduate
Research Scholars to easily locate important deadlines and due dates, thesis templates, and other
helpful program materials and resources.

To access the Undergraduate Research Scholars' eCampus Community, login to
http://ecampus.tamu.edu using your NetID and Password. The 2020-2021 Undergraduate Research
Scholars Community should be visible on your eCampus home page under Community and/or My
Organizations. If you do not see the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Research Scholars eCampus Community,
contact us at ugr@tamu.edu as soon as possible.

Late Work and Absences Policy

- No extensions will be granted for unexcused absences.
- No late work will be accepted without a university-excused absence.*
- Please refer to Student Rule 7 in its entirety for information about excused absences, including
  definitions, and related documentation and timelines.
- Missing mandatory events or assignments without a university-excused absence will result in
  your removal from the program.
- Send documentation to ugr@tamu.edu.

*University-excused Absences: Student attendance policies may change during the COVID-19
pandemic. Monitor Student Rule 7 and the official Texas A&M Coronavirus website for updated
attendance policies.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are an important part of the writing loop because they provide steps for assessing and
reflecting on your progress. One progress report is due in the Fall semester and two progress reports are
due in the Spring semester. Progress Report submissions are read by LAUNCH: UGR staff. Please address
any serious concerns you encounter with your project with us via email at ugr@tamu.edu.

Progress Report Submissions will be completed on the Assignments tab in eCampus. Students may prepare answers ahead of time using the questions below, but will need to copy and paste their answers into the submission portal in eCampus to complete the assignment.

Fall Progress Report Questions

1. Literature Review: What background materials have you read for your project? What materials do you plan to read for your project? Have you been able to build upon previous research in your field? How is your project different and why? Can you clearly articulate how your project advances research in your field?

2. What do you plan to accomplish over winter break? What are the concrete steps you will take to make progress on your research and writing?

3. Reflect on your two meetings with your assigned thesis reviewer. What was the most helpful part of each meeting? What do you wish had been included in each meeting?

4. What resource session did you attend and what was the most important takeaway from the session?

5. What is your spring semester meeting schedule with your faculty advisor? How often will you receive feedback on your content and writing prior to the final thesis deadline on April 12? Remember, you should meet regularly with your faculty advisor because they are the one who signs off on your final thesis.

6. Describe any challenges you have encountered so far and how the challenges have affected your timeline and/or research goals. If you are a Scholars Team, have you discussed potential challenges and solutions to working in a team environment as your research and write your thesis?

7. Has your research and thesis timeline changed since submitting your application? If so, please list the changes and describe why they have been made.

8. Was your proposal identified as needing research compliance approval (IBC, IACUC, IRB)? If yes, have you secured this approval? If you have not secured approval, have you made direct contact with the appropriate committee or did you attend one of the research compliance drop-in sessions?

9. Which citation style will you be using for references in your thesis? Have you discussed using this citation style with your faculty mentor? Will you be using a citation software to help insert citations in your thesis template? If so, which one? See examples of citation styles at https://library.tamu.edu/services/library_tutorials/citing_sources/citing_sources_2.html and examples of citation software https://library.tamu.edu/research/citation_management.html.

10. What are your plans to fulfill the presentation requirement? Please keep the April 12 Presentation Report deadline in mind.
    a. **NOTE:** If using the Creative Works template, your public presentation and Q&A must be completed before you can write section 3 for the second installment. Your reflection (section 4) must be completed and reviewed by your faculty advisor prior to the final thesis deadline on April 12. Plan your presentation ahead of time so you can meet these program and content deadlines. The URS Symposium registration deadline is January 27.

11. Which date will you sign up to attend the mandatory Thesis Formatting Workshop? January 11, 14, 20, or 21? Register at https://ers.tamu.edu.

Spring Progress Report 1 Questions

1. After having attended the thesis formatting workshop, are you still having trouble with any aspects of formatting your thesis document? Are there any formatting topics you wish would have been covered?
2. Do you plan to include figures, tables, images, or other content that you did not create yourself? If yes, have you obtained written permission to use this content? Have you included the permission statement in the Appendix section of your thesis, and are the original creators recognized on your acknowledgements page?
3. Is there any other reading that you still need to analyze for future directions in your research? How is previous research informing progress on your current project?
4. Please list the concrete steps you plan to pursue between now and the second installment submission deadline on March 1, 2021. If you are a Scholars Team, describe your individual contributions.
5. Are you receiving feedback from your faculty advisor on the content of your thesis? When is your next meeting?
6. What are your plans to fulfill the presentation requirement? Does your faculty advisor need to approve your poster or PowerPoint slides before you present your research publicly? If so, make sure you plan ahead to receive those approvals with enough time to print your poster/finalize your slides before your presentation. Please keep the April 12 Presentation Report deadline in mind. The URS Symposium registration deadline is January 27.
    a. **NOTE: If using the Creative Works template,** your public presentation and Q&A must be completed before you can write section 3 for the second installment. Your reflection (section 4) must be completed and reviewed by your faculty advisor prior to the final thesis deadline on April 12. Plan your presentation ahead of time so you can meet these program and content deadlines. The URS Symposium registration deadline is January 27.

Spring Progress Report 2 Questions

1. What common mistakes have you identified in your document? What are your writing tics that need to be corrected? How does this process make you more conscious about your future writing style?
2. Are all references in your thesis also included as in-text citations? Have you properly formatted your References page using your selected citation style?
3. Do you plan to include figures, tables, images, or other content that you did not create yourself? If yes, have you obtained written permission to use this content? Have you included the permission statement in the Appendix section of your thesis, and are the original creators recognized on your acknowledgements page?
4. Have you fulfilled the presentation requirement? If not, what are your plans to fulfill the presentation requirement? Please keep the April 12 Presentation Report deadline in mind.
    a. **NOTE: If using the Creative Works template,** your public presentation and Q&A must be completed before you can write section 3 for the second installment. Your reflection (section 4) must be completed and reviewed by your faculty advisor prior to the final thesis deadline on April 12. Plan your presentation ahead of time so you can meet these program and content deadlines.

5. What remaining components have you and your faculty advisor identified that must be completed before you can finalize your research and writing by the final thesis deadline (April 12)?
6. When will your faculty advisor review your final thesis and provide feedback so you can make any revisions well in advance of the April 12 deadline?
    a. **NOTE: If using the Creative Works template,** have you finished your reflection (section 4), building in time to discuss your reflection with your faculty advisor and incorporating feedback from your Q&A session into your reflection? When will your faculty advisor have a chance to review your final thesis that includes your reflection prior to the final thesis deadline on April 12?
7. Which embargo choice have you discussed with your faculty advisor? Keep in mind no changes can be made to your thesis once you have completed the program. **NOTE:** The standard embargo (thesis hold) is two years. LAUNCH will contact your faculty advisor once the hold has expired to determine if an extension if needed. Please be aware that if no response is received from your faculty advisor, your thesis will be published to the OAKTrust Repository and will be available to the public. Make sure you have had this conversation with your faculty advisor.

Presentation Report

Presentation Report Questions

1. Tell us where you made your public presentation (full conference/event name, city, and state).
2. What day did you make your public presentation (month, day, and year)?
3. Upload a PDF of your conference registration/receipt, the page you are listed on in the event program, or the certificate of attendance you may have received from the event where you presented.
4. Upload a PDF of your presentation PowerPoint slides or a PDF of your poster presentation.
5. May we include your information in a LAUNCH News Press Release and/or on social media? Photographs from our events will appear on the LAUNCH website, in our email newsletter, on marketing materials, etc. Additionally, the PDF of your poster or PowerPoint presentation may be used as an example for future scholars. Select "No" if you do not want your information shared or pictures of yourself published online.
6. What feedback did you receive on your oral and/or poster presentation? What changes will you make to your thesis based on the feedback you received on your presentation?
7. Would you prepare for your presentation differently? What do you need to work on in the future (nerves, tics, timing, slide design, how you interacted with your poster or PowerPoint, transitions between team members, etc.)?
8. What did you learn about your own speaking skills? What do you think you did well?
9. How do you think the Undergraduate Research Scholars program, public presentation, and two-semester thesis improved the quality of your research and writing? Please address the quality of writing and content in your answer.

Thesis Installment Submissions

Submit to eCampus

- Installment (2 in the spring)
    - Deadlines: January 25 and March 1
- Requested Revisions (multiple depending on *Needs Corrections* emails)
    - Deadlines specified in *Needs Corrections* emails; deadlines are typically within 72 hours

The purpose of the installments is to allow students to progressively add content to their thesis document throughout the duration of the program. Requested revisions ensure proper formatting of the thesis document.

Thesis Installments should be submitted in Microsoft Word format (PDFs accepted from LaTeX users) by the specified deadlines. Follow the *Installment Submission Guidelines* found in this Manual for required pages and other content expectations. *You should work on the same document file throughout the entire program to retain approved revisions.*

Grading Policy and Revisions

Thesis installments that contain errors will be sent back for revision and may delay approval of your document. Please note that you may avoid this delay by carefully checking each installment for frequent mistakes using the Common Mistakes Guide before you submit. Failure to revise your document for Common Mistakes before submitting may result in a delay in grading. All returned documents must be revised within three business days for approval. Documents containing track changes and/or comments will be returned for revision without review.

You will always be notified by email whether or not your installment document *Needs Corrections* or is *Approved*. Grades are also posted in eCampus on the *Installment Feedback* page (also known as *My Grades*). Installment documents are graded on a binary (0-1) scale: 0 = *Needs Corrections* and 1 = *Approved*. If you receive a *Needs Corrections* email, you will receive a new deadline to submit a revised document. The new deadline will typically be 24 to 72 hours (business days) after your document is graded. It is possible to receive multiple rounds of *Needs Corrections* emails. Your installment document will only be counted as *Approved* once it is compliant with the URS Thesis Formatting Guide and free of all mistakes.

Note for Teams: Only the primary contact will receive *Needs Corrections* and *Approved* emails because only the primary contact will have immediate access to the "graded" document in eCampus. It is the primary contact's responsibility to notify team members when revisions are needed. Team members should communicate with their primary contact regularly to check the status of their thesis installment document.

Revisions Deadline Policies

Students are required to return revisions to installment submissions within 72 hours of receiving a *Needs Corrections* notice unless otherwise specified by the Thesis Reviewer. Should a student fail to meet a revisions deadline, he/she/they will receive a *Past Due Notice*. Students must contact LAUNCH: UGR and submit the revised installment to eCampus within 72 hours.

Failure to meet revisions deadlines thereafter without documentation of a university-excused absence will result in the student's removal from the URS thesis program. Be aware of changing COVID-19 policies regarding excused absences. Visit https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus for official COVID-19 guidance from Texas A&M University.

Installment Submission Guidelines

Deadlines

1. Spring Installment 1 due on January 25
2. Spring Installment 2 due on March 1
3. Final Thesis due on April 12

The duration of the URS program in the spring is 12 weeks. However, you will only have about 8 weeks to work on the bulk of your writing. See the timeline below that breaks down the increments:

- 1 week (January 19-25: first week of spring classes; Installment 1 due on January 25)
- 5 weeks (January 25-March 1; Installment 2 due on March 1)
- 6 weeks (March 1-April 12; Final thesis due on April 12)
    - -1 week for spring break (March 15-19)
    - -1 week for student proofing and finalizing (March 22-29)
    - -2 weeks for advisor proofing and finalizing (March 29-April 12)
- **NOTE:** In the final 6 weeks, **you really only have about 2 weeks** of writing time.

By Installment 1

- Include preliminary references. List these references according to your chosen citation style on the appropriate pages in your thesis template (e.g., on the References page or if using the Journal Style templates, under the References subheadings in each section/manuscript).
- At least 25% of your writing should be complete. If you have not already, discuss with your faculty advisor an appropriate length for your thesis, chapters, sections, and/or manuscripts. Typically, undergraduate research theses average 20 to 30 pages; however, some theses range to several hundred pages. **NOTE:** This page count guidance does not include any of the Preliminary Pages from the template. **NOTE:** Remember that you can write thesis sections out of order—you do not need to start with the Introduction.
- Other components you might start planning and/or drafting:
    - Figures, tables, images, captions and titles, equations, etc.
    - Subheadings you want to use as part of your research narrative.
    - Chapter/Section/Manuscript Titles
    - Nomenclature
    - Bulleted and numbered lists
    - Appendices and what material you will include (such as permission statements, large tables, figures, graphs, study materials, survey materials, creative artifact, etc.).

By Installment 2

- Preliminary pages should be filled in (author names and advisor names on Title and Abstract pages, Research Compliance Certification page, Dedication page, and Acknowledgements page). **NOTE TO TEAMS:** By Installment 2, you also should have decided the order in which you will list team member names.
- At least 75% of writing should be complete. **NOTE:** Remember that you will most likely finalize the Abstract, Introduction, and Conclusion sections once you have completed the full scope of your project and have received feedback from your faculty advisor. You might have partial or incomplete drafts of the Abstract, Introduction, or Conclusion sections that you are continuing to work on—this is expected!
- Other components you should be finalizing:
  - Incorporation of feedback from your Public Presentation
  - In-text citations and References (make sure all in-text citations have a corresponding entry on the References page/sections; make sure citation style is consistent throughout the document).
  - Final Thesis Title
  - Remaining figures, tables, images, captions and titles, equations, etc. (make sure all figures, tables, images, etc., are referenced in the text).

Between Installment 2 and the Final Thesis Deadline

- Incorporate content revisions from your faculty advisor
- Finalize your Abstract page
- Finalize your Introduction and Conclusion based on the full scope of your project
- Finalize References page/sections
- Finalize Appendix(ces) page(s)
- Begin proofreading your document for writing style, typographical errors, grammatical errors, formatting errors, and consistency. **NOTE:** It is extremely important for you to incorporate all formatting revisions that you received from your thesis reviewers—this is the last time your faculty advisor will see your complete, properly formatted thesis before being asked for final approval.
- Ensure that all fillable boxes have been addressed and all template help text has been removed and changed to black text.
- Plan to submit your final thesis in advance of the noon deadline (Central Time) on April 12 in case you have internet or computer issues, or other technical difficulties.

After the Final Thesis Deadline

- If your faculty advisor requires any final revisions, make them immediately and notify LAUNCH. Remember: **You should have already sent your final document to your faculty advisor 2 weeks BEFORE the April 12 deadline so you do not end up with final revisions after the deadline. Plan ahead so that you are not in this situation.**
- If the LAUNCH office requires revisions, make them by the deadline(s) specified by your assigned thesis reviewer.
- You will receive an email from LAUNCH: UGR once you have completed the URS program.

Remember: No changes can be made to your thesis once you have received the email that you have completed the program, even if an embargo (thesis hold) is placed on the document.

Final Thesis Submission

The Final Thesis document will be submitted in April in a two-part submission process. Part 1 will be submitted through the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Research Scholars eCampus Community and Part 2 will be submitted to the Scholars Thesis Submittal System (STSS). Students upload their final thesis documents as PDFs to eCampus first to allow Undergraduate Research staff to check documents for proper formatting.

Once theses are approved, they will be uploaded to the Scholars Thesis Submittal System (STSS) by LAUNCH: UGR staff. Scholars will then be prompted to complete Part 2 of the submission process in STSS. During Part 2 students will input information used to create their OAKTrust profiles, select an embargo option for their thesis document, and receive official faculty advisor approval for their thesis document and embargo selection. By this time, faculty advisors should have already reviewed your thesis outside of the submission system, as official approval is expected within 72 business hours.

No incomplete or late assignments will be accepted without a university-excused absence and appropriate documentation. Submit documentation of university-excused absences to ugr@tamu.edu.

Formatting Guidelines

The Thesis Formatting Guide contains important information about URS thesis program templates and requirements, including:

- Explanation of available thesis templates
- Detailed thesis formatting requirements
- Common formatting mistakes
- Word Styles quick reference guide

The Thesis Formatting Guide for 2020-2021 will be released in September and available for download on the URS resources webpage on the LAUNCH website.

Contact Us

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