

Houston Scholars Proposal Guidelines

One of the primary goals of Houston Scholars is to advance and accelerate the careers of a select group of students who have distinguished themselves academically, as well as through leadership, research, and service activities. This year we have developed seminars for Houston Scholars on the subject of flooding. These are opportunities for you to engage with faculty and community leaders on issues that relate to your field and world.

In addition to the required seminars you will attend this year, Houston Scholar are encouraged to develop a proposal to conduct research or a co-curricular project. This proposal should promote and deepen your academic and career goals. The selection committee reviewing the proposals expects you to express how the project will complement your academic and career trajectories. This proposal should fill a gap that currently exists between you and your future plans and goals. This information should all be communicated in the proposal.

Proposals will be funded in Summer 2019 based upon their originality, feasibility, and specificity, and accountability. The committee is seeking innovative ideas from candidates; proposals should comprise more than a study abroad program or an on-campus summer research experience. In the here and now, you should develop a project, and consult with a Houston Scholars staff or faculty mentor to help you work out the details of your project proposal. Proposals will reflect the varied interests of Houston Scholars and proposal budgets may be small or large. In most cases, however, students should plan for a maximum cost of \$5,000 unless they are encouraged by a Houston Scholars mentor to pursue a larger project. Students who receive funding are expected to present their projects at Undergraduate Research Day in October 2019.

Proposal Guidelines:

As you begin to formulate the proposal, we encourage you to concentrate on the following “Ws”:

- **What?** What exactly do you intend to do? Is it lab research, fieldwork, or a study abroad opportunity? Do you need resources and supplies to conduct a research project or present at a conference? Consider the objectives and goals of your project, as well as the details of the proposal. What is sustainable about this proposal when it is completed?
- **Why?** Why should we care about your proposal? Why should you be funded? Does your proposal expand and/or deepen your academic interests instead of merely moving you along the same trajectory? Does your research contribute an original or under-theorized piece of knowledge to your field? Does your proposal involve an aspect of your academic career that is not served by other programs or opportunities on campus? How will you use this experience once it is over?
- **When?** What is the timeline for the development, initiation, and completion of your project? What steps are needed to develop the details that map out project completion?
- **Where?** Where will the project be conducted?
- **Who?** Who is going to mentor and help you successfully execute this proposal? Who else will participate in this project?

- **How Much?** What is the detailed and itemized budget for the project? What costs are involved and how will you manage these funds? *An itemized budget and budget justification are required with a completed proposal.* Note: We expect that proposals will range widely in cost, reflecting the varied interests of our students. In most cases, however, students should plan for a maximum cost of \$3K-\$5K unless they are being encouraged by a Houston Scholars mentor to pursue a larger project.

S.M.A.R.T:

Specific, Masurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

We suggest you follow a “SMART” model, proposing a project that is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. While the specific architecture of your proposal will not necessarily have to follow every single aspect of this model, we think that SMART provides a very useful framework to help you *think* about your project and work through the details. As such, your initial consultations with mentors and other members of your cohort should also assist you in clarifying each of these elements.

- Specific – target a specific area for improvement.
 - What: What do I want to accomplish?
 - Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
 - Who: Who is involved in this proposal?
 - Where: Identify a location(s).
 - Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- Measurable – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.
 - How much do I plan on accomplishing? How will I know when the project is accomplished?
 - How will I assess my project while it is taking place and when it has been completed?
 - Indicators should be quantifiable.
- Achievable – convince your reader that the work can be done
 - How can the goal be accomplished?
 - How realistic or feasible is the goal based on other constraints?
 - What type of background knowledge and resources do I need beforehand?
 - What resources do I need to accomplish the project?
- Relevant – state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.
 - Does this seem worthwhile?
 - Is this the right time?
 - Does this match my other objectives and pursuits?
 - Why am I the right person?
 - Is this project applicable in the current socio-economic environment?
 - Will this project bring me closer to my future goals? How?
- Time-bound – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.
 - How long will this project take to complete?
 - What are the dates of the project?
 - What can I do now to prepare?