

Houston Scholars Proposal Guidelines

During your tenure as a Houston Scholar you are expected to develop a project proposal. The project proposal may be to conduct research, develop a service project, attend or present at a professional conference, study abroad, etc. This proposal should promote and deepen your academic and career goals.

All project proposals are submitted to and reviewed by a faculty committee and competitive proposals are funded by support provided by the Provost's Office. 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 based upon their originality, feasibility, 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. The maximum budget for a semester-based project is \$1000; the maximum budget for a summer-based project is \$4000. Summer students whose projects require more than \$4000 must provide a justification for the additional cost in their

proposal and budget. Students who receive funding are expected to present their projects at the 2018 Houston Scholars Showcase. You are also encouraged to present your project at Undergraduate Research Day in October 2018.

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? *A letter of recommendation (or letter affiliation for a project that requires a particular endorsement for the project to take place) is required with a completed proposal.*
- **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 \$1-4K unless they are being encouraged by a Houston Scholars mentor to pursue a larger project.

S.M.A.R.T:

Specific, Measurable, 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?