**Kutztown Undergraduate Research Fund (KURF) - Science Subcommittee**

**Guidelines** Revised January 2023

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## Mission

Research differs from other types of creative intellectual exploration in that the goal of research is to answer specific questions using a rigorous, logically-designed methodology.  The Kutztown Undergraduate Research Fund (KURF) is a university-wide program intended to facilitate original research by undergraduate students.

Two subcommittees exist to serve the diverse population of undergraduate researchers at Kutztown University. The Science Subcommittee evaluates proposals involving social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, and computer science. The Arts and Humanities Subcommittee evaluates proposals involving visual and performing arts, humanities, and education[[1]](#footnote-1).

### Science Subcommittee Disciplines

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Anthropology * Astronomy * Biology * Biochemistry * Chemistry | * Computer Science * Criminal Justice * Economics * Geography * Geology | * Mathematics * Physics * Political Science * Psychology * Sociology |

## Eligibility

Students must meet the following KURF grant eligibility criteria **throughout the duration of the research project**, from the time the proposal is submitted until the time the project is completed:

* Full-time enrollment at Kutztown University
* Undergraduate status
* Kutztown University faculty research advisor agreement to supervise project

A seven-week window following graduation day exists for students who complete research as a senior and will present their findings at a national scientific conference shortly after graduation.

Proposals must be **submitted and approved prior** to the travel or research for which funds are requested.

## Types of proposals – What we fund

Funding through the KURF Science Subcommittee is limited to **$1,000 per grant**.   
Projects involving multiple students are welcome, but the funding cap is per project, not per student.

We fund three (3) types of grants from full-time undergraduate students:

1. **Research Materials Grants**

* Covers costs of materials for conducting experiments  
  e.g., chemical reagents, hardware, special analyses
* Note that material purchases are the property of Kutztown University and follow the custodial procedures of other assets.

1. **Research Travel Grants**

* Covers costs involved with travel to perform research at distant locations
  + Facilities with instrumentation unavailable at Kutztown University
  + Field research sites

1. **Scientific Conference Presentation Travel Grants**

* Covers costs for travel to present completed research at professional conferences
* **Important:** Acceptance of your abstract by the hosting conference is a required element of Scientific Conference Presentation Travel Grant proposals,   
  **but does not guarantee funding by the KURF**.
* We recommend you submit proposals for Scientific Conference Presentation Travel Grants at least ***two*** months prior to your conference date to ensure timely scheduling of your time with the KURF Committee and deliberation on your proposal either due to high volume of proposals submitted to the committee or your need to revise and resubmit your proposal after the committee’s assessment of your proposal.

## Restrictions – What we do NOT fund

* non-research projects (i.e., no other forms of scholarly activity - this is strictly a program for funding ***research***).
* travel, wages, or any other expenses for faculty
* travel, wages, or any other expenses for graduate students
* travel, wages, or any other expenses for part time students
* travel to conferences for which abstracts have not been accepted by the conference organization
* wages for student workers or researchers
* honoraria or gifts for participants in studies
* travel to present research done solely with outside institutions (e.g., REU)   
  (i.e., the KURF only facilitates research performed at Kutztown University).
* software and/or hardware already available at Kutztown University
* costs for chemicals or other materials already available at Kutztown University
* costs for materials for use in classes or labs taught at Kutztown University.
* research where the only beneficiary is you (i.e., your results ***must*** be disseminated).
* **Note to faculty research advisors:**  This program is ***not***intended to fund faculty or graduate student research projects.  Please visit the website for the [Office of Grants & Sponsored Projects](http://www.kutztown.edu/research) for help finding funding opportunities for faculty and/or graduate student research projects.

## Instructions for Proposal Submission

Before writing your proposal, please read [Appendix A – Minimum contents of a research proposal](#_Appendix_A_–).

The deadline for written proposal submission is one week prior to the meeting dates of the KURF Science Subcommittee. We meet monthly throughout the fall and spring semesters.   
Please check the KURF Science Subcommittee website for specific deadlines dates.

KURF Grant proposal submissions must follow this two-part sequence:

### Part 1 – Written Proposal

1. **E-mail your written proposal** **in Word Format** to Dr. Friehauf at [friehauf@kutztown.edu](mailto:friehauf@kutztown.edu?subject=KURF%20-%20Grant%20proposal). Your written proposal MUST be submitted electronically.
   1. The required KURF Proposal Template in Word format can be found on the [KURF website](#_KURF_Proposal_Template).
   2. Follow the formatting provided in the KURF Proposal Template – single spaced, 12-point Times font, etc.

**Important:** Please minimize discipline-specific jargon so that reasonably intelligent readers OUTSIDE of your specific discipline can readily understand the research goals and methodology involved in the proposal. Unclear and/or unintelligible proposals will not be funded.

* 1. Include a detailed budget of all costs as outlined in the template.
  2. Include a high-resolution photo of yourself as a separate jpg-format file attached to the same e-mail message.
  3. Please be sure that the subject line of your email states "Kutztown Undergraduate Research Fund - Proposal - *your name*"
  4. **If this is a Scientific Conference Presentation Travel Grant proposal**, the proposal may be submitted prior to acceptance of your abstract, but potential funding will be contingent upon acceptance by the hosting conference, in addition to an affirmative vote of the KURF Science Subcommittee.

☼ **Important:** Acceptance of your abstract by the hosting conference is a required element of Scientific Conference Presentation Travel Grant proposals, **but does not guarantee funding by the KURF**.

* 1. **If this is a Research Travel Grant proposal** for work at an off-campus laboratory**,** a copy of the letter of invitation from the destination lab is required.

1. **Hand-deliver a completed signature page** (Appendix C) with original signatures to Dr. Kurt Friehauf in the Department of Physical Sciences (Boehm Bldg. room 135). The purpose of the signature page is to document the faculty member’s commitment to the research project that they will be responsible for guiding, the student’s acknowledgment of the grant requirements, and the IRB and/or IACUC authorization for research involving live subjects.

### Part 2 – Oral Presentation of Proposal

As part of the evaluation process for KURF proposals, students are required to give a short presentation to the KURF Science Subcommittee explaining their research and funding request. Once we've received your written proposal, you will be notified of your presentation time on the meeting agenda.

**Important:** Keep your audience in mind when preparing your presentation. The members of the committee are faculty with diverse areas of specialization. Most committee members will not have extensive experience in your specific area of expertise. It is important that you limit the use of discipline-specific jargon so all members of the committee clearly understand the research goals and potential results of your proposed research. Committee members cannot support proposals that they do not understand.

1. Presentations take place during the open hour from 11:00 to 11:50 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month in a Boehm Science Building conference room.
   1. There is a computer connected to a digital data projector for PowerPoint presentations and a dry erase board in the room.
2. You will have a total of 10 minutes to make your case:
   1. You will have 5 minutes for your presentation. You must be very efficient and concise. We strongly recommend you **practice your talk** several times to make sure it fits within the time constraints and you’re comfortable with the delivery.
   2. You will have a 5 minute question-and-answer session following your presentation during which KURF Science Subcommittee members will request clarification and follow-up exploration.

KURF meetings have full agendas, so time limits must be adhered to strictly.

1. The purpose of this presentation is for you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of your research project to the KURF Science Subcommittee. You must demonstrate how well you designed the project to answer your research question.   
   Clear communication is essential.
2. Please dress “business casual.” You must present yourself in a professional manner. Students wearing sweats, t-shirts, and/or other inappropriately informal attire will not be permitted to present their proposal.
3. PowerPoint files for your presentation must be delivered to Dr. Friehauf at [friehauf@kutztown.edu](mailto:friehauf@kutztown.edu?subject=KURF%20-%20PowerPoint%20presentation%20file%20for%20meeting) no later than 9:00 am on the day of your presentation.

## Evaluation of Proposals and Presentations

Written research proposals and oral presentations of research proposals are assessed by the KURF Science Subcommittee using a rubric (Appendix B).

You will receive notification of the KURF Science Subcommittee’s decision on your proposal within two weeks of your presentation at the KURF meeting. Your proposal will be assessed and classified into one of four categories:

### Funded as proposed

Committee recommends full funding of all items proposed in your budget up to the maximum grant limit.

### Funded with modified budget

Committee recommends funding of some items proposed in your budget up to the maximum grant limit, but declines to fund some proposed expenditures.

### Declined with recommendation to revise and resubmit

Committee cannot fund the proposal due to concerns about content of written and/or oral presentation of proposal, but the committee believes the project has potential merit and if significantly revised, so recommends student re-write proposal and/or prepare improved oral presentation and resubmit.

This is the most common outcome in the grant community (e.g., NSF statistics for 2017 indicate only 23% of biology proposals, 29% of physical science proposals, and 24% of social science proposal are funded – on average, **three out of four proposals are declined funding**. Only one in four earns funding. The great majority of those proposals that ***are*** funded are revised and resubmitted proposals that were rejected the previous year.   
Bottom line: There is no shame in decline-with-recommended-revision-resubmission.

### Declined

Committee cannot fund the proposal because:

* the proposal requests funding for things the KURF program does not fund (see [Restrictions – What we do NOT fund](#_Restrictions_–_What)),
* because the scientific basis of the project as communicated in the written/oral presentation of the proposal is determined to be insufficient, and/or
* because the written/oral presentation of the proposal does not demonstrate the student is sufficiently prepared to undertake the project.

## Procedures for Fund Usage

The purchase of research materials on your grant can be done either by direct purchase with reimbursement for your receipts or through the university’s direct purchasing system. Each time you make a purchase, please update your KURF Budget spreadsheet and email the updated spreadsheet to [friehauf@kutztown.edu](mailto:sherrod@kutztown.edu?subject=KURF%20Budget%20update) with the subject line: *KURF - Budget update*

### Personal purchase with reimbursement

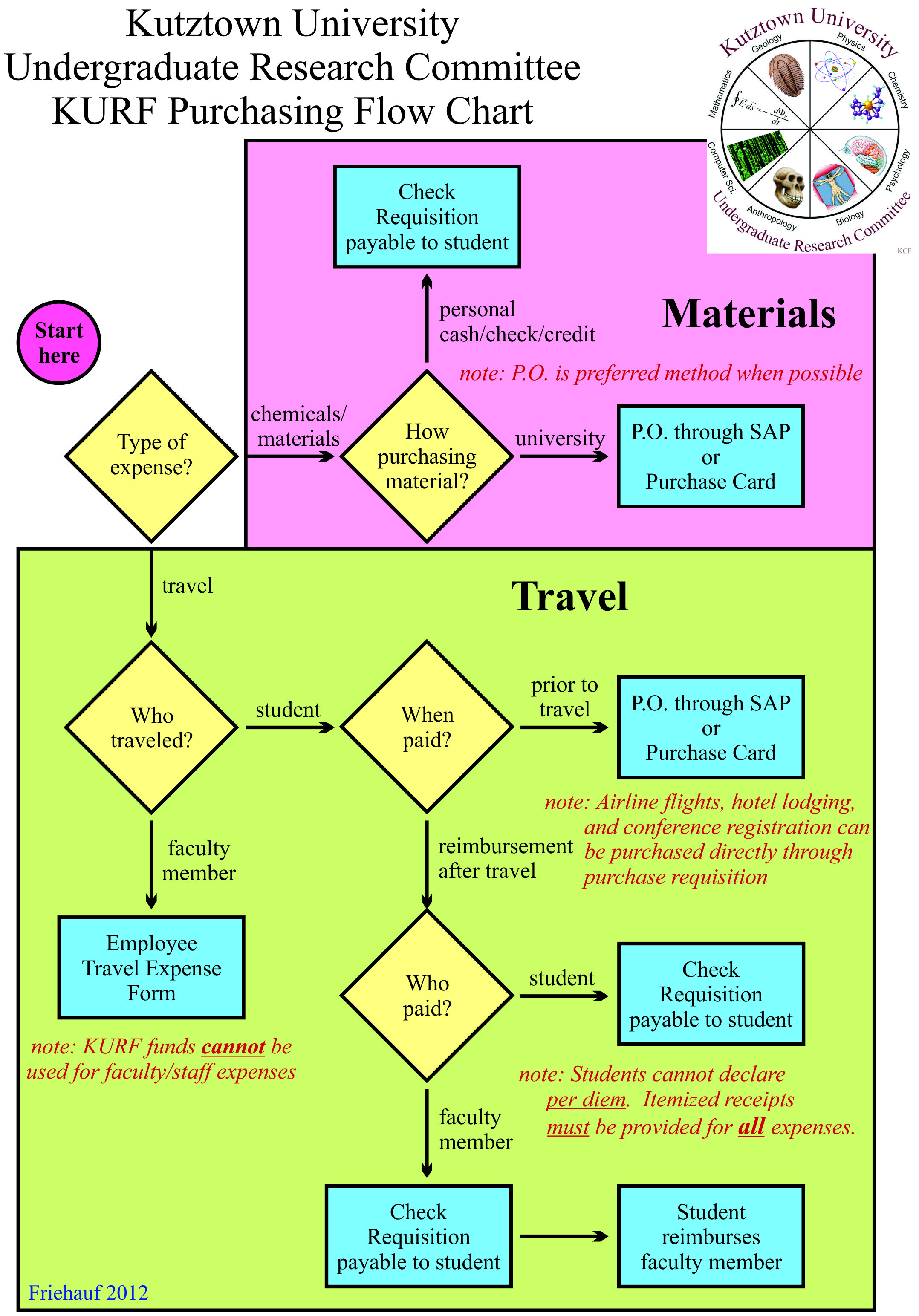
Kutztown University requires all receipts for reimbursement be ***itemized*** (i.e., explicitly list all items purchased). Credit card receipts and non-itemized receipts cannot be reimbursed.

1. Keep original **itemized** receipts for all of your reimbursable expenses.
2. Organize your original itemized receipts by taping them flat to letter-size sheets.
3. Complete the KURF Reimbursement Spreadsheet.
4. Print your KURF Reimbursement Spreadsheet to accompany your original receipts.
5. Email your KURF Reimbursement Spreadsheet to [friehauf@kutztown.edu](mailto:friehauf@kutztown.edu?subject=KURF%20-%20Budget%20spreadsheet).
6. Complete an original carbon-copy-type **University Direct Pay Requisition Form** (obtained from your department).
7. Deliver your completed Check Requisition Form, your printed KURF Reimbursement Spreadsheet, and your organized original itemized receipts to Dr. Kurt Friehauf in Boehm 138 so your reimbursement request can begin its authorization journey. Your paperwork will be authorized by the KURF, the Office of Grants, and then Accounts Payable. Reimbursement generally takes a week or two, depending on system traffic.

### Direct purchase through University system

Purchases made directly through the University system will require assignment of a cost center number that your faculty advisor can get from me. Ask your faculty advisor to send a list of the things to be purchased (e.g., airline flight) to Dr. Kurt Friehauf at [friehauf@kutztown.edu](mailto:friehauf@kutztown.edu?subject=KURF%20-%20request%20cost%20center%20for%20direct%20university%20purchase) for issuance of a cost center number that can be used by a university purchasing agent.

### Purchasing Flow Chart



## Appendix A – Minimum contents of a research proposal

**Precisely what is the question you propose to address?** You need to clearly and directly communicate that your journey has a specific destination.

**Why is your question important / relevant?** “Just basic research” generally doesn’t cut it in modern science both because funding is limited and because research is viewed as developing part of a greater fabric of scientific understanding. How does your work relate to the big picture?  
Funding agencies prioritize granting resources to projects of importance.

**You are the expert best fit for solving this problem.** This is done by explaining the background setting of the problem in a way that both smoothly synthesizes previous work and develops those ideas into an intelligent, forward direction. You should report the relevant analytical equipment available to you to demonstrate you have the tools for the project.

**How will you go about solving this problem?** You need to demonstrate that you have a well-planned method for resolving your question. Proposals that pose interesting questions, but not viable methodology for getting solutions are just idle musings.

**What are some of the expected results?** Clearly, you don’t know the results of your research before you perform the experiments, but you should have an idea of *potential* results of your experiments. Explain how you will interpret specific results (e.g., I’m going to analyze the drinking water for mercury contamination. If the concentration is over 0.002 mg/l, then the water is contaminated, but if the concentration is less than 0.002 mg/l, then we will conclude the water is suitable for drinking.) Establishing the ground rules for interpretation of your results helps prevent bias in observations, data collection, and interpretation.

**How will you disseminate the results of your research?** Funding agencies want to know that you’ll publish and present your results to the rest of the world. Projects with great questions and excellent methodologies are little more than intellectual hobbies if the researcher doesn’t publish the results.

**How much is the project going to cost?** Funders always want to know precisely how the money will be spent. Explain exactly what you need and why you need it. Include a table itemizing the costs of the project. Expenses with uncertain relevance will not be funded and their inclusion detracts from your proposal’s overall quality.

**Be clear and concise.** Reviewers are busy people and have a thick stack of proposals, so they appreciate direct language and minimal peripheral sidetracks. Heavy use of specialized jargon can obfuscate your message. Long and/or convoluted sentence constructions diminish readability. Write so you do not lose your reader’s complete, focused attention.

## Appendix B - Assessment Rubric for KURF Proposals and Presentations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applicant |  |
| Research Title |  |

***Overall Recommendation***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Outstanding | Good | Acceptable | Weak | Un-fundable |
| **Funding recommended** | | | **Funding rejected, but has potential** | **Funding rejected** |
| *No recommendations for improvement* | *Minor improvements suggested, but project success is highly likely* | *Project needs improvement prior to execution* | *Recommend major revision and re-submittal* | *Project does not meet criteria for funding; Resubmittal not recommended* |

***KU Undergraduate Research Written Proposal:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Does the written proposal communicate clearly the research question(s) to be addressed and their importance? |
|  | Is the research methodology clearly presented and likely to succeed in answering the research question(s)? |
|  | Is discipline-specific jargon minimized so that a reasonably intelligent reader OUTSIDE of the specific discipline can readily understand the research goals and methodology? |
|  | Is the need for items in the budget communicated and can the project be accomplished with the proposed budget? |
|  | Is there a plan for dissemination of the results of the project? |
|  |  |

***KU Undergraduate Research Presentation:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Was the research question clearly presented near the beginning of the presentation? |
|  | Was the relevance of the research addressed? |
|  | Did the presenter display a deep understanding of the research question, methodology and interpretation of results? |
|  | Is the presentation delivered in a way that faculty OUTSIDE of the presenter’s specific discipline can readily understand? |
|  | If statistical analyses are included, can the presenter clearly explain the statistical tools used and their interpretation? |

# KURF Proposal Template

## Kutztown University Undergraduate Research Fund - Proposal Cover Sheet

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name: |  | | | Student ID #: | |  | | | | | |
| Local Address: | |  | | | | | | | |  |  |
| Local Telephone: | |  | | Email: | |  | | | | | |
| Major: | |  | | Credit hours this semester: | |  | | | | | |
| Expected graduation date: | |  | | Total credit hours at KU: | |  | | | | | |
| Research faculty advisor name: | |  | | Faculty email: | |  | | | | | |
| Title of Research Project: | |  | | | | | | | |  |  |
| **Total**  Project cost: | |  | | | Costs covered by other sources: | | |  | | | |
| Funding type requested: | | Research materials  Travel to present research  Travel to do new research | | | Destination  (if travel): | | |  | | | |
| Have you received a previous research grant from the KURF? | | | Yes  No | | If yes,  date of grant: | | |  | | | |
| Title and amount of previous KURF research grant received: | | |  | | | | | | |  |  |
| If Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the ethical treatment of subjects is required for project, date application submitted to IRB or date received IRB approval for research:  *Include explanation in proposal* | | | | | | |  | | submitted  approved date: | |  |
| If Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval of the ethical treatment of subjects is required for project, date application submitted to IACUC or date received IACUC approval for research:  *Include explanation in proposal* | | | | | | |  | | submitted  approved  date: | |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project title: | **Determination of ionic strength of zodiac icons** |
| Student name: | **Kurt Friehauf** |
| Faculty advisor: | **Dr. E. Ville** |
| Program: | **Chemical astrology** |
| Project cost: | **$1,100** |

## Abstract

Replace this text with a concise summary of your project written in terms understandable to a lay person – if your proposal is funded, this abstract will be posted on the website. We strongly recommend that you have your parents or non-science major friends review your proposal, then ask them to explain the concepts back to you. This is *not* the abstract you submit for publication at a conference. This is an abstract for this proposal to be read by faculty on the KURF Committee and by the general public.

## Introduction

Replace this text with a half to one (½ ̶ 1) page explanation of the background of your research question setting the context for the problem statement. You know much more about the background of your project than any reader. The purpose of this section is to get your reader up to speed. This section should end by segueing into the problem statement.

## Problem statement

Replace this text with a clear, concise, and precise statement of the question your research proposes to answer. Be sure to explain the importance of answering the question and state the *multiple* hypotheses you will be testing.

## Methods

Replace this text with a description of your research design, clearly explaining the types of data that you will collect and how interpretation of those data potentially impacts your assessment of your hypotheses. Please try not to exceed two (2) pages for this section.

## Data / Results

If you are applying for materials to conduct experiments or are applying for travel funds to access off-campus analytical instrumentation, replace this text with a report of your preliminary results. Preliminary work on a project is common in grant proposals because it demonstrates a basis for the concept and a reason to believe the project has potential for success – it helps establish your expertise.

If you have *completed* your research and are applying for travel funds to present your results at a scientific conference, replace this text with a clear synopsis of your results.

## Conclusions

Replace this text with a clear and concise summary of your conclusions. Be sure to explain the implications of your conclusions and suggest a direction for future study based on these results.

## References

*Replace the citations below with the complete references of works that you cite in your proposal. Do not include references that you do not explicitly cite in your proposal.  
Please follow the example of formatting given below.*

Tindall, Sarah E., 2000, The Cockscomb Segment of the East Kaibab Monocline: Taking the Structural Plunge: *in* Sprinkel, D.A., and Anderson, P.B., *eds.*, Geology of Utah’s Parks and Monuments, Utah Geological Association Publication 28, p. 230-245.

Balco, G., Stone, J.O., and Mason, J.A., 2005, Numerical ages for Plio-Pleistocene glacial sediment sequences by 26Al/10Be dating of quartz in buried paleosols: Earth and Planetary Science Letters, v. 232, p. 179–191, doi:10.1016/j.epsl.2004.12.013.

## Timeline

*Replace this text with a clear and complete timeline of your execution of your research project.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Procedure** |
| September-October, 2014 | Isolate Paleo gene from wild Gastornis specimens |
| October-December, 2014 | Use PCR and OMG in Kutztown University lab to restrict the WTF activity |
| January 2015 | Statistical analysis of results and submit abstract for presentation at the national Socioaleobiogeochemical Society of America meeting |
| April 2015 | Present results at national Socioaleobiogeochemical Society of America meeting if abstract accepted |

## Budget

*(Replace the text in the following table with your costs if you are applying for a* ***travel grant****.)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget item** | | **Cost each** | **Number** | **Total cost** | |
| Hotel accommodations | | $150/night | 2 nights | $300 | |
| Vehicle Rentals | | $40/day | 2 days | $80 | |
| Abstract Registration Fee | | $100 |  | $100 | |
| Annual Meeting Fee | | $65 |  | $65 | |
| Flight | | $450 |  | $450 | |
| Food | | $30/day | 3 days | $90 | |
|  | **Total Cost** | | | | **$1085** | |
|  | Amount requested from KURF | | | | $1000 | |
|  | Amount covered by other sources | | | | **$85** | |
|  | ***(Please state additional funding source****)* | | | |  | |

*(Replace the text in the following table with your costs if you are applying for a* ***research materials grant****.)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **item** | **vendor** | **cost** | **use** |
| chemical A | Fisher | $350.00 | Cell culture growth |
| chemical B | Wards | $315.00 | Fluorescent tags for cells |
| do-dad 1 | Sigma-Aldrich | $153.00 | Cell stretcher |
| do-dad 2 | Lowes | $200.00 | Injector for chemical C |
|  | Total | **$1,018.00** |  |
| Amount requested from KURF | | $1000.00 |  |
| Amount covered by other sources | | **$18.00** | From: ***(please state additional funding source here)*** |

## Biographical sketch of student

Replace this text with a **4-5 sentence biography** of your background, your career goals, and how this grant will help you achieve those goals.

Email a **high-resolution photograph** of yourself to Dr. Kurt Friehauf at [friehauf@kutztown.edu](mailto:friehauf@kutztown.edu?subject=KURF%20-%20photo%20of%20student%20researcher) Your photo should show you either doing your research or presenting your results at a scientific conference.

## Published abstract

**If this is a Scientific Conference Presentation Travel Grant proposal**, please attach the abstract that was submitted for presentation at the meeting. *(Delete this section if proposal is not for presentation of completed research at a scientific conference).*

## Conference abstract notification

**If this is a Scientific Conference Presentation Travel Grant proposal**, please attach the official notification from conference authorizing your presentation at the meeting (i.e., acceptance of your abstract). *(Delete this section if proposal is not for presentation of completed research at a scientific conference).*

## Letter of invitation

**If this is Research Travel Grant proposal to perform research at an off-campus lab**, please include a letter of invitation from the instrumentation lab where the proposed research is to be performed. *(Delete this section if proposal is not for work at an off-campus lab).*

## Kutztown University Undergraduate Research Fund - Signature Page

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name: |  | | | | Student ID #: | | |  | | | | | | |
| Local Telephone: | | |  | | Email: | | |  | | | | | | |
| Project Title: | | |  | | | | | | | | | |  |  |
| Total Project cost: | | |  | | Costs covered by other sources: | | | |  | | | | | |
| If Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the ethical treatment of subjects is required for project, date application submitted to IRB or date received IRB approval for research:  *Include explanation in proposal* | | | | | | |  | | | | submitted  approved | | |  |
| If Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval of the ethical treatment of subjects is required for project, date application submitted to IACUC or date received IACUC approval for research:  *Include explanation in proposal* | | | | | | |  | | | | submitted  approved | | |  |
| **Faculty Endorsement** *(please initial each item):*  \_\_\_\_ I have read this proposal and I agree to serve as faculty supervisor of this project.  \_\_\_\_ I am responsible for conscientious, professional guidance of the students involved in this project  \_\_\_\_ I am responsible for proper expenditure of funds granted for this project | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |
| Faculty name: | |  | | Faculty email: | |  | | | | | | | | |
| Faculty Signature: | |  | | | | Date: | | | |  | | | | |
| **Student statement**  If an undergraduate Student Research Grant is awarded for this project, I agree to the following conditions *(please initial each item):*  \_\_\_\_ I will complete the research as outlined in my proposal.  \_\_\_\_ I am responsible for working in a professional, cooperative manner with the research advising faculty member on this proposal.  \_\_\_\_ I will present my results at a university and/or professional meeting.  \_\_\_\_ I will submit a final report, signed by me and the supervising faculty member, consisting of a project summary and an accounting of the funds expended, at least one month prior to the end of the school year. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student Signature: | |  | | | | | | Date: | |  | | | | |

1. For guidelines regarding KURF Arts and Humanities Subcommittee, please visit the [KURF website](https://www.kutztown.edu/academics/research/undergraduate-research-and-creativity/undergraduate-research-fund.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)