I. Abstract
The abstract should be a brief description of your project objectives and expected results. The abstract should be written for an educated but not expert audience. Use of technical language or discipline-specific jargon is strictly prohibited. Failure to heed this requirement will be detrimental to your evaluation scores.

II. Project Description (Limit 3 pages)
The project description should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken, using the five headings (A-E) below. It should be no more than 3 single-spaced pages long, 12-point Times New Roman type, with 1-inch margins.

Please note: While you should consult your faculty sponsor in writing your project description, it should be written by you, in your own words, and not copied from a website, article or other work. Plagiarism is cause for immediate disqualification.

A. Background and Context: Explain the present state of knowledge, understanding or creative experimentation in the field, with proper citations of pertinent literature where appropriate. (See Literature Cited, section III). Make it clear why you want to do this project, and why it needs to be undertaken to fill a gap in knowledge.

B. Statement of Significance and Impact: Explain the significance of your project as it contributes to the advancement of learning in your field (i.e. the big picture), to the enrichment of our cultural and aesthetic heritage, to the public welfare (i.e. the greater good) and/or to other research in your lab.

C. Statement of Project Objectives: Clearly and concisely state the research problem/question or creative concept that will be addressed during the period of the proposed project. Remember: This award is for you to carry out a specific, well-designed, original research, scholarly, or creative project.

D. Methods: Describe in clear and understandable terms your general plan of work in order to fulfill your stated goal.

E. Outcomes: What are your expected results or the expected range of results? What happens if your data does not yield the results you expected? How will you interpret “other” results? For creative projects, what will be the final “product” of the proposed project? Possible “products” are a report, a publishable article or chapter, a performance, a policy recommendation, a painting, etc. Be specific. An outcome of your USOAR project should be a poster/display at Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day in April (depending on project timeline).
UNDERGRADUATE SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES
IN ARTISTRY AND RESEARCH
FOR ALL OR PART OF THE PERIOD JANUARY 1–DECEMBER 31

III. Literature Cited (This is not included in your 3 page limit):
Include a list of references that are cited in your proposal, especially in section A. Use standard professional format such APA style for your literature citation.

IV. Impact on Academic Experience (This is not included in your 3 page limit):
Indicate how the proposed independent artistry or research is expected to enhance our academic experience.

V. Timelines of Project Activities (This is not included in your 3 page limit):
Provide a timeline of research activities throughout the spring session. Include specific benchmarks to achieve throughout the semester to indicate that you are on task. This timeline should be on a weekly or bi-weekly. Timelines written in narrative form will not be accepted.

VI. Itemized Budget and Justification:
How will the USOAR award money be used for your project? On this page, list your budget items, which may total no more than $2,500. If the budget exceeds $2,500, indicate on the application form if you will be able to obtain the additional support which is needed to complete the project. The budget justification section should include an explanation and justification of each item in your budget. The award may be used to purchase supplies, pay for travel expenses, or cover other costs associated with conducting the proposed project.

The USOAR award is to be used for the original project that is submitted and approved. You are required to keep original invoices and an expense report. Funds remaining at the completion of the project will be returned to the university either by charging the Bursars account back or by personal check.

The budget may NOT include any salary or wages for the student researcher, faculty sponsor, survey participants, or other personnel. In addition, tuition or study abroad expenses/fees are prohibited. All commodities and equipment will remain at NIU when the project is completed.

Please list all items that will be included in your budget including:

A. Travel: Include a reasonable estimate for plane fares, food, lodging, registration fees, etc.

B. Equipment: Please note that any equipment not consumed in the project, such as laptops or digital cameras, is university property, and must be returned to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning when the project is completed.

C. Consumable materials: This may include cost of printing, postage and office supplies.

Sample Budgets:

Unacceptable: Part of the money will be used for books, and the rest will be used for lab supplies.

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Sample Budgets Continued:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel to and from Boston</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two nights at hotel in Boston</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying and printing surveys</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals while in Boston</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals for lab experiment</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Budget Justification:** The majority of the funds, $800, will be used to purchase chemicals for the lab experiment I will be conducting. $100 will cover the cost of survey preparation (xeroxing, color pictures, etc.). $500 is needed for transportation to and from Boston, where I will be conducting my lab experiment. $500 is needed to cover the cost of the hotel stay while I am in Boston and another $300 will be used to cover the cost of my meals. Computer analysis of data and final report production requires the purchase of Metaverse 4.0, at $300.

VII. **Copy of Unofficial Transcript:** You can download your unofficial transcript from MyNIU.

VIII. **Scholar/Mentor Contract (Signed by both parties):** We will accept an unsigned electronic copy of this form only if it is sent from the faculty mentor’s NIU email address. If we receive this contract from any other email address, we will be unable to accept it.

IX. **Letter of Recommendation from Faculty Supervisor:** Faculty supervisors’ letters of recommendation must include the following:

- A description of how you know the student (how long and in what context)
- A candid and confidential assessment of the student’s ability to successfully complete the proposed research
- A discussion of your specific contributions to the project
- A statement of commitment of your time and appropriate resources to the proposed project

The completed form should be sent from the faculty supervisor’s NIU email address to ugresearch@niu.edu by the proposal deadline.

**Please note:** Receipts for travel expenses should be included with the final report. Each grant recipient will be expected to file a final report describing the creation and results of the project within six weeks of the completion of the project or the end of the funding period. The report must be signed by both the student and the faculty supervisor. If a student fails to submit a final report, he/she will be billed for any award monies received, and will be ineligible to apply for a future grant.