



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

# UROS

Undergraduate Research Opportunities  
Scheme (UROS) 2014

Guidance notes for research supervisors  
and student researchers

Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD)  
March 2014

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## **UROS for Staff**

## ***What is UROS?***

The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme (UROS) at Lincoln is designed to encourage undergraduates to become involved in the research work of the University, thereby contributing to that work, and developing their own research and transferable skills. UROS is a key component of the Student as Producer initiative which aims to establish Research-Engaged Teaching and Learning as the organising principle for curriculum design and student engagement. See <http://studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk> for full details.

UROS Bursaries will be made available from the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) for student placement on research projects. Applications are welcome from academic schools across the University.

Schools are invited to identify research projects which may stand alone or form a subsidiary part of larger scale research work, and that could be completed towards the end of the academic year by an undergraduate student working under the supervision of a member of academic staff.

Projects should enable students to:

- Develop and apply research skills to deliver a worthwhile outcome
- Develop the ability to work effectively with others
- Organise and present research outcomes to a high standard.
- Make a valuable contribution to the research work of the university

Following identification of projects, supervisors and students are invited to complete a UROS application form in order to apply for a bursary of up to £1000.

Applications must include support from the Head of School.

Decisions about awards will be made by a panel. The panel will include the Dean of Learning and Teaching, a post-graduate research student and at least 2 representatives of the University's research community.

## ***Who is eligible for the scheme?***

Students at the end of the first or second year of their programme who express an interest. Final year students would not normally be eligible because they will have become graduates at the point when UROS projects start, but exceptions may be made in special circumstances (e.g. where the student is about to move on to the pursuit of a higher degree).

## ***What work is involved for the college?***

Colleges will be responsible for administration of the bursaries. It is recommended that funds are made available in parts and the final payment authorised once the project and final reports and posters are finished. However, this remains at the discretion of individual Colleges.

Please note that consumables such as materials/software/resources are expected to be paid for from the school's budget.

## ***What is expected of staff?***

All students need to have an academic member of staff in the role of research supervisor.

Research project supervisors will need to ensure:

- Professional working practice.
- A structured induction in the first week of the placement.
- A proper risk assessment (the first induction session must include a health and safety briefing).
- Student supervision through regular (at least weekly) meetings with progress reviews and feedback to the student on the quality of their work.
- Keep students informed about what is happening and ensure that they feel part of the research team.
- Provision of necessary training in research skills and methods.
- Provision of necessary resources, including suitable working space.
- Assisting in the production of posters showing the completed research.
- Written reports of the project.
- Participation in future UROS events.

## ***What is expected of students?***

Students will be expected to:

- Commit themselves to understanding fully the nature of the research work required prior to accepting a scholarship, thereby minimizing potential mismatch between project requirements and student expectations.
- Work professionally with others, developing skills and applying them to deliver reliable project outcomes.
- Produce a report and a poster display showing the results of the completed research project.
- Be willing to assist with publicity for UROS events.

## ***Applying for a UROS scholarship***

Applications should be made using the Application Form which can be downloaded from <http://studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk/funding>. The Application Form must be jointly completed by both the supervisor and the student and also have the approval of the Head of School.

## ***Timetable***

Electronic copies of completed application forms for UROS 2014 should be sent by email to [cerd@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:cerd@lincoln.ac.uk) by 4 April 2014.

The outcome of the review panel meetings will be communicated to all applicants by 25 April 2014.

UROS projects will typically be completed during the summer vacation, but may also take place during semester time over an extended time-frame.

## ***What supervisors have said about UROS***

“The scheme has been an excellent opportunity for a student to become involved with a faculty research project”

“I found the opportunity to work with a keen undergraduate on a research project a most stimulating one.”

“The research findings have plugged a number of gaps in my own research in this area.”

“The student learned a good deal about observation techniques: they helped to design the data record sheets, took control of decision-making (according to an agreed procedure) as to how observation would proceed, and learned the importance of accuracy in recording observations. In this sense, their research skills have been enhanced.”

## ***UROS FAQs for staff***

### **I'm interested in getting involved. Where do I begin?**

Academics who are interested in becoming supervisors can identify and design projects which should proceed within the principles of good academic practice. Alternatively students may approach an academic expressing an interest in becoming involved. Once the project and student have been identified, the application form should be filled in and signed by the supervisor, student and relevant Head of School. Application forms must be sent electronically to [cerd@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:cerd@lincoln.ac.uk) by 4 April 2014.

## **What kind of work can I give to a UROS student?**

The student should be given a brief that provides a genuine and valuable learning opportunity in terms of the development of research skills and awareness, employability and transferable skills.

## **Do projects have to be directly curriculum orientated?**

Projects should be extra curricula and not part of a student's assessed course work. Students should not rewrite a UROS report and present it as a dissertation. The main reason for this is that UROS is an opportunity to contribute to the research work of the university, and needs to be seen as quite separate from the taught curriculum. For reasons of fairness, it would not be right if students were perceived as being funded to do work which was part of their assessed programme of study.

However, it is reasonable for a student to build upon the UROS experience and expand on the topic for their dissertation. One of the identified benefits from UROS is that students become involved in a particular area of research and see their dissertation as an opportunity to expand this and take it further. However, in all cases the dissertation must represent a genuine extension of the project, with a revised focus of inquiry and further data collection and analysis.

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the department and the dissertation supervisor to determine what constitutes a significant extension of the project.

## **Should a record of the research be kept?**

The UROS is an ideal opportunity for Personal Development Planning (PDP) and keeping a progress record is not only good research practice but will help in the construction of your poster and end of project report.

UROS projects will be encouraged to maintain a blog using the University's Wordpress installation at <http://blogs.lincoln.ac.uk>. Support will be offered from CERD in setting up and using blogs to promote and disseminate research activity.

## **How often should I see my placement student?**

For some students this may be their first real experience of professional work and they may require support, particularly at the start of the project. A well-structured placement is likely to be a steep learning curve for a student and it is advisable for the supervisor to be easily contactable and provide a detailed, planned induction. Once the placement project is running, meetings should be held at least weekly at which feedback is given.

## **What if I am on holiday or travelling during the placement?**

We recommend that Supervisors are not absent for more than 1-2 weeks of the placement at most and supervisory presence is crucial for the first and last week. Arranging to have a second supervisor is a good way of ensuring that the student always has someone to ask for help and experiences working in a team. A PhD student may be a second supervisor and this provides useful supervision experience.

### **Do I need to acknowledge my student's work?**

Yes. Where students make a significant contribution to an area of a study (data collection, analysis etc), they should be offered authorship or acknowledgements (as appropriate) on any resulting publications.

### **Can I select an international student?**

UROS bursaries are not classed as 'employment', so any student may apply even if they do not currently have a legal 'right to work' in the United Kingdom.

### **Can I select more than one student?**

Yes. It is quite acceptable to divide the bursary between 2 or more students. However, there is a maximum of £1000 available per project.

### **Do I need to have an identified student to make an application?**

While the application is intended to be completed jointly by the staff and student, it is recognised that this is not always possible. Some departments prefer to advertise the position once funding has been awarded. The precise mechanism for selecting students is left to the discretion of the department or school.

### **What happens after the research is completed?**

All UROS students are expected to write a research report and produce a research poster. At the end of 2014 there will be a research dissemination event where students and their supervisors will be offered the opportunity to take part in a poster display and present the findings of their research.

Participants will also be invited to rewrite their research findings for publication in NEO, the online journal of student research, or in external publications.

In addition, students will be encouraged to present their work at the British Conference of Undergraduate Research BCUR. See <http://www.bcur.org> for further details

## **UROS for Students**

## ***What is UROS?***

The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme (UROS) at Lincoln is designed to encourage undergraduates to become involved in the research work of the University, thereby contributing to that work, and developing their own research and transferable skills. UROS is a key component of the Student as Producer initiative which aims to establish Research-Engaged Teaching and Learning as the organising principle for curriculum design and student engagement. See <http://studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk> for full details.

## ***What will be expected of me?***

You will be expected to:

- Commit yourself to understanding fully the nature of the research work required prior to accepting a scholarship, thereby minimizing potential mismatch between project requirements and student expectations.
- Work professionally with others, developing skills and applying them to deliver reliable project outcomes
- Work within the appropriate health and safety guidelines
- Keep a PDP record of your experience on the scheme
- Produce a summary report of your research project and main findings
- Produce a poster display showing the results of the completed research project.
- Be willing to assist with publicity for UROS events
- Offer assistance in mentoring future bursary winners

## ***What will I gain?***

Participation in UROS should help you to gain:

- Transferable skills that will benefit you in your studies and employability
- Insight into and experience of academic research
- Opportunities to contribute to the development of new knowledge
- Earn while you learn - bursaries available up to £1000

## ***How can I get involved?***

If you there is an area that interests you, you are welcome to approach an appropriate academic member of staff about the possibility of developing a project. If you have a broad range of interests, and would like to participate, let your tutors know that you would be interested in applying for a placement on UROS project.

## ***Timetable***

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The outcome of the review panel meetings will be communicated to all applicants by 25 April 2014.

UROS projects will typically be completed during the summer vacation, but may also take place during semester time over an extended time-frame.

## ***What students have said about participating in UROS***

“This project has helped me to develop my communication skills further by having to liaise with professionals in the field.”

“I feel that this experience has helped me greatly. The research skills I have attained, I know will help me immensely at writing my 3rd year dissertation.”

“Having to contact different people has made me more confident with my communication skills. I felt the theme was incredibly interesting and quite relevant to my work hence considerably aiding my own practice. The report is something I worked hard at thus making me feel I have achieved something of a substantial outcome.”

“Mostly, I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to become part of the research undertaken by the university.”

“The scholarship was a great opportunity to take advantage of improving my own knowledge of such a key area of the artists’ practice, additionally allowing me the chance to indulge my artistic nature by visiting numerous galleries around the country.”

“I feel adamant that the most successful part was the experience I gained.”

“This project increased my knowledge of some historical sources and of research procedures. It gave me the opportunity to develop further my skills of analysis, critical thinking, and interpretation of primary sources; and emphasised the importance of project management skills such as the need for a logical approach to research and the importance of accurate note taking.”

“I feel that this project was a valuable experience. The six weeks’ research was a welcome intellectual stimulation during the long summer break. It helped me hone my research and project management skills required for my dissertation and it gave me a sample of what part of an academic career may be like.”

“Using the experience I have gained from working on this project and the work I have done over the summer period I intend to further investigate this subject in my dissertation.”

## ***UROS FAQ's for students***

### **Where do I start?**

Students interested in applying should contact their school's research supervisors or approach an academic member of staff to discuss their interest and find out about existing research projects.

### **Who is on the panel?**

The panel will include the Dean of Learning and Teaching, a post-graduate research student and at least 2 representatives of the University's research community.

### **Should a record of the research be kept?**

The UROS is an ideal opportunity for Personal Development Planning (PDP) and keeping a progress record is not only good research practice but will help in the construction of your poster and end of project report.

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### **Do projects have to be directly curriculum orientated?**

Projects should be extra curricula and not part of your assessed course work. Students should not rewrite a UROS report and present it as a dissertation. The main reason for this is that UROS is an opportunity to contribute to the research work of the university, and needs to be seen as quite separate from the taught curriculum. For reasons of fairness, it would not be right if students were perceived as being funded to do work which was part of their assessed programme of study.

However, it is reasonable for a student to build upon the UROS experience and expand on the topic for their dissertation. One of the identified benefits from UROS is that students become involved in a particular area of research and see their dissertation as an opportunity to expand this and take it further. However, in all cases the dissertation must represent a genuine extension of the project, with a revised focus of inquiry and further data collection and analysis.

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the department and the dissertation supervisor to determine what constitutes a significant extension of the project.

### **How much is the bursary?**

Bursaries of up to £1000 will be made available per project. This bursary may be split between 2 or more students at the discretion of the department.

### **How will the money be distributed?**

Funds will be paid directly to Colleges who will organise the payment of bursaries to students.

### **When will the money be paid?**

It is recommended that funds are made available in parts and the final payment authorised once the project and final reports and posters are finished. However, this remains at the discretion of individual Colleges.

### **Will I have to pay tax?**

No.

### **How often should I see my supervisor?**

Students should expect an adequate induction and regular contact with their supervisor, seeing them not less than once per week. If supervisors need to go away during a placement it is requested they limit their absence to a fortnight and make arrangements for alternative supervision.

### **What happens after the research is completed?**

All UROS students are expected to write a research report and produce a research poster. At the end of 2014 there will be a research dissemination event where students and their supervisors will be offered the opportunity to take part in a poster display and present the findings of their research.

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