

Mississippi State University

Undergraduate Research Symposium Special Area Competition Fact Sheet

Spring 2023 Symposium April 13-14 in Colvard Student Union

Shackouls Honors College (SHC) hosts and plans the main Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) event and offers a time and place for other units to showcase undergraduate student research and sponsor Special Area Competitions. SHC helps facilitate Special Area Competitions by promoting and communicating about the event, submission deadline, and planning many of the logistics.

What is a Special Area Competition?

A Special Area Competition is an externally hosted evaluation of a select group of students' projects at the spring Undergraduate Research Symposium. These Special Area Competitions give students the opportunity to be recognized for their work in a wide variety of areas. Special Area Competitions may span project categories, or they may be specific to a major. They may be theme driven or discipline driven. They may be hosted by departments, colleges, centers, classes, faculty members, or student groups and they may have student, faculty, or staff evaluators. Existing Special Area Competitions include Public Health, Community Engagement Research Track, and Tomorrow Builder Award from Theta Tau Professional Engineering Fraternity. **We encourage creativity in the development of Special Area Competitions and are open to a range of possibilities.**

We provide the time and place and planning of the Undergraduate Research Symposium event plus:

- Creation and monitoring of the abstract submission form (*see attached document for submission form used last spring*)
- Provide spreadsheet of student submissions and abstracts two weeks in advance of event
- Promote your competition/organization on our website, in the abstract booklet, and on the URS T-Shirts
- Communicate with students including deadlines and event reminders
- Provide students with handbook and event information & guidance on website
- Create and provide URS abstract booklet
- Support securing prizes, announcements of Special Area Competitions winners, distribution of awards as desired.

How to develop a Special Area Competition

1. Decide the pool of students or types of research projects that you would like to evaluate (for example, you may want to include all psychology research, or you may want to judge all projects related to sustainability). What is its name? How will you decide if they meet criteria for your Special Area Competitions?
2. Consider aspects of judging the Special Area Competition, including who you will seek to evaluate; how you will determine the winners of your competition; and whether you will be giving a prize and how many. These can be finalized later but it is good to begin planning.
3. Write a paragraph explaining your competition to be included in the Abstract Booklet and on the URS website.
4. **Submit Special Area Competitions form by Nov 15.**

https://msstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eWKEPnIUxktzZAi

If you have questions, contact Dr. Anastasia Elder, ace24@msstate.edu and 662.325.8503