

## **Salisbury University Student Research Conference Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty**

### **What is student research?**

At SU, any significant independent study, performance, or portfolio by an undergraduate or graduate student (or group of students) falls under the broad definition of research.

### **We don't do "research" in my field; we do "X."**

Past student research conferences have featured

- Student research work in a faculty member's laboratory
- Independent research or literature review in the social sciences and humanities
- Social work and education case studies and pedagogical investigations
- art work
- film analyses
- respiratory therapy and exercise science studies
- performance of student authored one act plays
- marketing case studies
- business plans and reports

This list is not exhaustive, and only aims to show the broad range of activities welcomed by the SU Student Research Conference. We use the term research as a short form for all of the above activities (and many others); it is not intended to exclude students from any major.

### **How original does student research have to be?**

Each discipline will respond to this question differently. In general though, student research is something more than responding to textbook questions or completing routine class assignments. Students do not have the time or experience to replicate faculty level "professional development," but any significant independent inquiry or exploration can be useful research experience for students.

### **Why should student research be presented at the SU student research conference?**

A public research conference gives students a chance to share their findings and explorations with an educated, non-specialist public. This means that students will generally prepare their presentations differently than they would for their classes, and will receive different comments and questions than they would in class. They will generally present alongside students who they have not worked with and see how their work fits into the broader world of student research at SU. Few of these benefits can be gained in a classroom setting, or even in departmental presentations.

The SU research conference is also a great place for us to celebrate all that our students are doing in independent academic work and research. Students from every academic program and major are encouraged to participate.

**Should I assign student research as part of my class requirements?**

No. The student research conference is intended to make students value their independent achievements and to value the students themselves as independent inquirers, performers and researchers. While in some cases their independent research may have been done in the context of a required capstone course, making a SUSRC presentation mandatory takes away from what should be a voluntary, independent experience. Students who are presenting “for grades” should do so in the context of the classroom of the instructor who is evaluating the presentations. There is also no guarantee that a student’s presentation will be accommodated at the research conference (limits of space and time make this inevitable).

**Do you accept all student proposals?**

No. While we strive to include as many student presentations as possible, in some cases we do not have room for presentations and posters. In this case we accept those proposals which seem to be the best thought out, while we simultaneously strive to include proposals from as diverse an array of disciplines as possible. In some cases also, student proposals are poorly written, or suggest that no independent work has been done. Such proposals are generally rejected.

**Should I submit the proposal for my student(s)?**

No. Although you will be required to approve your student’s work before he/she can submit an abstract, we ask that students submit their proposals independently. Students must submit a conference application. This submission process enables students to gain familiarity with conference submissions and independent work. However, feel free to familiarize yourself with our on-line submission process and to assist your students whenever needed.

**What do I (the faculty mentor) have to do?**

Presuming that you have advised students to do independent work and research you should have no hesitation in asking them to share it with a wider public. Encourage your students to present. Refer them to the FAQ page for students. Point out the brain-boosting (and resume-enhancing) qualities of participation. Give them confidence that their work is good enough. Read their proposal (note the word limit and title character limit) and suggest improvements.

You will be notified by email of a student’s pending conference application. Your approval of the project is required for full consideration. This step is critical to ensure that the faculty mentor has agreed to the submission and has verified the quality of the work.

If the conference application is accepted, your student may need further assistance. You might read over their paper, have them practice their presentation, or look at drafts of their poster. The extra work you do should be amply repaid in seeing the accomplishments of your student. In short, please continue to mentor your student in preparing a high quality presentation.

**You haven’t really answered my main question, which is “X.”**

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