Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) Checklist and Personal Statement Rubric

Checklist for Applying to External Summer Research Programs

Every program’s requirements are unique, so check each program carefully. However, there are some items programs commonly require, and some things you should definitely start to think about before you start putting your applications together.

- Check eligibility requirements, due dates, and materials required for each program
- Two letters of recommendation
  - Select two people who can, preferably with details and anecdotes, speak to your research or academic experience, testify to your ability to deal with adversity, and show how you work well with others. Who are those people? One should be an academic, research, or science contact. Contact them early with deadlines, and ideally an example of your personal statement.

______________________________  ________________________________

- Personal Statement
  - Research experience or educational background
  - Any key research skills? Check the first question on this page and the lists on this page.
  - Key critical thinking, communication, life skills? Check the second question on this page.
  - What are your professional goals?
  - What are you personally interested in? Connect that to each program.
  - An anecdote or narrative that gives a unique sense of who you are and your motivation. (a challenge you overcame, you’re an immigrant striver, etc.)

- Basic Info for Application Form
- Resume
  - Consult with the Career Center on your resume, call 773-508-7716.
- Transcript (check unofficial or official)
- Photo
Personal Statement Rubric

Practically every summer research program will ask for a personal statement, or a cover letter which is basically a personal statement. As always, check what they are looking for. To help you write and revise, use this rubric, which is a tool for evaluating and revising a piece of writing.

For each of the criteria below, rank the statement 1-5, with 5 being the best. Comment below.

Experience and Skills
Do the applicant’s experience and skills match the program’s desired qualifications? Specifically, has the applicant demonstrated research skills the program desires through experience? If the program is not looking for specific technical research skills in a particular area, has the applicant demonstrated broader skills of critical thinking, communication, adaptability, that indicate success in a summer research program?

1  2  3  4  5

Goals, Motivation, and Relevance
Does the applicant articulate their long-term goals clearly, and explain how participation in this particular program would help them develop the skills and experience needed to achieve those goals? Does the applicant offer a compelling explanation for why they are interested in those career goals, and why they are interested in this specific program?

1  2  3  4  5

Clarity, Organization, and Applicability
Is the statement well written and organized, indicating good communication and organization skills? Does the statement fulfill all elements requested in the personal statement? The statement demonstrates specific understanding of this particular program, and avoids generalities.

1  2  3  4  5