

2025 IHHE Exploration Grant

The UR Institute for Human Health and the Environment (IHHE) Exploration Grant is a scholarship to provide funds for the promotion of transdisciplinary research experiences for UR undergraduate students who wish to conduct research related to the following areas:

- The impact of environmental exposures on human health and potential underlying mechanisms by which environmental factors affect health;
- Social, economic, and cultural contributors to the creation and/or resolution of environmental health problems.

Students from Arts, Education, Humanities, and STEM backgrounds are all encouraged to apply.

Successful students will be selected to receive a grant of \$7,500. This aid is to be disbursed during the summer months to cover the cost of their housing, food, transportation, or other academic costs while conducting summer research.

The goal of the program is to provide summer research opportunities to students from different academic disciplines who are passionate about finding solutions to environmental health challenges.

Research opportunity mentors must be identified in the application to be eligible for this grant. Applicants are expected to complete 300 hours of research over the course of the summer between May and August 2025.

Students from **underrepresented backgrounds, as defined by the NIH**, are especially encouraged to apply:

- Students who are Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.
- Students with disabilities, and/or
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including first-generation college students and students who come from families with income below established low-income thresholds

Timeline:

Monday, January 27th, 2025 – Application opens

Friday, March 21st, 2025, at 11:59 pm – Application deadline

Monday, March 31st, 2025 – Funding decision announcement

Eligibility:

Applicants must be **University of Rochester undergraduate students** and have a **cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater**.

General requirements (details below):

Student Resume/CV

Letter of Support from Mentor

Research Statement

Personal Statement

IHHE EXPLORATION GRANT APPLICATION

(Click the link above to apply)

Steps to apply:

1. Find and commit to a research opportunity relevant to human and environmental health.

Before applying, students must find a mentored research opportunity with a University of Rochester faculty member who does research relevant to environmental or human health. The IHHE website could be a good starting point for this search.

2. Plan your application with your mentor.

The online application requires all requested documents to be submitted through the designated online portal. Students are required to provide their basic information, research statement, and personal statement. Faculty mentors will be required to submit a letter of recommendation after the student's initial application submission. Revisions to the application are allowed until March 14th at 11:59 pm. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Application Components:

Via a REDCap form, both student (items 1-5 in a single pdf file) and mentor (item 6) must submit the following required components:

- 1. Student information:** contains basic information about the student (class year, major, contact information) and other relevant information.
- 2. Student resume/CV:** pdf format only
- 3. Research mentor information:** please enter the name, department, and contact information for the mentor.
- 4. Research Proposal:** In no more than 2 pages, single spaced, excluding figures and citations, tell us about your proposed research. Please keep in mind that your application will be read by faculty members who may not be a specialist in your particular subfield. Your description must include the following:

- *Context and Background:* What is the broad environmental relevance of your proposed research?
- *Research Question:* What scientific question(s) will be addressed? What are the overall goals of the proposed research?
- *Objectives:* Objectives are specific, measurable or identifiable tasks you will do to address the research question. What are the specific tasks and expected outcomes of the research/creative activity? (Bulleting or numbering the objectives can be a useful way to stay on track and clearly present the aims of the project.)
- *Methodology:* How will you accomplish the proposed research question? What are the study methods you aim to use?
- *Contribution:* What is your individual role/contribution to the project?
- *Anticipated results:* (This section will vary considerably based on the type of project.) The committee does not expect you to know exactly what will happen, but wants to see that you've thought about it.
- *Project timeline:* What is the general timing of the steps outlined in your plans? Remember that you are expected to complete 300 hours over the course of the summer between May-August. Be realistic. Reviewers will be evaluating project feasibility.

5. Personal Statement: In no more than 1 page, single spaced, please comment on the following:

- Broadly speaking, why are you interested in the proposed research?
- What has led you to wanting to engage with this specific research experience?
- What is this experience's relationship to your personal, academic, and professional goals?
- How and why do you think this experience will meet your expectations?
- Are there any mitigating factors, barriers, or other things that you would like us to consider?

6. Mentor Letter: Please note that this is a confidential letter, and students will not be able to see their mentor's letter. Once the student submits their application via REDCap, the mentor will receive a link to submit their letter. The faculty mentor should cover the following in their letter:

- Familiarity with the student (duration, capacity)
- Originality of the proposed work
- Feasibility of the proposed project, including student qualifications and timeline
- A supervision/communication plan that plans for regular meetings and explains how the student will be evaluated over the course of the experience
- Any mitigating factors concerning the student that the review panel should consider
- Commitment to full participation in this program including pre- and post-survey and support for final presentation.

Application Evaluation:

A panel of UR faculty and staff will evaluate complete application packages. Factors that will be taken into consideration in evaluating the research proposal include the following:

1. Clarity of writing and appearance
2. Environmental health relevance of the proposed work

3. Research question, aims and objectives
4. Methodology
5. Feasibility
6. Expected student contributions

Factors that will be taken into consideration in evaluating the personal statement include the following:

1. Articulation of interest in the proposed research
2. Articulation of expectations for the summer
3. Alignment of project goals with personal goals
4. Clarity of writing and appearance

Each of these categories will be rated using the following scale: excellent, good, satisfactory, weak.

Awardee Responsibilities:

Award recipients will be responsible for:

1. Reading [these linked instructions](#) regarding tax responsibilities and direct deposit for the grant. *International students*: your award may be subject to withholding. Although you are likely eligible to apply for a tax refund in the spring through the IRS, please use the instructions provided to minimize any potential withholding.
2. Submitting a mentoring contract by **May 9th, 2025**.
3. Conducting research between May and August, totaling at least 300 hours.
4. Attend social gatherings for the trainees and mentors in this program.
5. Presenting your research at a IHHE Symposium in the next academic year.
6. Submitting an evaluation of the program at the conclusion of the summer, which will be delivered via a survey.