

Lance & Elena Calvert Undergraduate Research Award

Instructions for Students

The reflective essay carries the most weight in the judging for the Lance and Elena Calvert Undergraduate Research Award, followed by the bibliography. These are the components that form the self-reflective articulation of the research process and the utilization of library resources that form the basis of the award. The points below are designed to guide you in focusing on important elements in the reflective essay and the bibliography.

Reflective Essay

The reflective essay represents the most important element used by the judges to evaluate your work for this award. The reflective essay should cover various aspects of your research process including search strategies that you used, your information gathering methods, and how you chose sources to support your thesis. The following points are taken from the rubric used in judging the submissions for the award and should be addressed when appropriate in the reflective essay.

- Student effectively uses and explains information gathering methods appropriate to the discipline. You should explain your methodology and how it is consistent with what is expected in your discipline. In other words, tell us about your research process.
- The essay displays an awareness of all potential finding aids appropriate to the inquiry. Finding aids can include but are not limited to databases (Academic Search Premier and Project Muse, for example), bibliographies, and some websites. In other words, finding aids can be anything that helps you get to the information you need to complete your paper or project.
- Student is able to formulate a complete search strategy to fully explore the breadth and depth of literature on the topic and uses advanced search strategies to locate specific types of resources, e.g. dissertations, unpublished research, and primary sources. You should describe your search strategies and your use of flexible vocabularies, especially when you ran into information gaps and failed searches. How did you adjust your searches when needed to find information?
- Appropriate manifestations of a work are selected and used appropriately, recognizing that primary sources for the discipline may be of a different nature than those in other fields. This is particularly true in the arts where primary sources may be musical scores, audio and video recordings, artist's writings, models, floor plans, landscape, or design work.
- Intentional investigation of viewpoints or performance/application practices encountered is described in the reflective essay. Don't just focus on one side of the issue. Tell us how you reconciled differing viewpoints through the course of your research process and how it influenced your choice of resources.
- Constraints on access to sources appropriate to the topic/project are addressed. Student determines cost-effectiveness of obtaining specific sources not locally available, e.g., through LINK+ or interlibrary loan. Justify the use of alternative sources if that was necessary.

And finally, how did you evaluate your resources? Tell us in the reflective essay how you chose your information resources and the criteria you used to choose them.

Bibliography

Your paper's bibliography should be in a consistent style appropriate to your discipline. To help the judges understand your unique set of resources, you may include an explanatory note identifying specific characteristics of these sources that were important in your selection and use for your project.