

# 2025

## Application Guide



**Recognition and Funding Opportunity**

# Interdisciplinary Research Teams

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**UC Irvine**

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program

**CALIT2**

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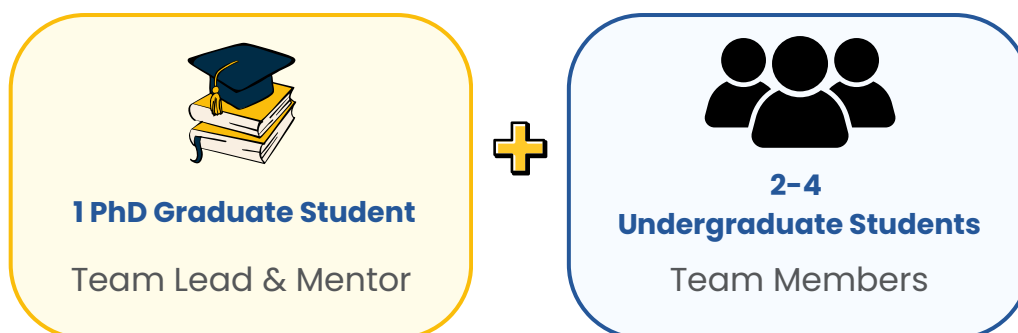
# What is the Interdisciplinary Research Teams?



[CALIT2](#) and UROP have partnered to offer the Interdisciplinary Research Teams (IRT) program, which provides PhD graduate and undergraduate students the opportunity to work together in teams on projects that are interdisciplinary in nature. **One PhD graduate student lead will mentor 2–4 UCI undergraduate students on the project from January to May 2026.**

If awarded, CALIT2 will provide a \$1,000 stipend to each PhD graduate student (**pending CALIT2 budget administrative staff confirmation**) serving as a mentor for a team; plus up to \$2,000 for project supplies, as needed for the project. Undergraduate students receive recognition as a UROP Fellow.

Preference will be given to projects affiliated with [active CALIT2 faculty](#) and that are experiential in nature. 



## What counts as interdisciplinary?

The PhD graduate and undergraduate students are encouraged to work collaboratively, bringing their interests and experience from multiple disciplines to solve problems through an interdisciplinary lens.

Undergraduate students on a team must be from at least two different schools or two different departments within a school. **Preference is given to teams with students from different schools.**



### How does IRT support a project?

As part of an Interdisciplinary Research Team, students can apply for funding to support their project. You can request up to **\$2,000** for your project, and all funding must be expended by the end of May 2026.

### How do we access the funds?

Funds will not be directly distributed to the awardees. **PhD graduate students must submit purchase orders to CALIT2. No exceptions.** Detailed instructions will be provided to the awarded PhD graduate student leads on how to submit purchase orders for supplies to CALIT2, who will approve and will handle all purchases.

- ✓ No direct distribution to students
- ✓ PhD Graduate leads submit purchase orders to CALIT2
- ✓ CALIT2 approves and handles all purchases

# Who Can Participate in IRT?

We welcome **all** current UCI PhD graduate and undergraduate students who are participating in a PhD graduate student mentored interdisciplinary research project or creative activity.

## Eligibility Requirements



### Enrollment Status

Must be enrolled at UCI as degree-seeking PhD graduate or undergraduate students through at least **Spring Quarter 2026**



### Faculty Approval

PhD graduate student must have **UCI Faculty PhD Advisor's approval**



### Team Composition

Must be part of a PhD graduate and undergraduate student team working on an **interdisciplinary project**



### Academic Standing

Must be in **good academic standing** (2.0+ GPA)

## Project Requirements:



### Research Timeline

Research takes place from January through May 2026. All projects should be completed and funding must be expended by the end of May 2026



### Presentation

All teams are **required to present** their projects in person in May or June 2026 (**Date TBD**) and submit a [final report](#) by the end of May 2026



## Application Process

While the undergraduate team members should be involved in writing the proposal and personal statements, **the application must be submitted via the PhD graduate student's application account.**

- You can only submit one IRT application. There is a maximum of one award per team and student.

The **PhD graduate student lead** must be the one to complete and submit the application through their own online application account.



# What is a UROP Fellow?

UC Irvine undergraduate students may apply for a UROP award to receive recognition of their faculty-mentored research or creative activity. Upon selection, they become UROP Fellows (this title is for undergraduate students only, not graduate students). UROP Fellows who receive SURP (Summer Undergraduate Research Program) or REF (Research Experience Fellowship) are required to present at the [UC Irvine Undergraduate Research Symposium](#) in May. 

If awarded IRT, you are required to present for CALIT2. Therefore, **you are invited and encouraged to present at our symposium**. IRT is one pathway to becoming a UROP Fellow.

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## Skills You'll Develop

As a UROP Fellow, you will develop valuable academic, personal, and career readiness skills that will prepare you for your future. Employers have identified the eight core [career readiness competencies](#) below that will equip college graduates to successfully transition to the workplace. 

Career & Self-  
Development

Communication

Critical Thinking

Equity & Inclusion

Leadership

Professionalism

Teamwork

Technology

Participating in activities that build career readiness skills builds confidence and experience from which you can identify and articulate your skills in graduate school applications, resumes, interviews, and networking conversations. Employers are more likely to hire people who they believe are career ready.

## UROP Fellow Benefits

In addition to building on your skills, UROP Fellows will receive:

- ✓ **One free research poster** per project per academic year
  - The poster is intended for use at the UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium, although it may be used for other conferences. Must be redeemed April 2026 – May 2026
- ✓ **Graduation cord** for recognition at UCI Commencement
  - One cord per student, regardless of number of UROP awards earned
- ✓ **Use of UROP Fellow title** for recognition on Resume, CV, LinkedIn, and graduate school applications
- ✓ **Access** to UROP Fellow resources and community
- ✓ Students who need support for project-related supplies in order to complete their project may apply for needs-based funding
- ✓ **Exclusive opportunity** to apply for the UROP Travel or Publication Award, which is limited to UROP Fellows

**Note:** These benefits are effective for any UROP recognition and funding opportunities **Fall Quarter 2025 and forward**. Past UROP Fellows do not receive these new benefits unless they are awarded in upcoming cycles (Fall Quarter 2025 and forward).

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## Ways to Become a UROP Fellow

There are several pathways to earning the UROP Fellow title:

### Research Experience Fellowship (REF)

Apply in Fall Quarter

### Interdisciplinary Research Teams (IRT)

Apply in Fall Quarter

### Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP)

Apply in Spring Quarter

# How Do I Prepare My Application?

Below is an overview of the information you will submit for your online application.

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>UC Irvine PhD Graduate Student Lead and Undergraduate Students Information</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• UCI email</li> <li>• Phone number</li> <li>• School, major, &amp; class level</li> <li>• Expected Graduation Date</li> <li>• Undergraduate Co-applicant Names, UCI e-mail addresses, Schools, and Majors</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>UCI Faculty PhD Advisor Information</b>                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• UCI email</li> <li>• School &amp; department</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Project Information</b>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project title</li> <li>• Indicate if your project is affiliated with <a href="#">active CALIT2 Faculty</a></li> <li>• Indicate the amount of funding you are requesting</li> <li>• Indicate if your project involves human or animal subjects</li> <li>• Indicate if any undergraduate students on the team also applied for funding through the Research Experience Fellowship application in Fall 2025</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Required Documents</b>                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Proposal with Itemized Budget. Can request up to \$2,000 for project supplies.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ All members collaborate on one proposal that is submitted by the PhD graduate student</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Personal Statement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Combine all personal statements into <b>a single document</b> for submission</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Your PhD Faculty Advisor will need to sign this form before submitting</li> <li>◦ You will upload this form to your application.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



## Application Timeline

- Monday, November 3, 2025 at 11:59 PM – Student Application Deadline
- Friday, December 12, 2025 – Notification Emails sent

**Reminder:** Your research must be conducted during January – May 2026

### Note about completing the application:

- **Save as Draft:** Save your progress and return later to edit
- **Submit:** Final submission (no changes allowed after this)
- **Confirmation:** You'll receive an email confirmation.
  - If you do not receive a confirmation email, you must contact the UROP Office to ensure that your registration has been submitted correctly.

**Apply to IRT by Nov. 3, 11:59PM**



# Writing Your Proposal

## What is a proposal?

A proposal describes your project and should convince the reviewers of its significance and the need for funding, if requested.

**PAGE MINIMUM: 2 PAGES**

## Writing Tip: Be Concise and Focused

The more concise and focused you are in your writing, the easier it is for reviewers reading your application, which could help your case in being selected and if requested, awarded funding. Our minimum recommendation is 2 pages, but this varies by discipline. Consult your UCI faculty mentor for guidance on how many pages you need to state your case for funding.

## What should I include in my proposal?

Your proposal should address the following 5 core elements:

1

### Thesis, Purpose, Objective, & Approach

- Describe your purpose with a clear research question
- Why is this project significant? Thoroughly discuss how it advances knowledge and its potential impact on society
- Describe work you have already completed, what you plan to accomplish, and your intended outcomes
- List the books, articles, and any other outside sources you used in preparing your proposal or that have contributed to your research

2

### Responsibility

- Discuss your specific duties for the project. Are you working in a lab or conducting an independent project?
- Describe how your work is independent from that of your mentor(s)
  - For group projects, define each student's role and how they're independent of each other
- Explain how you will interact with your faculty mentor and other research personnel throughout the project

3

### Timeline

- Create an outline of your specific research process, including what needs to be completed (e.g., data collection, analysis, trainings, meetings)
- Include a schedule—by week, month, or quarter—of project tasks and deadlines
- Discuss the progress you have made so far, where you are in your project, and expectations that you can complete the work within this timeframe
- List specific goals to ensure that the project is progressing efficiently

4

### References

- List all books, articles, and other outside sources used in preparing your proposal
- Include sources that have contributed to your research background and understanding
- Use appropriate academic citation format

5

### Budget

- Include an itemized budget of projected expenses for the length of your IRT project.
- Justify why you need funding and how it will be used
- Consult with your PhD Faculty Advisor before developing your budget.
  - There are limitations on what [types of expenses](#) can be covered
  - Include an [itemized budget](#) of projected expenses for the length of your project



# What Expenses Are Covered by IRT?

Students can request up to \$2,000 to support their project. Please be aware that there are limitations on what expenses can be covered. A requirement of this application is to create an itemized budget; therefore, it's essential to be cautious about what can and cannot be covered.

Many books, software packages, and other resources are freely accessible to you through the university as a UCI student. The [UCI Office of Information Technology \(OIT\)](#) website contains information on available software, and you should check the [UCI Libraries website](#) for books and other reference materials that may be available for free.



## Expenses That CAN Be Covered

- Animals
- Chemicals
- Copying/printing
- Facilities rental
- Mailing/postage
- Mileage (to conduct local research)
- Other critical related costs
- Presentation materials (e.g., Symposium poster)
- Reference materials not available for free
- Software
- Supplies



## Expenses That CANNOT Be Covered

- Benefits for project participants
- Conference registration fees
- Gift cards/gift incentives, cash or otherwise
- Items that can be borrowed for free or rented at lower cost
- Major hardware purchases
- Membership fees
- Salaries, honoraria and stipends
- Standard laboratory expenses
- Travel expenses\*

\*Travel Note: UROP Travel Awards can provide limited funding to undergraduates for qualified expenses. See the UROP website for more information.

**All purchases must adhere to university policy.** Note that some equipment, such as **laptops and similar hardware** (rarely approved and only if mission-critical to the project), remain the **ownership of CALIT2/UCI** and **must be returned in June**.

## Formatting the Itemized Budget

Use the format in the sample below for your budget. Create your budget as a table within your proposal or copy/paste a table from Excel or Google Sheets to your proposal. Clearly explain any expenses that could be seen as unusual. Specify the amount you are requesting from CALIT2 and include justification in your application.

| Sample Interdisciplinary Research Team Budget    |                 |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Item                                             | Budgeted Amount | Explanation and Justification for Expense                |
| Copying/printing                                 | \$500           | Materials needed in experiment design.                   |
| Organic solvents for reaction and chromatography | \$680           | Supplies needed to gain results.                         |
| Proper Waste Disposal                            | \$700           |                                                          |
| Poster for Symposium                             | \$120           |                                                          |
| Total Budget                                     | \$3,100         | Total cost of your project                               |
| Total Requesting from CALIT2                     | \$2,000         | Amount you are requesting from CALIT2 (Maximum: \$2,000) |



We offer a [2025 Interdisciplinary Research Teams Budget Template](#) to help you keep track of the items you are requesting funding for.



# Formatting Your Proposal

**Use the information below to help you format your proposal.** Content and organization vary by field of study. Talk to your faculty mentor to determine how you should organize your proposal (this includes citation styles e.g., APA, MLA, and Chicago).

| Requirement       | Specification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Header</b>     | At the top of the document<br>Name of the PhD graduate student, undergraduate researcher(s) and faculty mentor                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Page Count</b> | Minimum 2 pages<br>If you need to write more that's okay, but keep it concise.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Spacing</b>    | Double spaced                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Margins</b>    | 1" margins                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Font Size</b>  | 11-point or larger type                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Font Type</b>  | Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Document</b>   | Size: 8.5" x 11"<br>File type: MS Word or PDF                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Submission</b> | Upload as PDF or MS Word file <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>While all student applicants should work on the proposal, the Primary Applicant will <b>submit ONE document that contains the proposal</b>. Ensure that each student's name is included on the proposal.</li></ul> |

## Need an Example?

Check out sample [Interdisciplinary Research Teams proposals](#) for reference!



# Writing Your Personal Statement

## What is a personal statement?

A personal statement describes your relationship to the project in a concise, focused manner. **Each student on the team should write their own personal statement, and all statements should be combined into one document.**

**WORD COUNT: 300 WORDS MAXIMUM PER STUDENT**

## What should I include in my personal statement?

Please address the following in your personal statement paragraph, **using no more than two or three sentences for each:**

- **Interest and Motivation:** Describe your academic or professional interest in conducting this research or creative activity. Explain what sparked your curiosity or passion for this specific project.
- **Personal connection to the project:** Share personal experiences, values, or life events that uniquely connect you to this project. Discuss any personal motivations or values driving your commitment to this project.
- **Goals and Impact:** Explain how pursuing this project will help you move toward your academic, career, and/or personal goals. Discuss the skills, knowledge, or experiences you aim to gain from conducting the project. Discuss the impact your project can make in your field and community.
- **Relevant Background:** Highlight your background and experience related to this project, including any previous relevant accomplishments. Include information about any previous related research projects, coursework, internships, or activities.

## Writing Tips:

- **Focus on your unique perspective** and connection to the research
- **Be specific** about your motivations and goals
- **Highlight only your most relevant experiences**
- **Do not repeat details already covered in your Research Proposal**
- **Use clear, concise language** to maximize impact within the word limit
- The UCI Writing Center offers [writing support and appointments](#). They're also hosting a UROP Personal Statement workshop – check ZotSpot under UROP's profile for details.



## As you prepare the personal statement

We recommend that you refer to this rubric as you prepare your personal statement. Considering these criteria will help ensure that your personal statement effectively presents your relationship to your project:

| Content/Questions                         | Acceptable                                                                                                                                                                | Not Acceptable                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Interest and motivation</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly communicates the reason for pursuing the project</li> <li>Interest/passion are demonstrated</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivation is not clear</li> <li>Interest/passion are not demonstrated</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| <b>Personal connection</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples clearly relate to the project</li> <li>Limited to one or two compelling examples</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance of the example(s) is not clear</li> <li>Many examples</li> </ul>                                                                                  |
| <b>Alignment with goals and impact</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goals are clearly defined</li> <li>Establishes logical connection between the project and goals</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goals are not clear</li> <li>Project does not seem to lead toward the goals</li> </ul>                                                                      |
| <b>Relevant background and experience</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly related to the project</li> <li>Relevance is clearly explained</li> <li>Limited to most important examples</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No direct connection to the project</li> <li>Relevance is not clear</li> <li>Many examples</li> </ul>                                                       |
| <b>Writing</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easily understood</li> <li>Clear logical flow</li> <li>Concise</li> <li>No errors in spelling, grammar, or language use</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not easy to understand</li> <li>No clear logical flow</li> <li>Wordy and/or repetitive</li> <li>Errors in spelling, grammar, and/or language use</li> </ul> |

**Reminder:** Combine all personal statements into a single document for submission

# Formatting Your Personal Statement

Use the information below to help you write and format your personal statement.  
**Each member must write their own personal statement, but all statements should be combined into a single document for submission.**

| Requirement   | Specification                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Word Count    | 300 words maximum                                                                                                                                           |
| Spacing       | Double spaced                                                                                                                                               |
| Margins       | 1" margins                                                                                                                                                  |
| Font Size     | 11-point or larger type                                                                                                                                     |
| Font Type     | Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial                                                                                                                             |
| Document Size | 8.5" x 11"                                                                                                                                                  |
| Submission    | Upload as PDF or MS Word file <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Primary Applicant submits ONE document with all names and personal statements</li></ul> |

# Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form

The [Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form](#) indicates that you agree to create your proposal with your team and mentor the undergraduate students named on the proposal. In an effort to increase the value and impact of the IRT experience for the undergraduate students, we expect you to be proactive, both in defining expectations for the project and in guidance and oversight of the project. You are agreeing to engage in mentoring activities with your team throughout the year.



## What is the Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form?

This form serves as a commitment document where PhD graduate students agree to mentor undergraduate students throughout their IRT project experience.

## What steps do I need to take to complete the form?

- 1 **PhD graduate student meets with both their PhD Faculty Advisor and also the undergraduate students on their team to review proposal**
  - Obtain your Faculty Advisor's approval. Collaborate with your undergraduate team members to develop and refine your research proposal.
- 2 **Complete the Graduate Student Section and Send the Form Electronically**
  - PhD graduate student completes their section of the form, and then sends the "Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form" electronically to their UCI Faculty PhD Advisor to obtain their approval (electronic signatures required) for completion.
- 3 **UCI Faculty PhD Advisor completes the form**
  - Your UCI Faculty PhD Advisor signs off on the form to indicate that they approve you to pursue this project and sends the completed form back to you.

**Important:** Provide your UCI Faculty PhD Advisor with this form **as soon as possible** so they can sign and return to you before the application deadline.

- 4 **Submit the Form**
  - You submit the form electronically along with your application by the application deadline.

# Conducting Ethical Research

**Does your project involve human and/or animal subjects?**

-  Yes, my project involves human subjects
-  Yes, my project involves animal subjects

**If yes, projects involving human and/or animal subjects must adhere to UCI's Research Protections standards.**



**Have you consulted with your Faculty Mentor about research protections?**

-  Yes, I have discussed this with my Faculty Mentor
-  No, I need to schedule a meeting with my Faculty Mentor

**If no, consult with your Faculty Mentor** to determine if Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval is needed.



## Identify Required Approvals

### Human Subjects?

#### **Institutional Review Board (IRB):**

Reviews research involving human participants to ensure ethical standards are met

- Required for some types of human subjects research
- Certain categories qualify for exempt status and do not need IRB review or approval



### Animal Subjects?

#### **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):**

- Reviews research involving live vertebrate animals
- Required for all animal research
- Ensures humane treatment and care



Click here to access the [UROP Research Protections Instructions](#).



# Important Links

[Active CALIT2 Faculty](#)

[2025 Interdisciplinary Research Teams Budget Template](#)

[Career Readiness – UC Irvine Division of Career Pathways](#)

[CALIT2 IRT Webpage](#)

[Graduate Student Mentor Agreement Form](#)

[Interdisciplinary Research Teams Application](#)

[Required Final Report Template](#)

[Sample Proposals](#)

[UCI Libraries](#)

[UCI Office of Information Technology \(OIT\): Technology Resources for Students](#)

[UCI Writing Center: Schedule an Appointment](#)

[Undergraduate Research Symposium](#)

[UROP Research Protections Instructions](#)

[ZotSpot – UROP](#)



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## **What should I consider when creating a budget?**

IRT awards will provide research-related supplies and expenses specifically for the IRT project during this academic year. PhD graduate students who will be conducting research beyond this year should only include items that will be used this year. Please review the sample budget in this guide for details on allowable and non-allowable expenses. The maximum amount that can be requested is \$2,000.

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## **How will I receive my funding?**

One student representative from each team must submit purchase orders to CALIT2 based on the approved budget that was submitted as part of the proposal. CALIT2 will approve and purchase the items for the team. Funds will NOT be transferred to the student or department. All funds must be expended by May.

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## **Can I apply for IRT funding for the same project if we received it last year?**

No, not if the project is the same. IRT projects should be able to be completed within the academic year. If you can demonstrate a new, distinct project related to your research, you can apply for IRT again. Be sure to provide clear objectives and justify why further funding is necessary to continue your research or creative activities in a different type of project.

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## **Is there another opportunity to obtain funding for project-related expenses through UROP?**

The UROP Fall Research Experience Fellowship (REF) is the other UROP opportunity for undergraduate students to receive funding for project-related supplies and expenses. It has the same deadline as IRT in the fall.

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## **Can we apply for IRT and the Research Experience Fellowship (REF) at the same time?**

Yes, teams may apply for both IRT and REF but can only receive funding for one application. Teams not awarded for IRT will be considered for REF. Note that while PhD graduate students should apply for IRT, one undergraduate student from the team should be the one to apply to REF.

## **How can I increase my chances of receiving funding?**

Ensure that you submit the strongest application possible: consult with your faculty advisor to write a well-justified and detailed Proposal and Personal Statement. Ensure that your budget is realistic and clearly outlines the necessity of each expense. Go to the UCI Writing Center to receive feedback on your documents. While we strive to fund as many worthy projects as possible, the CALIT2 and UROP award budgets are limited and if awarded, you may not receive the maximum amount requested. The final funding decision is based on a variety of factors considered by CALIT2. You will increase your chances by following our Guide closely to submit the best application you can.

---

## **If a group project is awarded funding or recognition, do all members need to present for CALIT2?**

Awarded IRT teams must present their research for CALIT2 in the Spring quarter. PhD graduate student mentors will present with their undergraduate student team at the IRT symposium.

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## **Does the PhD graduate mentor have to be the lead applicant?**

Yes! For IRT, the PhD graduate mentor must be the one who submits the application on behalf of the team. They must create their own account within the application system and submit the application via their own account.

---

## **Am I automatically registered to present at the UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium?**

No. Undergraduate students who would like to present their project at the UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium must register separately for this event in early April. While we encourage PhD graduate student leads to support their undergraduate student team by attending, because this is an undergraduate event, PhD graduate students are unable to present with their team.