Track 1- Guidelines and Rubric for SURF for Creative Activity Proposals

The arts and creative humanities track invites proposals that explore scholarly inquiry, creative expression, and interdisciplinary investigation. This track welcomes a diverse range of projects such as creative portfolios, artistic explorations, performance projects, and experimental works that articulate intellectual rigor and critical engagement with their subject matter. Students are encouraged to develop projects that push the boundaries of their discipline and contribute new insights, perspectives, or interpretations within humanities and creative arts.

Examples include, but are not limited to: a series of paintings exploring a specific cultural or historical theme; an original composition or music performance integrating research into style, history, or theory; a creative writing project accompanied by a critical analysis of influences and themes; or a digital humanities project involving both creative production and scholarly exploration.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate the intellectual merit of their project by articulating how their work advances understanding or creates new knowledge within their field or across disciplines. Projects should go beyond routine coursework, practice, or performance expectations to reveal creativity, scholarly inquiry, and critical thought.

Proposal details:

- Proposals must present a project to be completed during the 8-week summer term that is original, feasible, and intellectually rigorous.
- The project must clearly articulate its intellectual merit, including reflection on the research or creative questions it addresses and its broader significance.
- Proposals should include a detailed project description, goals, methodology or creative approach, expected outcomes, and a timeline.
- Applicants must demonstrate how the project extends beyond normal coursework, rehearsals, or studio practice, highlighting deeper inquiry or innovation.
- Projects may be interdisciplinary and integrate humanities or creative arts with other fields.
- If fieldwork is required for the project, proposals should thoroughly discuss the feasibility and planning of travel and logistics.
- We strongly encourage a plan for dissemination or presentation of the project results (e.g., exhibition, performance, publication, public talk, or digital platform) in the proposal.

Document Formatting Guidelines

- Proposals and personal statements must be written in 12-point font with 1-inch margins.
- Document must be uploaded as a PDF Proposal is limited to two (2) pages.
- References do not count toward the page limit and can be completed on a separate page.
- Personal statement is limited to one (1) page.
- Any pages beyond these limits will be removed before the proposal is sent to reviewers.

Rubrics for reviewers

Criteria	1 (poor)	2 (fair)	3 (good)	4 (very good)	5 (excellent)
Intellectual Merit	Student's proposal lacks clear research or creative inquiry; questions and significance are unclear or weak.	Student's proposal shows some indication of creative inquiry and significance, but lacks depth or clarity in broader impact.	Student' proposal is generally clear with moderate articulation of significance and broader impact, though some aspects could be strengthened.	Student's proposal provides clear description of research or creative inquiry with strong articulation of significance and impact.	Student's proposal exemplifies exceptional clarity and depth of inquiry; significance and broader intellectual impact well-articulated.
Originality, Innovation, and Significance	Student's proposal presents routine or derivative project with little to no novelty or significance; no attempt is made at situating the project in the broader context of the discipline.	Student's proposal includes some original elements but limited innovation or broader impact described; does not completely situate the work in the context of the discipline.	Student's proposal demonstrates some originality and innovation with moderate significance; background situates the work though with minor gaps or weaknesses.	Student's proposal demonstrates originality and innovation with clear significance to field/discipline/community and includes very good background	Student's proposal is highly original and innovative; project provides exceptional background (including citing relevant literature as needed) to situate the work and advances knowledge or offers new perspectives with strong significance.
Feasibility and Planning	Student's proposal presents unrealistic or poorly planned project scope; lacks clear timeline or goals; unlikely to finish in summer.	Student's proposal includes evidence of some planning but with unrealistic elements or unclear timeline/steps.	Student's proposal is planned with generally realistic scope and timeline; most goals are clear and achievable, though some details may need refinement.	Student's proposal contains well-planned project with realistic scope, timeline, and articulated goals; likely completable.	Student's proposal is exceptionally thorough and includes realistic planning with detailed timeline and achievable goals.
Motivation and Strength of Student	Applicant shows little or no genuine motivation; faculty mentor indicates weak or questionable student commitment.	Some indication of motivation or enthusiasm but student lacks depth or consistency; mentor notes some strengths but with concerns about persistence or engagement.	Student demonstrates clear motivation and commitment; faculty mentor describes the student as generally strong with potential for success.	Student demonstrates strong and consistent motivation; mentor highlights student's solid strengths, dedication, and positive attributes.	Exceptional motivation and passion clearly expressed; mentor strongly endorses student's outstanding character, resilience, and capability.

Preparation, Readiness, and Skillset	Student is poorly prepared with insufficient relevant knowledge or skills; mentor indicates lack of readiness to undertake the project.	Some preparation and skill evident but with gaps or weaknesses; mentor describes readiness as limited or needing development.	Student has adequate preparation and skills for the project; mentor regards the student as mostly ready to begin work.	Well-prepared student with strong relevant skills and background; mentor affirms the student's readiness and suitability.	Exceptionally well prepared with advanced skills and knowledge; mentor views the student as fully ready and highly capable to excel.
Learning Goals and Impact	Learning goals are vague, unrealistic, or insignificant; mentor sees little potential for meaningful growth or impact.	Somewhat clear goals but limited in scope or significance; mentor notes moderate developmental potential.	Learning goals are clear and attainable with recognizable impact; mentor indicates positive growth opportunities.	Goals are well articulated, significant, and likely to have meaningful impact; mentor supports strong developmental benefit.	Learning goals are highly focused, ambitious, and transformative; mentor enthusiastically anticipates profound growth and impact.
Quality of mentorship plan (Faculty Mentor Form, Question 3)	Broad assurances with few concrete details; training approach, progress tracking, and reflection are largely absent.	Limited student-specific detail; logistics are vague or inconsistent; skill development is lightly addressed; milestones and reflection/feedback are minimal.	Some student-specific detail; basic logistics are described; skills and goals are identified but training methods, milestones/tracking, and reflection practices lack specificity.	Mostly student-tailored; clear check-ins and expectations; skill-building approach is workable; milestones and progress monitoring are defined; reflection/feedback is included but not fully integrated.	Highly student-tailored and adaptive; explicit mentoring structure and roles; well-defined skill training with feedback and increasing independence; clear milestones/timeline with tracking and contingencies; regular reflective learning and formative feedback that support student agency and development.