



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™ UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE DISCOVERY

Special Area Competition Fact Sheet Undergraduate Research Spring Symposium

The Spring Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) provides a platform for showcasing undergraduate research and hosting Special Area Competitions. The Undergraduate Research and Creative Discovery (URCD) office supports these competitions by promoting them, managing submissions, and coordinating event logistics.

What is a Special Area Competition?

A Special Area Competition is an externally organized evaluation of selected student research projects presented at the Spring URS. These competitions offer students recognition for their work in specific fields or themes. They can:

- Span multiple project categories or focus on a single major.
- Be driven by a theme or academic discipline.
- Be hosted by departments, colleges, centers, classes, faculty, or student organizations.
- Include evaluators who are students, faculty, or staff.

You can view examples of past competitions and winners on our website. **We encourage creativity in the development of Special Area Competitions and are open to a range of possibilities.**

Support Provided by URCD

URCD facilitates Special Area Competitions by offering:

- A centralized abstract submission form.
- A spreadsheet of student submissions and abstracts, provided two weeks before the event.
- Promotion of your competition on our website, in the abstract booklet, and in post-event reports.
- Communication with students about deadlines and event details.
- A student handbook and event guidance via the URS website.
- Creation and distribution of the URS abstract booklet.
- Support for announcing winners and distributing awards (if applicable).

How to develop a Special Area Competition

1. **Define your scope:** Decide which students or types of projects you want to evaluate (e.g., all psychology research or sustainability-related projects). Choose a name and criteria for inclusion.
2. **Plan your judging process:** Identify potential evaluators, determine how winners will be selected, and decide whether prizes will be awarded.
3. **Write a description:** Prepare a short paragraph explaining your competition for inclusion in the abstract booklet and on the URS website.
4. **Confirm your participation:** Submit your commitment by November 15th via email or through the Special Area Competitions portal.

https://msstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bvVOEXm40srRKK2

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