A number of issues are impacting undergraduate research at UGA, including the two-week suspension of instruction; the move to online instruction for the remainder of the semester; the message that students are not allowed to return to campus until they receive permission; and ongoing changes in research activities at UGA.

As a result, the Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) is receiving many questions, especially from students who are holding a CURO Research Assistantship (CRA) this semester; students enrolled in credit-bearing R-suffix undergraduate research courses; and students who had submitted an abstract for presentation at the CURO Symposium. This document provides some suggestions on how to address such questions.

Additional information or any necessary updates or changes will be forthcoming as they become available. CURO programming is contingent on University of Georgia instructions and guidelines. Please continue to monitor the CURO website for further information.

The CURO Symposium

The 2020 CURO Symposium is transforming to an online, virtual format. Those students who were preparing posters and oral presentations will be receiving an email with information and instructions regarding the submission process, as will their faculty mentors. The deadline for these submissions is April 13, 2020, with the 2020 Virtual CURO Symposium taking place April 21-24.

Some students (and their faculty mentors) are concerned that their research is not as advanced as they expected it would be when they submitted their abstract, and they are not sure if they will be able to do much more given the new restrictions about research on campus. CURO wants to emphasize that it is quite common for students participating in the CURO Symposium to present work-in-progress and that there is no expectation for the research to be finished when presented at the CURO Symposium. However, while we highly encourage all students to present at the Virtual CURO Symposium, we understand that for some students it may not be feasible to present at this time.

Spring 2020 CURO Research Assistantship

Undergraduate researchers receiving a CURO Research Assistantship (CRA) during Spring 2020 will continue to be paid to complete all the CRA payments.
The CURO Research Assistantship (CRA) and Required CURO Symposium Participants:

Students who received CRA funding during summer and fall 2019 should have no problems presenting in the Virtual CURO Symposium.

In the case of students who are receiving their CRA during the current semester, we understand that there might be barriers and challenges for them to proceed with their research and thus comply with the CURO Symposium presentation requirement. In the case of students receiving a Spring 2020 CRA, CURO proposes the following:

- If your work and research are, at this time, advanced enough that you already have sufficient material to continue working remotely and prepare a presentation for the Symposium, you should go ahead and do so. Once you present at the Symposium, the CURO requirements for CRA recipients will be fulfilled.
- If your work and research are, at this time, not advanced enough for you to prepare the Symposium presentation that had been initially planned, please discuss with your mentor if they can propose appropriate changes in the approach of the research and presentation (i.e., adding a significant literature review component, remotely analyzing existing data, etc.). If you find an alternative and are able to present at the Symposium, the CURO requirements for CRA recipients will be fulfilled.
- If your work and research is at this time not advanced enough for you prepare a presentation for the Virtual Symposium and you and your mentor do not find an alternative for your research, then you may ask CURO to move your Symposium presentation requirement to the 2021 CURO Symposium to fulfill the requirement. If you are graduating and will not be in Athens to present during the 2021 CURO Symposium, please get in touch with CURO to determine what you need to do to fulfill the requirement.

Students enrolled in for-credit R-suffix Undergraduate Research Courses during Spring 2020

If you are enrolled in a credit-bearing course and your research is disrupted and cannot be completed as scheduled, discuss the situation with your faculty mentor. CURO’s suggestions include the following:

- If a student has completed or can complete sufficient work to meet the learning objectives for the course, then the faculty mentor may consider the experience completed and assign a grade for the course. In some cases, the student may have already finished a sufficient amount of work toward the course. In other cases, a faculty mentor may be able to find a way to let a student work remotely on their project. In some cases, the faculty mentor may wish to substitute the planned work for something else that still addresses the original learning objectives and fulfills the requirements set forth by their departments. In any of these scenarios, the course could be considered completed. Faculty and their departments have significant discretion on how they can help a student complete their courses and we encourage faculty members to seek such solutions as these will create the least disruption for students.
- For some faculty mentors and their students, there simply may be no way to complete the research courses. In these cases, faculty mentors may consider assigning a grade of Incomplete but this is appropriate only if the student and faculty mentor plan to complete the course later. A student may choose to Withdraw as well, but please be aware that could impact a student’s financial aid calculation and might have an adverse impact on their aid. It could also impact their completion of the Experiential Learning requirement and their time to degree completion. A decision to Withdraw should be done in consultation with academic advisors and financial aid advisors. In our opinion, a withdrawal should be a last resort option.