UROP
Student
Information Pack

Academic year 2016-2017 (Version 1.0) 24/10/16
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UROP General Information

General
Firstly, congratulations - you have been awarded a UROP placement!

UROP – the Essex Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme – allows you the chance to assist established researchers in one of their projects. During your placement you will gain new skills that will not only help you in your final year dissertation, but will also be useful to you in your future career – whatever direction that may take.

If you complete a minimum of 100 hours on the UROP placement (including your online training and completion of your poster) this will counts at 50 units towards the Big Essex award. For more information see the website https://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/bige/.

Agreement
The UROP agreement summarizes the conditions of your placement. Your copy is at the back of this document on page 9). Please note that signing the UROP agreement confirms your agreement to create an academic poster at the end – or towards the end – of your UROP placement (see page 8 for further details).

Hours
The absolute maximum number of hours you may spend on this placement is 200 hours (although please note that some placements are split between two students and these would then be restricted to a maximum of 100 hours each).

How your hours will be divided up and when you start/finish the placement is a matter for discussion between you and your UROP supervisor. However so that you do not neglect your studies, the UROP hours are limited during term-time to 10 hours per week, but there is NO restriction during vacation times. Please also note the University recommendation that you do not spend more than 15 hours per week on work; your UROP placement is not classed as employment, however, should you take a Frontrunner position or other employment, at the same time as your UROP placement, this could ultimately interfere with your studies.

Quick facts about your bursary payments
- Your UROP bursary will be paid into your UK bank account MONTHLY.
- The amount you receive will depend upon how many hours you have spent in the past month on your UROP placement.
• Do not exceed 10 hours per week during term-time.
• No restriction on hours per week outside of term-time.
• So that we know how much to pay you, you will need to complete a timesheet **EACH WEEK** for any hours that you spend on the UROP project (this includes meetings with your UROP supervisor about the project), and send it by email to your supervisor. You can see how to complete the timesheet on page 6.
• You must keep a note of your weekly hours, to ensure that you do not exceed 200 hours (as you will not be paid for more than 200 hours). To do this, please use the spreadsheet summary available from the UROP web page, under the link “Useful forms for students” (more information on this is provided on page 7 of this document).
• Please note that although the placement is for 200 hours, a total of 5 hours will be needed for your online training (2 hours 15 minutes, see page 3) and for the time you spend on the creation of your academic poster (2 hours and 45 minutes) at the end of the placement (see page 8).
• Completion of a minimum of 100 hours on the UROP placement counts at 50 units towards the Big Essex award.
Online Training Modules

Before you begin your UROP placement, you will need to complete THREE online compulsory training modules. These are:

- Health and Safety Essentials
- Computer Safety (Display Screen Equipment)
- Basic Fire Safety

Details of how to do this will have been included in the automatically generated email you received, but are repeated here once again for you.

Online training instructions:
You are required to undertake the University’s online health and safety training. Provision of instruction and training is a legal requirement therefore the University runs online courses to give you advice and training to help minimise your risk of harm. You are required to self-enrol and complete the following courses: Basic Fire Safety, Computer Safety and Health & Safety: The Essentials. Each course should take around 45 minutes to finish and at the end of each course there is a short quiz to complete. Upon completion of each module, you will be able to produce a certificate - please send all three certificates to UROP. The three health and safety courses are located on the University’s Moodle website, the login page can be found here: https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=119386. To access Moodle, please use your usual University of Essex username and password. You will be asked for an enrolment key as part of the self-enrolment process, please enter the enrolment key for the department you will be working in. Enrolment keys can be found using this link: http://www.bitly.com/essexkeys

NB: When you have finished the Computer Safety course you are required to complete a DSE self assessment form and give or send it to your UROP Supervisor, who will give it to the DSE Facilitator in your department. If you experience any problems or would like further assistance please email: safety@essex.ac.uk

You do NOT need to complete a timesheet for the hours taken to complete this online training, you will be paid automatically at the end of the following month.
Already completed some online training modules (as a Frontrunner or earlier UROP student)?

Please note if you have already completed some or all three of these training modules (either in an earlier UROP placement or as a Frontrunner) then please log into Moodle again and send the certificates to UROP. If you have only completed one or two of these modules, please complete the remainder – you will paid 45 minutes for each module. However, if you have already completed all three, you will NOT be paid, but instead you will be able to spend an extra 2 hours and 15 minutes on your placement!

Other training

All other training deemed necessary to complete your placement, must be organised by your UROP supervisor.
During your UROP placement

Conduct
During your time as a UROP student, we ask you to:-

• Be flexible, adaptable and fulfil the duties of the UROP placement to the best of your ability.
• Be punctual, dress appropriately and behave in a professional manner at all times.
• Inform your placement supervisor at the earliest opportunity if you have any problems with your duties.
• Have regular contact and communication with your UROP supervisor (see below).
• Complete the online Moodle modules described on page 3.

Regular meetings with your UROP supervisor
You should have regular meetings with your UROP supervisor. These may be face-to-face or by email or some other method (e.g. phone, Skype). These meetings should be used to discuss the tasks that are expected of you, and for you to ask for clarification if you are unsure of anything. Please don’t be afraid to ask your supervisor for help or further explanation – the primary function of this placement is for you to learn new skills – if you don’t understand something, you won’t be in a position to learn.

If you have any problems contacting your UROP supervisor, or if you have any problems with your supervisor, please email the UROP coordinator (urop@essex.ac.uk), where your concerns will be dealt with confidentially.

Research skills and professional development skills
You should carefully record the skills you develop as you progress through the UROP placement. This will be especially useful for you in the future when you add this placement experience to your CV. You may wish to note them down in your timesheet (see page 6).
Completing your Timesheets

Please complete a timesheet EACH WEEK for ANY hours that you spend on your UROP project. This includes any time spent on meetings with your UROP supervisor too.

The following steps explain how to download, complete and email your weekly timesheets.

1. In the UROP web page, under the section entitled “Useful forms for students” [https://www.essex.ac.uk/urop/students/useful-forms.aspx] you will find a link for the weekly timesheet [Timesheet for UROP students]. Select this link and the timesheet will download.

2. Open the document.

3. Complete the sections, as follows (an example is shown here):
   - Name (first name, surname).
   - Department.
   - Date week ending (this should be the date for the Sunday of the week you are completing). Please use UK style dates (e.g. day, month, year).
   - Academic term week (if you know it).
   - Please **round up** your daily hours to the nearest 15 minute interval.
   - In the left hand (pale blue) column, enter the number of hours for each day spent on the UROP project – using the **decimal format** for your hours. For example:
     - 3 hours, 15 minutes = 3.25;
     - 3 hours, 30 minutes = 3.5;
     - 3 hours, 45 minutes = 3.75.
   - The total number of hours will be calculated automatically, together with the amount of your bursary payment for this particular week.
   - If your supervisor would like to know on which research task you have spent your
time, please add this in the pink column to the right of the number of hours. Additionally this information may prove useful to you when you are completing your poster at the end of your placement.

4. IMPORTANT: save this document, using your surname and the week ending date, e.g. SMITH_240814.
5. Once you are finished, email this document immediately to your UROP supervisor.

**Keeping a note of your hours**

Make sure you do not exceed the maximum hours, as your bursary payment is limited to 200 hours in total. It is therefore important to keep a note of your weekly hours. You may wish to use the spreadsheet (shown below) which is entitled “Summary of your hours on your UROP placement” and which can be found on the on the UROP web page under “Useful forms” [http://www.essex.ac.uk/urop/students/useful-forms.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/urop/students/useful-forms.aspx)

If you use this form it is only for your own use and does NOT need to be sent to your supervisor or UROP.

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This spreadsheet allows you to monitor your UROP hours.

From your weekly timesheet:
>>> enter the week ending date (in to column B below)
>>> enter your total hours (in to column C below)
>>> Do this for EVERY week you spend time on your UROP project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UROP hours summary</th>
<th>Current total to date:</th>
<th>24.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to placement: Online training</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>&lt;&lt;&lt; paid when UROP coordinator receives email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After placement: Poster preparation</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>&lt;&lt;&lt; paid when UROP coordinator receives poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>week ending e.g. 31-Jan-16</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>&lt; Enter total from your timesheet (use decimal format)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>week ending 07-Feb-16</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>week ending 14-Feb-16</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>week ending ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Towards the end of your UROP placement

Producing an academic poster

Towards the end of your placement – or shortly after you have finished, you will be asked to create a poster, in which you will summarize the skills you have developed. On the UROP website (under ‘useful forms and information for students’, the link is shown here http://www.essex.ac.uk/urop/students/useful-forms.aspx ), there is a PDF document of tips to help your create a poster. Also there is an example of a complete poster, which you may wish to use as template for your own poster or if you prefer to design your own poster, there is a blank poster. Please make sure you use one of these poster documents as the basis for your own poster, as these have the UROP information inserted at the top and bottom.

Once complete, you must send your poster as an email to UROP. The final deadline for submitting your poster to UROP is 1st September 2017. However please note that you if you have finished your placement, you should complete your poster as soon as you can, and then send it to UROP. You will receive payment for the hours you spend on the poster. Payment for 2 hours and 45 minutes will be made once the poster is received by the UROP coordinator.

A selection of posters will be printed will be used during UROP information events, which will be held during Welcome Week in October 2017. You may be invited to attend this event, to chat with students who have not yet experienced UROP and tell them about your experience.

By signing the UROP agreement, you also agree to allow the University to use your poster – in all formats, both electronic and paper version – on websites and in departments to advertise the UROP scheme.
Termination of UROP placement

How can your UROP placement end?

- Your UROP placement will automatically terminate when you have completed 200 hours – or the number of hours agreed at the start of your placement – (including online training AND poster creation, totalling 5 hours).
- Following the end of your placement you will be asked to complete an evaluation, which will form the basis of a testimonial for the UROP web page.
- If you are no longer a student at the University of Essex your UROP placement will be terminated with immediate effect.
- If you wish to terminate your placement, you are required to give a week’s notice to your UROP supervisor and the UROP coordinator (urop@essex.ac.uk).
- Your UROP placement may be terminated, if you do not fulfil your UROP duties (as agreed with your supervisor) without informing your supervisor of any extenuating circumstances. In order for this to happen, your supervisor must give you a written warning.
Frequently Asked Questions
(Student FAQs)

1. What is UROP?
   The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) is our funded bursary scheme for undergraduate students to become trainee researchers and to become part of the academic community here at Essex.

   UROP students in all departments have the opportunity to gain new skills and to learn first-hand what being a researcher really means.

   UROP placements may count as 50 units towards the Big Essex Award, as long as you complete a minimum of 100 hours on the placement and submit the poster at the end of the placement.

2. What would I have to do in a UROP placement?
   Essex has an excellent reputation for research, and, if selected, you would have the opportunity to assist an established academic researcher on one of their current research projects, where you will learn how to carry out research.

3. How many hours would I be expected to spend on a UROP placement?
   Each placement is fixed to a maximum of 200 hours and if you want to include your UROP placement towards the Big Essex Award you will need to complete a minimum of 100 hours on the placement.

   From the 200 hours allowed for each placement, five hours will be deducted. This will be for:
   a) 2 hours and 15 minutes for the completion of the online training modules before you begin your placement.
   b) 2 hours and 45 minutes for the creation of an academic poster at the end of your placement, in which you will summarize the skills you have developed. Additionally you will be invited to attend a short UROP information event during Welcome Week at the beginning of the following academic year, where a selection of posters will be displayed, and where you will be able to chat to new Undergraduate students about your UROP experience.

4. When would I do the placement?
   Depending upon which year of study you are in placements are available throughout the year (from mid-autumn term onwards, including all vacation times). However which placement you may take depends ultimately upon which year of study you are currently in.

   - If you are first year student, you may be selected ONLY if the placement begins after your exams (e.g. not before 5th June 2017).
   - If you are a second year student, you may complete any of the placements advertised.
   - If you are a final year student, you may be selected ONLY if the placement is completed by 1st May 2017.

   Once selected for a placement, the actual distribution of your hours should be discussed with your supervisor, but during term-time hours are limited to 10 hours per week.

5. Would this placement interfere with my studies?
   No, if you are involved in a UROP placement during term-time, your placement hours would be limited to a maximum of ten hours per week. During the winter, spring or summer vacation breaks
restriction does not apply, but your hours should be reasonable (e.g. not more than 40 per week and should be agreed with your supervisor).

6. Would I receive any training?
   You would need to complete the online health and safety training modules (described below). Any other training necessary will be provided by your supervisor and/or the department?

7. How much money would I receive, and is this payment taxable?
   You would be paid a maximum of £1,370. This sum is not taxable, as it is a bursary. Similarly if you receive any housing or child benefits, these will not be affected by your bursary. The money will be paid into your UK bank account on a monthly basis. The amount of the monthly sum will depend upon how many hours you have spent on the UROP placement each month. You may not exceed 200 hours for the placement.

8. How will I be paid?
   You must complete a timesheet at the end of EACH week that you have spent some time on your UROP placement. This timesheet can be downloaded from the UROP website – here http://www.essex.ac.uk/urop/students/useful-forms.aspx. The completed form must be emailed at the end of each week to your UROP supervisor.
   This weekly timesheet forms the basis for the calculation of your monthly payment, so please make sure you complete it correctly and send it to your supervisor EACH WEEK!

9. Can I mention my UROP placement later on my CV?
   Yes, this is a valuable experience which will count towards your future career development. Your supervisor will be able to write a reference for you, detailing the research you have been involved in and the skills you have gained.

10. Who can apply?
    Any Undergraduate student, who will receive their degree from Essex University, may apply. However there are restrictions to when you may complete a placement, dependent upon your current year of study.
    • If you are first year student, you may be selected ONLY if the placement begins after your exams (e.g. not before 5th June 2017).
    • If you are a second year student, you may complete any of the placements.
    • If you a final year student, you may be selected ONLY if the placement is fully completed by 1st May 2017.

    Additionally you normally need to have an average of at least 60% in your first year modules.
    ✓ International students may apply, as UROP placements are not classed as employment.
    ✓ Mature students may apply.
    × Masters and PhD students may NOT apply for UROP placements under any circumstances.
    × ERASMUS students may NOT apply for UROP placements.

11. Can I apply for a placement in a department other than my own?
    Yes, you are free to apply for a UROP placement in any department.

12. How do I apply?
    Look at the list of current placement vacancies www.essex.ac.uk/urop/students/placements.aspx.
    Complete the application process, which is self-explanatory and is reached via the link under each placement on the same page.
A confirmation email and copy of your application will be sent to you automatically when you submit your application – please make sure you keep a copy of this application, as you will need this if you are called to interview, and once the deadline has passed you will NOT be able to see details of the placement for which you have applied.

Once the deadline has passed, you will be informed (by the UROP supervisor) of the time and place for your interview. If you have any queries please e-mail the UROP coordinator UROP@essex.ac.uk.

13. When will UROP placements be announced?
Placements will be uploaded to the UROP website (here: http://www.essex.ac.uk/urop/students/placements.aspx) throughout the year, beginning from September 2016 onwards.

14. Can I apply for more than one UROP placement and/or a frontrunners placement?
You may apply for up to FIVE UROP placements, but you may accept only ONE. Additionally, you may apply for Frontrunner employment at the same time as UROP placements. Please note that if you are offered both a UROP placement and a Frontrunner employment and that both are scheduled to take place at the same time, you should be aware of the University guidelines suggesting that more than 15 hours per week may be detrimental to your studies.

15. What happens if I am successful?
Your UROP supervisor will offer you the UROP placement by email, please confirm your acceptance by email to your supervisor.

Shortly after this, you will receive an automatically generated email from the UROP system, asking you to come to the Learning and Development office to sign your UROP agreement. Room directions and days/times will be provided on the email. In this same email you will be asked to complete three compulsory online training modules on Moodle:
   i) Health & Safety Essentials, ii) Computer Safety (Display Screen Equipment), iii) Basic Fire Safety. These must be completed BEFORE you begin your placement. The automatically generated e-mail will give you the appropriate web-links to complete the training.

You will be paid for this time, but you do NOT need to complete a weekly timesheet for this time, which is calculated at 45 minutes per module (45 minutes x 3 = 2 hours 15 minutes).

By signing the UROP agreement you will also agree to produce an academic poster at the end of your placement (with details of the research you have been involved in, and the skills you have gained). A template and detailed instructions on how to do this are available in the Student area of the UROP webpages. You will be paid 2 hours and 45 minutes for completing this poster, which will be paid when UROP receive the poster.

16. I have other questions, who do I contact?
Please e-mail the UROP coordinator, UROP@essex.ac.uk
To be signed by the student when commencing a UROP placement at the University of Essex

I accept that, during the course of my placement via the UROP, I may have access to personal information about staff and students who work and study at the University. As such, I recognise that I have a duty of confidentiality in relation to this information and am bound by the provisions of the Data Protection Act and the University’s obligations under the Act. I understand that, where relevant, I am bound by the Conditions of Access for Administrative Information Systems and the University’s Guidelines for Use of IT Facilities. In relation to personal information accessed as part of my placement at the University, I undertake to adhere to the obligations set out above both during my period of placement and after it has ended.

I hereby agree to the following:

- To spend a maximum of **200 hours** (to be completed by 30 September 2017), on the research activities, as agreed with my UROP supervisor, for which I will receive a UROP bursary. The bursary will be paid monthly (dependent upon the number of hours spent on the placement) into my UK bank account.
- To provide a digital version of an academic poster about my UROP placement (towards the end of the placement).
- To allow my poster to be used to advertise UROP to other students within the University in all formats (e.g. electronically via websites and also as a printed version of the poster).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex email:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed: UROP Student: .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed: UROP Coordinator: ...........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: .................................................................</td>
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