

Guidelines for Preparing a Research Prospectus Paper & Presentation

VIMS REU Summer Intern Program 2025

It is an NSF requirement that all REU interns write a prospectus paper on their intended summer research and give a scientific presentation on their prospectus. Mentors should work closely with their REU on developing and writing the prospectus as well as their presentations.

Key Information, Dates & Deadlines:

- PowerPoint Presentation final SLIDES are due by **Wednesday, 6/18/2025 at 9:00 am**
 - REUs are to give TA final presentation slides via a USB or *PC compatible* flash drive.
Presentations must be in a Dell compatible version of PowerPoint.
 - Slides must include:
 1. Title slide (include *your* home institution logo, VIMS logo, and NSF logo on title slide)
 2. Personal Introduction slide
 3. Background/Introduction
 4. Objectives/Hypotheses
 5. Proposed methods
 6. Preliminary results (*if you have it*) or expected results
 7. Acknowledgement slide to recognize funding sources, mentors, and associated persons related to your research project
- Prospectus Presentations will be conducted in Andrews Hall 326 on **Wednesday, 6/18/2025 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**
 - Time
 - Each presenter will be given:
 - 5-minutes to present
 - 3-minutes Q&A
 - Approximate Event Timeline (subject to change):

▪ 10:00-10:05 am	Introduction – Rochelle Seitz, Program Director
▪ 10:05-11:15 am	Session 1 REU Presentations
▪ 11:15-11:35 am	<i>20-minute Break</i>
▪ 11:35-12:15 am	Session 2 REU Presentations
▪ 12:15-12:25 pm	Concluding Remarks and Announcements
▪ 12:30-1:00 pm	Post presentation discussions and lunch (AH 326)
 - Mentors are encouraged to email the TA a week before presentations (Wednesday, 6/11) should they require their intern to present during a specific timeslot. Assigned timeslots (Sessions 1 & 2) will be based on mentor availability followed by alphabetical order.
- Prospectus Papers are due on **Wednesday, 6/18/2025 by 5:00 pm.**
 - Final versions of the Prospectus Research Papers are to be emailed to:
 - Rochelle Seitz, Director, seitz@vims.edu
 - Grace Massey, Coordinator, grace.massey@vims.edu
 - Natalia Schoenberg, TA, njschoenberg@vims.edu
 - The Prospectus must be submitted as a **Word Doc** file (PC compatible) and **not as a pdf.**

General Guidelines – Prospectus Presentation:

- You will be allotted **five-minutes** to present your proposed summer research (scientific presentation format) to the audience of REU interns and their mentors. Followed by **three-minutes** to answer questions and receive comments from the audience. The presentations will be on **Wednesday, June 18th 10:00 am – 1:00 pm in AH 326**. You must use a PC compatible version of PowerPoint for the presentation (no Google slides or mac versions of slides), total slide limit: 6-slides (including acknowledgements).
- You will meet the TA in AH-326 by **9:00 am** to upload slides to the venue computer. Presentations must be ready to upload on a USB or Flash Drive as a PC compatible PowerPoint file. If using a MAC you will need to convert prior to 9:00 am. If you don't have a USB or Flash Drive, it is recommended that you ask another REU to use theirs. In previous years, multiple REUs have saved their presentations on a single USB which they gave the TA. This is recommended and encouraged.
- Slides must follow a scientific conference format and include:
 1. Title slide (include *your* home institution logo, VIMS logo, and NSF logo on title slide)
 2. Personal Introduction slide – tell us who you are, where you're from, your major, and share a couple things about yourself that make you unique. Include telling us how you heard about the VIMS REU Program and why you applied.
 3. Background/Introduction
 4. Objectives/Hypotheses
 5. Proposed methods
 6. Preliminary results (*if you have it*) or expected results
 7. Acknowledgement slide to recognize funding sources, mentors, and associated persons related to your research project
- Example presentations will be emailed to you by the TA. Interns are to work with their mentors and labs to develop presentation.
- Here is a useful link to a YouTube playlist on how to become a better speaker/presenter:
 - <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxB9ndY1289m-k8Xp8spNOyicnkvgKNx>

The TA will be emailing examples of Prospectus Presentations from previous years.

General Guidelines – Prospectus Paper:

Your Written Research Prospectus is due on **Wednesday, June 18th by 5:00pm (EDT)**. Submit electronic copies (*a Word Doc file that is PC compatible*) to the following: seitz@vims.edu, Grace.Massey@vims.edu, and njschoenberg@vims.edu.

Use the general guidelines given below to format the written prospectus. Your mentor should review your prospectus, and will make recommendations for improvement. Make these recommended changes and corrections before you submit copies to Rochelle, Grace, and Stephanie via e-mail. We will return editorial/scientific comments and retain a copy for the program files.

Cover Page:

Please make a cover page that includes the following information: 1) title of the project, given as “Prospectus: *insert your title here*”; 2) your name and home institution; 3) name of your mentor; 4) date submitted.

Abstract:

An abstract is not necessary to be included in the Prospectus, but will be required for the final paper.

Introduction:

This section should provide a brief introduction to the research topic and outline the motivation for your study. You want to interest and engage the reader with respect to the research you are proposing. Why is the study going to be important or significant? What have you read that leads you to the question you are posing? Include appropriate references to materials that will provide a context for the planned research. This section might include references to classic papers, as well as more recent papers, which indicate why the research is needed, or of value.

Objectives/Hypotheses:

Please clearly state your research objectives. What are your goals or hypotheses? What specific objectives do you hope to accomplish? This is more or less the “game plan” section of the prospectus.

Methods:

This brief section should give a general overview of the methods you will use. Detailed protocols are not necessary. Provide enough information to give the non-specialist a sense of how you will accomplish your research.

Expected Results:

This can be the most difficult section to write, but in some ways, it is the most important. What kinds of results do you expect to get? It may help if you frame your expected results in reference to previously published papers (e.g., Seitz et al. (2018) found -----, and we expect to find -----). Why will they be important/relevant to your field of study?

References:

1. Within the Prospectus, citations should be included as follows:

- a. If the reference is from a single author, then within the text, refer to the author's surname (without initial) and year of publication (e.g. "(Seitz, 2021)");
- b. If the reference has been written by two authors, both surnames should be given using "and" followed by the year of publication (e.g. "(Seitz and Massey, 2021)");
- c. If the reference has been written by more than two authors, only the first author's surname is listed followed by "et al.," and the year of publication (e.g. "(Seitz et al., 2021)").

2. If you are citing more than one reference for a sentence and/or statement, then the references cited together in the text should be arranged chronologically (e.g. "(Massey, 2020; Seitz, 2021)").

Reference Page(s) (on separate page, not counted in page limit)

1. All publications cited within the Prospectus should be presented as a list following the main text of the manuscript (i.e., a "Reference Page(s)").
2. This list of references cited within the Prospectus should be arranged alphabetically based on first author's surname, and then chronologically (e.g. a paper written by Seitz in 2019 would precede a paper written by Seitz 2020).

An example is:

Jones, H.D., Richards, O.G., Southern, T.A. 1992. Gill dimensions, water pumping and body size in the mussel *Mytilus edulis* I. J. Exp. Mar. Biol. Ecol. 155(2), 213-237.

The entire prospectus should be **no more than 3 pages long, including the cover page**. References should be added at the end and will not be counted in the 3-page limit. The Prospectus should be *single spaced, font-type Times New Roman, and size 12-point font*.

Final paper:

This prospectus will become a useful framework for your final report. The final report will include more detailed methods and results, as well as discussion based on your findings. The final paper will also include an abstract of the study, which will be no more than 200 words long.

The TA will be emailing examples of REU Prospectuses from previous years.