**University Libraries Award for Undergraduate Research Rubric**

**University of South Carolina**

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| **Essay (25 points)** | **Developing (0-8)** | **Proficient (9-17)** | **Accomplished (18-25)** |
|  | Does not describe search strategies  Does not describe the process of developing the topic or research question  Does not identify appropriate research tools for given context  Does not identify criteria for evaluating information source | Search strategies are described only generally; the essay might:  -misidentify the types of information needed  -display awareness only of general or introductory search tools  -describe minimal or misguided efforts to optimize search terms  -reveal an over-reliance on materials available on campus  -fail to address challenges, information gaps, and responses to failure  Topic or question may require more refinement in light of time and resources available (or an assigned topic was not sufficiently developed)  Criteria for evaluation of sources incomplete or unclear | Search strategies explicitly described; the essay might:  -correctly identify types of information needed  -display awareness of a variety of search tools appropriate to the inquiry  -describes efforts to optimize search terms (e.g., experimentation with multiple search strings, use of database-specific controlled vocabularies)  -describe efforts made to obtain materials not locally available  -address challenges, information gaps, and responses to failure  Topic or question accurately reflects time and resources available  Displays clear criteria for evaluation of sources selected |
| **Project (15 points)** | **Developing (0-5)** | **Proficient (6-10)** | **Accomplished (11-15)** |
|  | Poorly written  Unsupported claims or assertions  Primary data obtained from secondary sources  Poor selection of quotes (e.g. from sources that do not support applicant’s argument or address point) or heavy reliance on quotes instead of synthesizing material | Writing occasionally lacks clarity or emphasis  Some claims or assertions lack references  Occasional use of inappropriate quotes or quotes poorly integrated into argument | Well-written, clearly identifying convergence of evidence and argument  Sources used appropriately in support of argument/thesis  Numerical data traced to original primary sources or gathered by applicant  Quotes and acquired ideas well selected and integrated into applicant’s argument |
| **Works Cited (5 points)** | **Developing (1-2)** | **Proficient (3-4)** | **Accomplished (5)** |
|  | Relies on a few sources  Unclear why some sources were selected  Many citations are incomplete (lacking sufficient information to locate the source cited) or unstandardized (lacking a consistent style) | Uses a range of sources appropriate to the topic  Sources meet assignment requirements, but may lack breadth, rigor or relevance  Some citations are incomplete or unstandardized | Sources display rich variety in appropriateness and format  Sources display awareness of the need to dig beneath the surface of information to find quality and relevant materials  Citations are complete and standardized (a few formatting errors can be forgiven) |
| **Letter of Support**  **(5 points)** | **Developing (1-2)** | **Proficient (3-4)** | **Accomplished (5)** |
|  | Points to little or no originality in topic  Does not discuss whether questions formulated relate to the purpose, development, and presentation of the project  Does not assess quality of sources utilized | Indicates that the student’s argument takes familiar path with some originality  Provides limited information about the appropriateness of argumentation, methods, and sources used | Explains how project addresses questions within the discipline  Indicates that questions formulated relate to the purpose, development, and presentation of the project  Addresses the appropriateness of argumentation style, investigative methods, and sources selected |

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