



The Elihu Burritt Library Undergraduate Research Award

Essay Evaluation Guidelines

	Beginning (0 -5 points)	Competent (6-10 points)	Excellent (11 - 15 points)	Points (0 – 15)
Research Strategy				
Research Process	Search strategies described, but no demonstrated clear understanding of process.	Search strategies explicitly described, along with successes and resolutions for failed searches Demonstrates some independence and initiative in research.	Search strategies explicitly described. Consideration of what made a source useful or not useful. Demonstrates deeper understanding of research process and a high level of independence and initiative in research.	
Search Tools	Uses basic tools, such as search engines, Google, and CentralSearch basic search.	Uses more search tools and Research Guides, general full-text databases, or subject-specific databases.	Uses complex tools, such as WorldCat, archival finding aids, and specialized databases.	
Search Techniques	Uses keyword searching; browses library stacks; views initial results from electronic resources.	Modifies searches frequently; identifies new keywords; uses subject headings; follows footnotes & references.	Modifies searches frequently; uses search limits; identifies key authors and subject headings; follows footnotes & references; uses cited reference searching.	
Library Collections	Uses CCSU Library and other libraries' collections superficially.	Digs deeper into the CCSU Library and other libraries' collections & services. Includes some primary or multi-media sources (Humanities/Social Sciences) or performs adequate literature review (Sciences).	Exploits CSU Libraries' and other libraries' collections and services to the fullest. Enhances project through the use of primary and/or multi-media sources (Humanities/Social Sciences) or performs exhaustive literature review (Sciences).	

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Sources Used				
Types & Formats	Uses basic sources (books, websites, articles).	Uses a broader array of information sources.	Seeks out a wide variety of source types used in the discipline. Selects the most appropriate type/format to support their research.	
Breadth & Depth	Finds obvious references from familiar sources.	Finds references from a variety of sources and disciplines.	Finds references from multiple perspectives, pursuing comprehensive coverage.	
Evaluation & Selection	Assesses the relevance of sources.	Evaluates the relevance and quality of sources.	Carefully evaluates the relevance and quality of sources; considers authority, accuracy, currency, objectivity and coverage.	
Citation Style/Ethical Use	Cites all materials, but not in a standard or consistent way.	Cites all materials in a consistent way, for the most part.	Cites all materials properly using a discipline-appropriate bibliographic style.	
Essay				
Originality	Describes research process in a straight-forward manner.	Demonstrates some amount of uniqueness.	Essay shows exceptional originality.	
Personal Learning & Understanding	Develops a basic understanding of library research.	Develops a deeper understanding. Attains adequate skills required for upper-level undergraduate research.	Develops a thorough understanding, approaching graduate level research.	
Overall Quality	Writing is grammatically correct.	Writing has clarity and coherent organization.	Writing demonstrates clarity, engaging language, and sophisticated stylistic quality.	
Total Points:				

Adapted from Eastern Connecticut State University's J. Eugene Smith Library Research Award, who adapted from the University of Georgia's Undergraduate Research Award Essay Evaluation Guidelines. Revised September 2023.