

Rae Linda Brown Undergraduate Research and Creative Projects Showcase - Submission Guidelines

Why should students participate in the showcase?

Presenting at the showcase provides an opportunity for you to share your research or creative work to an audience of peers, professors, and community members while gaining invaluable professional experience in a supportive setting. Bringing together projects from across campus allows students to engage with and learn from each other about a broad range of topics.

Formal presentations are great experiences to include on resumes and graduate school applications.

Who is eligible to present at the symposium?

Students of all undergraduate class standings are encouraged to participate. In fact, research shows that involvement in faculty-mentored projects early in an undergraduate career has many benefits, such as helping students explore an area of study or future career path that interests them and gaining invaluable hands-on experience and organizational skills. The connections made with faculty mentors will not only enhance your undergraduate experience, they will likely extend well beyond your time at PLU.

What does the application process involve?

Students interested in presenting at the showcase will submit an abstract or artistic statement of their work (a short summary) along with the name of one faculty advisor who mentors the project. The online abstract/artistic statement submission form will be open November 11, 2025. Submissions are due March 23, 2026 (11:59 pm). This extended window for submissions allows students to submit projects they have completed during the Fall semester in addition to projects that may develop in J-term and/or Spring. Note: submissions may include projects from previous terms/years at PLU. Questions can be directed to Associate Provost Bridget Yaden at byaden@plu.edu.

Tips for Your Proposal

- Make sure your abstract/artistic statement is understandable to a wide audience.
- Consult with your faculty mentor as to whether your abstract/artistic statement should be written in the first or third person, and what is appropriate for your project.
- Take time to prepare your abstract/artistic statement. Write drafts and revise in order to capture your project precisely.
- Create a clear title that incorporates the keywords, key points and findings, and/or main ideas of your project.
- Review your abstract/artistic statement carefully before submission, checking for errors, typos, and clarity.

- Seek input from your faculty mentor and be sure to receive your mentor's approval.

How can I best describe my work in my proposal?

Read through the various descriptions of research and projects to help you as you draft your proposal.

Quantitative research is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Quantitative research methods are concerned with collecting and analyzing data that is structured and can be represented numerically. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories, and hypotheses pertaining to phenomena.

Quantitative research abstracts could include the following, usually presented in this order:

- **Research Question or Problem:** What is the purpose or objectives of the study? What is the key point of investigation? What problem are you trying to solve? What question are you pursuing? What hypothesis/idea are you testing?
- **Research Method:** What methods did you employ or approach to resolve your problem/question or to test your hypothesis/idea? What was your experimental design and protocol? What was involved in the planning, design and implementation of the project?
- **Results:** What were the results of your research? What information resulted from your investigation? What did you find during the course of your scholarly work? Specifically, what new insight did you gain? What did you learn, create or discover that potentially advances your discipline?
- **Conclusions:** Based on your results, what are your main findings and conclusions? Were your results consistent or inconsistent with your original hypothesis? How do your results inform your original question? What are the broader implications of your findings, especially as they relate to your original hypothesis or your question? What weaknesses or limitations remain?

A literature synthesis is a way of drawing upon existing literature to create a new understanding of a topic. A literature synthesis is more than a review and includes comparing/contrasting, interpreting, and critiquing literature reviewed. When conducting a literature synthesis, it is important to specify procedures for identifying literature to review, as well as what was included/excluded and why (e.g. 15 peer reviewed articles on K-3 STEM education, using peer reviewed sources from 2010-2018).

Literature synthesis abstracts could include:

- **Purpose:** What is the question, focus, or problem you are investigating? How does your synthesis fill a gap in the current knowledge base?
- **Criteria for inclusion:** How many studies were included? What criteria did you use to include/exclude studies?

- **Results:** What are the key findings of your literature synthesis?
- **Conclusions/Discussion/Implications:** What is the broader significance/implications of your literature synthesis?

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that includes a range of research genres (e.g. case studies, ethnography) and draws upon a range of empirical data gathered from human participants (e.g. observations, interviews, open-ended questionnaires). Qualitative research is an approach to gaining understandings of human processes, experiences, motivations; as well as provide a building block to developing new or revising existing conceptual frameworks.

Qualitative abstracts could include the following, usually presented in this order:

- **Purpose:** What is the focus/purpose of the research?
- **Methods:** Who were your participants? What data did you collect and how did you collect it? Did you use a particular conceptual framework to analyze the data
- **Results:** What are key findings of your study? (If study is in progress, what does your interim analysis suggest?)
- **Conclusions/Discussion/Implications:** What is the broader significance/implications of your research?

Thesis-driven, argumentation, close reading or criticism: This type of scholarly work defends an original thesis statement by using specific evidence that is drawn from a text, film, or piece of art. It also frames its thesis argument in light of a larger critical conversation, by citing and interacting with published critics who have previously made arguments about this material.

Abstracts for these papers could include:

Background: What have critics previously discussed about the material you'll be analyzing?

Gaps: What is still missing from the critical conversation?

Intervention: How will your paper address these gaps in the conversation? (Will it use a new theoretical lens? Broach an undiscussed topic? Put one text or artifact in dialogue with another one for the first time?)

Thesis: What will your piece argue as it makes its intervention?

Implications: Why is it important to defend this thesis statement? (Does this thesis, for example, add new context to our understanding of an idea? Or cast doubt on previous interpretations, for a particular reason? Or speak on behalf of vulnerable groups in a way that has not yet occurred?)

Creative Projects: A creative project is research that culminates in an expressive product or performance. These projects can take the form of: a musical, theatrical, or dance performance or design, or documentation of a performance/design; a performance art piece or documentation/design; a work of fine art such as sculpture, ceramics, painting, drawing, print, or

digital/electronic art; a work of creative writing; or an “applied art” — a creative work that represents a media industry product, such as graphic design work, journalistic work, branding or promotional materials/PR work, a website or other new media or multimedia product, an audio recording, an app, or a video. Innovative creative projects may also fall outside these established categories.

Creative project abstracts/artistic statements could include:

- **Form:** What form of creative research does your work represent? If selected, how do you plan to present your work?
- **Motivation:** What compelled you or inspired you to create this work? If applicable, is there a client or audience for which this creative work was produced
- **Methods/Materials:** What were the means by which you created this work? If applicable, what were the materials used? If applicable, what technology/software was used? If applicable, was this work created using an established methodology?
- **Interpretation:** What message or objective does the work carry? Is there an reaction or response the work is intended to elicit? For narrative works, what is the synopsis of the story?
- **Social/Cultural Significance:** How does the work resonate within contemporary contexts? Why is this work important to our social and/or cultural lives?

In addition to submitting a written abstract/artistic statement, those in the arts must submit a 3 minute video excerpt (performance arts, film) or digital images (visual arts). Students will be prompted to upload these supplemental materials within the application.

Human Participants Review Board (HPRB)

HPRB approval is necessary for research with human subjects that is going to be presented publicly, and this needs to happen before data is collected. Questions can be addressed to each academic unit's HPRB Designate, a Board member, or the Chair (hprb@plu.edu). More information is also available at www.plu.edu/hprb.

If your research was completed through a non-PLU institution or program, please provide proof of human subjects review from that institution (approval number, letter, etc...).

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

IACUC approval is necessary for research with vertebrate animals that is going to be presented publicly, and this needs to happen before data is collected. Questions can be addressed to a Committee member or the Chair. More information is available at www.plu.edu/iacuc.

If your research was completed through a non-PLU institution or program, please provide proof of animal review from that institution (approval number, letter, etc...).