

Alexander Grass Scholars Program
Faculty Mentor FAQ

What is the Alexander Grass Scholars Program (AGS), and how does it involve faculty mentorship?

Each Spring semester, 20 undergraduates are selected through a competitive process to participate in a project-based learning experience about research in the humanities. Students are introduced to the nuts-and-bolts of humanistic methods like careful reading, historical analysis, contextualization, conceptual analysis, and critical evaluation. They learn to develop research questions, interact with archives, locate and assess sources, choose research methods, navigate ethical considerations, and practice strategies for communicating about findings.

In UF's Summer A (6-week term beginning mid-May), students are enrolled in a UF course on Foundations of Humanities Research. As a part of this course, they are divided into four groups, each of which explores a publicly engaged topic and completes a research project. They also produce a formal research plan for an individual project in the fall.

In the Fall term, each student completes an independent research project and participates in a Grass Scholars Research Symposium to publicly present their work. Faculty mentorship is crucial during students' independent research process. Mentors guide students in executing their research plan, navigating challenges, and ensuring quality and research integrity.

What support does the Grass Scholars Program provide faculty mentors?

The AGS program provides **\$500** for supervision of a Grass Scholar. This may be taken as a lump sum if faculty is on appointment (taxes will be deducted), or as professional development funds (held in a department account, taxes not deducted).

What are my responsibilities as a Grass Scholar faculty mentor?

Students begin the fall with a research plan developed during the Summer A Research Fundamentals course. Faculty should assist their student in following

their plan. Faculty are also expected to ensure research integrity: helping students to select and assess sources properly; fact-checking when appropriate; helping students to navigate any ethical issues that may arise (for instance, when conducting research with marginalized communities); helping students to communicate their research results clearly and in a compelling fashion via a research poster.

What kinds of projects will the students be producing?

Grass Scholars may opt for non-traditional, public facing humanities projects involving research. Examples include writing blogs, producing a podcast, creating a StoryMap, and designing a social media campaign.

More advanced students are encouraged to produce traditional research products if they wish, along the lines of a humanities research paper. We especially encourage this when students have established faculty mentorship, and the faculty mentor is committed to overseeing an advanced project.

All students must prepare a humanities research poster to showcase their work at our Grass Scholars Research Symposium in November. Posters must be accurate, compelling, and legible to a broad audience while communicating original humanities research.

Grass Scholars Projects must be distinct from other funded undergraduate research projects—such as University Scholars, CLAS Scholars, and Reuben Askew Scholars.

About how much time should I expect to devote to supervising my student?

We estimate that faculty will meet for 1 hour every other week with their student, and faculty are encouraged to attend the Grass Scholars Research Symposium in November. This amounts to approximately 10 hours over the course of the semester.

Must my student sign up for independent study or thesis credits with me in order to pursue this research?

No, but if you and your student would like to organize your collaboration around independent study or thesis credits you may certainly do so.

What other supports do Grass Scholars have to complete their independent research projects?

Funds: each Grass Scholar is awarded \$1500 to support their research upon completion of the Summer A course. (They are awarded an additional \$500 upon successful participation in the Research Symposium).

Graduate student mentorship: each Scholar is assigned to a graduate student mentor, who is responsible for checking on their independent research progress and being available for consultation.

Informal peer mentorship: each Scholar is one member of a 5-student group from the summer term, with whom they worked closely to produce a public-facing research project.

Grass Scholars Coordinator: Alison Walsh will serve as Coordinator of the Grass Scholars Program in 2026-2027 and will be available to consult with students about their projects in the fall of 2026.

Who can I contact for more information?

Alison Walsh, Grass Scholars Coordinator, humanities-center@ufl.edu