

Alexander Grass Scholars Program

Graduate Mentor FAQ

What is the Alexander Grass Scholars Program (AGS), and how does it involve graduate 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 produces a research project. Each graduate mentor is assigned to a summer project group and attends site meetings in person during Summer A (Thursdays and Fridays, 11-12:15). Mentors support students as they learn about research fundamentals and complete their summer project.

In the Fall term, each student completes an independent research project and participates in a Grass Scholars Research Symposium to publicly present their work. Graduate mentors follow the 5 students they worked with in the summer, to guide each student in completing their individual research project, answering questions and providing feedback when needed.

What support does the Grass Scholars Program provide graduate mentors?

The AGS program provides **\$1000** total (summer A \$500 and fall \$500) for supervision of five Grass Scholars students assigned to a specific project site. This may be taken as a scholarship if the graduate student is enrolled (taxes will be deducted), or as professional development funds regardless of enrollment status (held in a department account, taxes not deducted).

What are my responsibilities as a Grass Scholars Graduate Mentor?

Your primary responsibility is to manage a public-facing humanities project and support undergraduate research. This might involve, but is not limited to, the following activities:

During the Summer A term: Attend and participate in site meetings. Check in weekly with students to monitor their project progress and assess their work. Support project leaders in tracking and managing students' projects. Document final summer project presentation. Support students in finding their prospective fall faculty mentor. Maintain regular communication with and report any relevant information to the Grass Scholars Coordinator, Alison Walsh (alison.walsh@ufl.edu).

During the Fall semester: Meet with your group of five students at least two times. In addition, schedule an individual consultation with each student to review a draft of their research poster before the Grass Scholars Research Symposium. Facilitate faculty-student interaction. Attend the Grass Scholars Research Symposium in November.

Please note that this is not a TA appointment; no grading is required.

What kind of research project am I expected to support?

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.

Regardless of the (other) research produced, 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 Reubin Askew Scholars.

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

In Summer A, we estimate 14-16 hours of work; please make sure to get in touch with your project leader to establish a schedule. For the Fall, expect 8-10 hours of work, which includes: 2 check-in meetings plus a one-on-one consultation with each student before the Grass Scholars Research Symposium, plus mentors must attend a Grass Scholars Research Symposium in November.

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.)

Faculty mentorship: most Scholars will work with a faculty mentor, who is responsible for supervising the research project by ensuring the research integrity, rigor, and legitimacy of independent student research in the fall.

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