



The Passionate Leaders Project

OVERVIEW

The Passionate Leaders Project (PLP) supports undergraduate students seeking to enrich their academic and professional interests by funding learning opportunities beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom. Students may request up to \$4,000 through the PLP to fund a variety of activities including global experiences, research, internships, service projects, creative endeavors, and other ambitious undertakings.

To apply for funding, applicants will submit a written statement:

1. Describing the overall project including activities, outcomes, and broader impacts.
2. Linking the project to future professional or educational goals.

After completing the project, students will be required to assess the effectiveness of the PLP program and reflect on their professional and academic growth.

GOALS

Engaging in research with a faculty mentor, studying abroad, or working within one's field of interest is essential to learning. The PLP strives to make these opportunities accessible to every Simmons student. Through the PLP, students will:

1. Deepen their passion to address the challenges of an increasingly complex world.
2. Develop critical leadership skills and knowledge.
3. Attain and demonstrate key competencies, which prepare students for success in the workplace or future academic pursuits.

ELIGIBILITY

Second semester sophomores, juniors, and seniors are eligible to apply. Although there is no GPA requirement to access PLP funding, students must be in good academic standing. Undergraduate students may receive PLP funding only once during their time at Simmons.

Student cannot receive PLP funding and additional support from a URF program (such as SURPASS, Simmons World Challenge, Research Fund, Research Travel Fund, and UGFSC) during the same term. Students must close out their PLP grant prior to receiving support

from other URF initiatives.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

For the 2020-2021 academic year applications will be due:

- Fall 2020 application deadline—Tuesday, September 1, 2020
- Spring 2021 application deadline—Thursday, February 4, 2021

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about the PLP go to simmons.edu/plp or contact ugprogram@simmons.edu.

Instructions for Preparing the Passionate Leaders Project Application

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Online Application
- Proposal Narrative
- Budget Justification
- Letter of Recommendation
- Applicant Resume
- Additional Materials

HOW TO APPLY

Submit your completed application materials through the PLP Application Portal. Please combine the proposal narrative, budget justification, resume, and additional materials into a single PDF, and label the file using the following naming convention: PLP21_YourName. Email files over 10MB to ugprogram@simmons.edu.

TYPES OF FUNDED PROJECTS

Some examples of appropriate PLP experiences and projects include global experiences, internships, research opportunities, service projects, and creative endeavors.

- **Internships**
 - PLP will support paid or unpaid internships. Internships may be with a non-

profit, for-profit, or in the public sector.

- **Global Experiences**

- PLP will support students participating in study abroad (for a semester, summer, or year), a short-term travel course, or internship abroad approved by Simmons's Center for Global Education (CGE).

- **Research**

- PLP will support four types of student research projects:
 - Research with Simmons faculty. Students may work as a research assistant for a Simmons faculty member during the fall, spring, or summer terms.
 - Independent research. PLP will support students pursuing an independent research project.
 - Research with an organization. PLP will support students working as a research assistant/intern at an organization outside of Simmons.
 - Continued work on a research project. PLP funding can be used to support continued work on a project connected to undergraduate research activities at Simmons such as SURPASS or UGFSC.

- **Service**

- PLP will support service projects, which must be unpaid. Generally, PLP will support two types of service projects:
 - Service Projects affiliated with Simmons. Students participating in a service project affiliated with Simmons are welcome to apply for funding through PLP.
 - Unpaid service projects affiliated with an approved non-profit organization.

- **Creative Endeavors**

- PLP will support creative endeavors, including independent and artistic creation in the visual arts, performing arts, and literary arts.

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND DESCRIPTION

1. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative consists of 2 essays:

Essay 1 (no more than 3 pages)

Project Overview. The first essay should provide a detailed overview of the project.

- Describe the project, including the objectives, outcomes, procedures/methods.

- Describe the deliverables related to the project. Your deliverables are how you will share your experience and your findings with others. Examples include presentations, publications, senior theses, capstones, papers, posters, portfolios, journals, blogs, vlogs, and podcasts. Be creative! It is important to note that your internship or your research alone is not a deliverable. You have to think about the best way to share your experience and your findings with others. Some examples:

Not a deliverable	Deliverable
Internship at a Boston arts organization	Institutional analysis of the organization and its role in the Boston arts world
Research about Simmons’s involvement in the suffrage movement	Series of pop-up exhibits about Simmons’s involvement in the suffrage movement

- Provide a project timeline that includes an estimated timeframe for the completion of the project and its main activities.
- Provide an impact statement. This statement should have two parts.
 - First, discuss why this project is important and how it contributes new information to the knowledge of the field or discipline.
 - Second, demonstrate how the project specifically addresses at least one of Simmons’s Essential Capabilities:
 - Communication
 - Critical Thinking and Creative Problem-Solving
 - Data Analysis and Interpretation
 - Ethical Leadership
 - Integrative Learning
 - Navigating of Cultural Differences

Find out more about [essential capabilities](#).

Essay 2 (No more than 2 pages)

Personal and Professional Interests. The second essay should focus on how this project relates to your personal, educational, and professional interests.

- Discuss your personal, educational, and professional interests in the proposed project and how you expect to benefit from engaging in this project.
- Describe your academic, professional, and co-curricular experiences which make you qualified to conduct this project.

Formatting

Each essay should utilize 12pt Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, and single spacing. You may include citations and appendices in addition to the page count in each essay.

2. Budget

Funding

Eligible students may receive up to \$4,000 for project support. The amount requested does not impact fundability or the selection process. Therefore, it is advantageous to think creatively and broadly to seek funds that ensure that a project is as successful as possible. Expenses may include any legitimate costs required for the successful completion of the project. Examples of expenses that projects might require include:

- Materials or supplies such as general office supplies, laboratory supplies, software, transcription, journal or newspaper subscriptions. Research projects might also include archival access fees or photocopying.
- Travel and living expenses such as transportation costs, food, lodging, conference registration.
- Stipend for a faculty research assistantship: The stipend will be disbursed at a flat rate. The amount of the stipend request should equate to the estimated number of hours worked, multiplied by Massachusetts state minimum wage.
- Internships: Please note that students will receive internship disbursements in two payments. The first disbursement will be made prior to the start of internship, and the second payment will disburse at the end of the internship, pending a positive evaluation from the student's supervisor. The stipend will be disbursed at a flat rate. The amount of the stipend request should equate to the estimated number of hours worked, multiplied by state minimum wage.
- Funds cannot be used for personal items or tuition (with study abroad experiences being an exception). In addition, purchase of electronic equipment will only be considered if essential to the project.

Budget Tracking

Please use the budget justification form to request funds and track your expenses, which can be found at [PLP Budget Justification Form](#). If a project spans the summer, it must include a breakout of expenses by fiscal year. The University's fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

Payment and Taxation

- Non-salary PLP stipends will be disbursed by check.
- For non-salary stipend payments: Stipends may be considered taxable income to the

federal and/or state government. If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien for U.S. tax purposes, the University will not withhold from your non-salary stipend payments. Therefore, you should consult your personal tax adviser to determine whether or not you should be making estimated tax payments with respect to your stipend income. The University is not required to report non-salary stipend amounts for U.S. citizens or individuals who are resident aliens for tax purposes, on a Form 1099 or other formal tax document. Therefore, it is important to keep your own records in order to have the information necessary to prepare your personal tax return.

- For salary payments: Stipends paid for research assistantships at Simmons University are considered salary payments. They will be paid by the Payroll Office and are taxable. The Payroll Office withholds taxes, and these amounts are paid to and reported to the federal and/or state government. The same rules apply to U.S. and international students.
- If you are a nonresident alien for U.S. tax purposes, the University is required to withhold and remit to the federal government at a rate of 14%.
- Undergraduate Research and Fellowships is not authorized to answer questions about how/if student grants might affect taxes. Please consult with Student Financial Services and the IRS about scholarships and grants which are received. If you are an international student looking for information about taxes go to: <http://www.colleges-fenway.org/student-resources/global-experience/exchange-visitors-2/understanding-us-taxes/> or contact the Center for Global Education.

Student Responsibility

The funds awarded must be used for the purposes outlined in the budget. Please be sure to track your expenses and save **all** of your receipts. Students are required to submit receipts documenting expenses when they close out their PLP grant. If students are unable to collect a receipt, they must keep a log of the expense which should include: the item, where the item was purchased, the date of purchase, and the cost of the item. The agreement that you sign upon beginning your grant requires that you spend these funds in accordance with your budget, and any funds spent without appropriate receipts may need to be paid back to the University.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The letter of recommendation should detail the qualifications (i.e., academic and/or professional preparation) of the student applying to participate in the proposed activity. This letter should address your ability to carry out the proposed project, rather than a general letter of recommendation. Letters can come from a Simmons faculty member or staff member, as well as an individual outside of the University.

4. PROJECT ADVISOR

Students will be required to identify a Simmons staff or faculty member who will advise them on their PLP project: they will be expected to share their project proposal with their advisor at

the beginning of their grant period and their deliverables and outcomes at the end. Advisors should be available for light coaching throughout.

5. RESUME

Students must provide an updated resume listing all professional, academic, and co-curricular experiences.

6. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Additional items will be required depending on the project.

Global Experiences

Projects that incorporate a global experience will require approval from the Center for Global Education (CGE).

The Center for Global Education (CGE) will review all proposed global experiences to be funded by the Passionate Leaders Project, and reserves the right to deny the request.

Approved global experiences must meet at least **one** of the following criteria:

- A. The proposed experience is a Simmons University or COF study abroad or short-term travel course.
- B. The proposed experience is administered through an established Simmons partner provider (i.e., ISA, IES, SIT, CAPA, CIS, World-to-World, etc.). Students must submit the following items for review:
 - Purpose of Travel: Explain why travel to a particular location is essential to academic studies, research, or work.
 - Communication: Comprehensive list of emergency contacts, both US-based and in-country, local contacts.
 - Signed Waiver (completed via the [StudioAbroad Portal](#)).
- If neither "A" or "B" apply: The proposed experience is essential to the student's academic study, research, or work, and is in a permissible location, with appropriate health and safety measures in place. The Passionate Leaders Project does **not** support travel to countries and/or locations that are subject to a U.S. Department of State Rating Level 3 ("Reconsider Travel") or Level 4 ("Do not Travel"). Students must submit the following items for review:
 - Purpose of Travel: Explain why travel to a particular location is essential to academic studies, research, or work.
 - Proposed Travel Itinerary: Must include lodging arrangements, transportation to and from the location within the region, and day-to-day transportation.
 - Risk Mitigation Plan: Outline of risks as identified in the DOS Travel Advisory and/or International SOS security information and mitigation procedures.

- ISOS Briefing: Summary of a briefing with an ISOS security analysis for the destination—provide name and case number for verification. Contact the CGE for the name and case number information.
- Communication: Comprehensive list of emergency contacts, both US-based and in-country, local contacts.
- Signed Waiver (completed via the [StudioAbroad Portal](#)).
- Additional materials: Any additional materials that would be useful for the CGE or Undergraduate Research and Fellowships in making a decision, such as any prior relationships that have been established with a site or host institution or maps of the region.

Upon reviewing the submitted materials, the CGE may require students to take additional steps, or modify their travel plans in order to obtain approval. If the global experience request is denied, a summary of the reasons supporting the decision will be given. Please direct all questions regarding travel or study abroad to cge@simmons.edu.

Internships and Service

Students participating in internships or volunteering at an organization must submit an offer letter or letter of invitation/affiliation from the organization. This letter should discuss the student's role at the organization. Organizations must submit an evaluation of the intern's work at the end of the internship or service opportunity. Students should consult with Undergraduate Research and Fellowship staff prior to signing contracts with any organization.

Research

Students participating in an independent research project that involves human subjects must receive IRB approval prior to the start of the project. Once you submit your materials to IRB, the approval process will take a minimum of 10 days.

In order to receive approval, you must complete the CITI Training Program, which you can complete at any time prior to submitting your materials for IRB approval. [Register with the CITI Program](#).

More information about the IRB process at Simmons can be found at: simmons.edu/academics/research/sponsored-programs/institutional-review-board.

Creative Endeavors

Students with projects that involve a creative endeavor may choose to include a portfolio or imagery as part of their application. Students may upload this work to the application portal separately, email materials to ugprogram@simmons.edu, or include it in the appendices of the proposal narrative. These items are not included in the page count of the proposal essays.

After the submission of materials, Undergraduate Research and Fellowships may require students to take additional steps, or modify their projects in order to obtain approval. Students may receive a conditional approval for PLP funding, pending the submission of required materials. All of the required documentation for the project must be submitted and approved prior to the disbursement of any funding.

Selection Criteria

The PLP review committee is looking for proposals that include the following:

1. A detailed and feasible timeline
Include start and end dates, anticipated number of hours per week, and a week-by-week listing of project milestones.
2. Detailed and feasible methodology
What is your project design/structure? Which procedures, methods, and strategies will you employ to conduct your project? What materials will you use?
3. Academic merit
4. Discussion of the student's previous work related to the project
The committee is looking for a strong foundation of skills and knowledge. PLP proposals are especially well reviewed when they are a continuation of previous work. The PLP should not be the first time you are engaging with a particular topic or skill.
5. Creative deliverables
The committee is looking for deliverables beyond class assignments and required theses. Deliverables are especially well reviewed when students creatively employ a medium outside of or in addition to the written word. They are also well reviewed when they are created with a specific purpose and audience in mind. Ideally, the URF team will not be the only audience for your deliverable.
6. A mentor, advisor, or supervisor who will support the student

Student Agreement

Prior to receiving PLP funding, each student must sign a Student Agreement form which outlines PLP expectations, the student's role and responsibilities within the project, and safety and wellbeing in the field. Each student must also attend a meeting with URF staff to review responsibilities and expectations.

Closing Your Grant

PLP grants received during the Fall 2020 semester must be completed by Tuesday, August

31, 2021. Grants received during the Spring 2021 semester must be completed by Monday, January 31, 2022. This includes the following:

- Students must submit all receipts to Simmons University. Failure to submit receipts may result in a charge to the student.
- Students will be required to submit at least one deliverable that represents skills and knowledge obtained or outcomes achieved during the project.
- Students will complete an evaluation for the PLP, which will assess overall learning and satisfaction with the experience.
- If you are a senior graduating, you must close out your project prior to commencement.