

SROP APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDELINES

Introduction

The first step in completing the SROP application is to gain an overall understanding of the process. **Please read through all application instructions before beginning your application.** The SROP application is web-based and is not available in paper form.

Completing the Application

You must register for an application account. You will need to create a username and password, and have an e-mail address in order to register for an account. In order to submit your letters of recommendation, you will need to send your username to your recommenders, so choose an appropriate username. The e-mail address you provide will be used for all U-M SROP communications regarding the status of your application. You are advised to monitor your e-mail account regularly (including your spam folder).

You will need your account information to return later to either complete your application or check its status. The application consists of 4 sections that will be completed online:

- Student Background Information
- Faculty Mentor Selection
- Personal and Academic Statements
- Faculty letters of recommendation (2)
- Unofficial Undergraduate Transcript(s)

Your transcript(s) must reflect all earned undergraduate credits and grades through December 2016.

Preparing Your Written Statements

You will be required to submit two written statements. You are encouraged to prepare and edit your written statements prior to initiating your online application. **The written statements are a crucial component of the application.** Be sure to proofread and edit your responses. Visit the writing center on your campus if one is available to you. Share your drafts with an advisor and/or professor. When you complete the online application, you can cut and paste your statements into the appropriate sections on the application form.

Personal Statement (1300 words maximum)

SROP is intended to help students learn about and prepare for graduate study. This program is especially intended for students from groups that are underrepresented in academia and in their disciplines including, but not limited to, racial and ethnic minorities, low-income and first generation students, non-traditional students, students from geographically underrepresented areas. The personal statement is your opportunity to explain why you want to participate in SROP. Below are some questions you might consider:

- What are your graduate school goals?
- What are your academic aspirations?
- What are your career goals?
- In what ways have your experiences and background influenced your goals?
- How will participation in SROP help you accomplish your goals?
- How will you contribute to the diversity of the community of SROP scholars?

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Academic Statement (600 words maximum)

In order to help match potential faculty mentors with you, the SROP program staff members need to know your research areas of interest. You should explain as clearly as possible the areas that you would like to research and why this research appeals to you.

1. It is a good idea to consult your advisors or professors for advice about preparing a research statement. Your professors can help you formulate questions or topics. This is a good opportunity to ask your professors to give you a recommendation. They can write a better recommendation letter for you if they understand your research interests and your motivations for wanting to complete a research experience.
2. Your statement should be specific but not too narrow in focus. If you have had other research experiences, include a description of the project and your role. You can explore areas of research at U-M by visiting web pages for graduate departments/programs to find out what research is done in that area of study.

Requesting Academic Recommendations

Your faculty recommendations are vital to the selection process. These documents provide the selection committee a glimpse at who you are as a researcher. Recommendations carry more weight if they are from professors or instructors who know you. We may contact your references directly to confirm their recommendation information.

Here are a few tips to assist you when determining who will be your recommender and the steps you should take to assist your recommender.

- Ask for recommendations from someone who knows your academic work and can comment specifically on your performance, particularly in the fields of study related to your desired research area.
- Advisors and program directors can comment on your overall achievement. Generally, they cannot evaluate your experience in your field of study. If you have a recommendation from someone like this, you will need to have a strong academic reference that can speak to your research potential and knowledge in the field to supplement it.
- You should not ask a neighbor, church minister, employer (unless related to your research area), or anyone else who may know you outside of an academic or research context.
- Early in the application process, visit your recommenders during office hours or schedule an appointment to discuss your SROP plans and your graduate school goals.
- Give your recommenders a short resume of your experience and areas of interest. Remind them about a project or paper you completed in their class. What grade did you get? Was there something about that project that stood out?
- Once you FINALIZE the online application, give your recommenders the instructions for completing the online recommendation form. The instruction e-mail will have a website address and your application ID number which your recommender will need in order to submit their recommendation.
- Monitor your application status and e-mail to ensure that the recommendations are submitted on time.

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Selecting SROP Institutions

Participation in SROP is an excellent opportunity for you to become familiar with a place where you might like to pursue graduate study. SROP also gives you a chance to become acquainted with professors in the departments where you might apply.

The University of Michigan has a separate application from other Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) institutions; the centralized BTAA application cannot be used for admission to U-M's SROP. In the BTAA application, you can select any or all of the institutions that are part of the BTAA. Do not apply to universities where no one is doing research in your desired area. Program staff will not be able to match you with a research mentor, and you are unlikely to be accepted there.

Receiving an Offer

SROP staff at the University of Michigan will begin contacting applicants in the spring. If selected, you will receive an acceptance offer from a program via e-mail. *Monitor your e-mail inbox (including your spam folder).*

It is possible that you could receive offers from multiple institutions. **Once you have accepted an offer from a university, you cannot accept an offer from a different institution. Acceptance decisions are final.**

How to Handle Multiple Offers

We encourage you not to hold onto multiple offers while waiting to hear from every institution. For example, let's say you applied to A, B, C, and D universities. You received an offer from B and C. You know that A is your first choice. Given a choice between B and C, you definitely prefer B. We encourage you to decline the offer from C so that another student can receive an offer for the space that you declined.

To continue the example, let's say that you received an offer from D. You are still holding out for A, but you know that B is still your preference over D. Decline your offer from D while you wait to see if A will accept you.

This courtesy will enable more students to receive offers for a great research opportunity.