

OSR Peer Consultant Faculty Handbook

Office of Student Research

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Welcome

Dear Colleagues:

The Office of Student Research (OSR) at California State University San Bernardino has implemented a new program, the OSR Peer Research Consultant (PRC), to support faculty who wish to make changes in their courses so that students' inquiry, research and creative activities become a genuine part of their classes. The program will be offered every quarter.

The OSR will provide instructors with a Peer Research Consultant, an undergraduate or graduate student whose assistance will contribute to turn course assignments into research projects. The primary role of the Peer Research Consultant is thus to assist undergraduates as they design, carry out, analyze and disseminate the results of their projects. Specifically, the OSR Peer Research Consultants assist students with framing questions appropriate for the discipline, devise and conduct class investigations and reporting findings in writing and/or orally to the class and a broader audience.

The OSR hopes you will consider using the Peer Research Consultant in your courses and will encourage your students to participate in peer research sessions.

Best,



Dr. Jeffrey Thompson
Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies



Dr. Francisca Beer
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
Director of the Office of Student Research

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Peer Research Consultant Program Mission, Vision, and Goals

The Office of Student Research (OSR) at California State University, San Bernardino has designed a Peer Research Consultant Program similar to the program used at North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Specifically, the OSR Peer Research Consultant program provides instructors with a undergraduate or graduate student who serves as the Peer Consultants, and whose assistance contributes to turn course assignments into research projects.

The primary role of the Peer Research Consultant is to assist students as they implement, design, analyze, and publish the results of their projects. Specifically, the OSR Peer Research Consultants will assist with framing questions appropriate for the discipline, implementing and conducting class investigations, and report findings in writing and/or orally to the class and to a broader audience.

For the purpose of our program, we adopt the national Council for Undergraduate Research (CUR) definition for research, i.e.: "an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline." By adopting the CUR definition, the OSR expects students to disseminate their research findings through presentations and other scholarly pursuits such as publications appropriate for their discipline. CSUSB students are encouraged to take advantage of The *OSR Journal of Student Research*, and the OSR symposium the "Meeting of the Minds".



Vision Statement

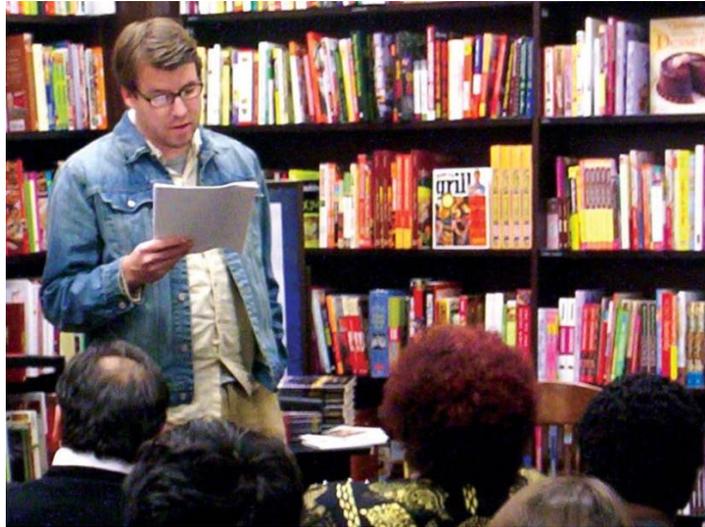
By using Peer Research Consultants, the Office of Student Research Peer Research Consultant Program will support an environment in which research and scholarly experiences will be provided for all disciplines to enrich the academic experiences of all CSUSB graduate and undergraduate students.

Mission Statement

The mission of the OSR Peer Research Consultant program is to contribute in building a community of scholars that foster innovation and develop a sense of purpose and achievement. By doing so, the OSR contributes to CSUSB's mission to offer a challenging and innovative environment that increases graduation rates, and is driven by teaching and research excellence, intellectual interaction and creativity.

Objectives

1. The OSR Peer Research Consultant program will develop, implement and monitor a program that will integrate students into the extensive research and scholarship work of the department faculty.
2. Participants in this program will enroll in graduate school at a higher rate than their peers, will receive a higher overall grade in the targeted class than their peers, and will obtain an overall higher grade point average than their peers.
3. The OSR Peer Research Consultant will employ on-going, consistent program evaluation that includes clear goals and objectives, identification of appropriate means to measure outcomes, and a process for incorporating results into program development and implementation.
4. The OSR Peer Research Consultant will contribute to campus, state, and national academic and non-academic conversations regarding the role of a Peer Consultant.



The Peer Research Consultant Model and Design

The Peer Research Consultant Model involves the following key personnel:

1. **Peer Research Consultant Administration:** The OSR provides support to faculty and Peer Research Consultants. The OSR hires, trains and evaluates the Peer Research Consultants. The OSR also evaluates the overall achievements of the program.
2. **Faculty:** Faculty selects Peer Research Consultants for their classes. Faculty members also promote the OSR Peer Research Consultant program by encouraging all their students to work with peer consultants. Faculty cooperates with Peer Research Consultant by providing course assignments that have the potential to be turned into research projects. Faculty also cooperates with OSR by providing data needed for assessment.
3. **Peer Research Consultant:** Undergraduate or graduate students who are selected (or at least approved) by the instructor, and trained to provide assistance to faculty in all colleges with the exception of the College of Education.
4. **Students:** Students enrolled in the course seeking assistance as they implement, design, analyze, and publish the results of their projects.



Role of the OSR Peer Research Consultant Faculty

Faculty members are encouraged to implement the model that best suits their class and teaching style. There is no one way to conduct student research. Research and creative activities may include class-based activities (i.e. writing assignments, research papers); class-based projects (i.e. community service learning programs) or capstone experiences (i.e. senior projects, honors projects). Student research and creative activities also vary according to the amount of work required to complete the project, the project magnitude and/or depth. Applicants are encouraged to visit the website of North Carolina-Chapel Hill University where they will find numerous examples of research and creative activities undertaken by faculty with the assistance of students (www.unc.edu).

In order for the OSR Peer Research Consultant to be useful, efficient and helpful, faculty are asked to provide assistance in the following areas:

1. Introduce the Peer Research Consultant Program to the class and encourage students to work with the consultant,
2. Provide students' grades to the consultant as soon as possible,
3. Insure that pre and post surveys are administered to the class,
4. Reveal differences in test scores between students using the OSR program and other students,
5. Emphasize to students that the Peer Research Consultant program is opened to any student in the class and any student may benefit from been involved,
6. Please secure a desk copy of any texts and related materials for the Peer Lab facilitator,
7. Verbally encourage all students to attend lab sessions,
8. Participate in end-of-quarter Roundtable discussion,
9. Complete end-of-quarter faculty survey,
10. Invite students to attend OSR events/workshops

11. Include OSR Peer Research Consultant Statement in syllabus,
12. Provide copy of syllabus with application,
13. Provide OSR a brief biography and picture for webpage.

Clearly, the role of a Peer Research Consultant is different from the role of a tutor or a teaching assistant. Peer Research Consultants do not teach and do not grade students' work. Consultants are not obligated to attend classes. Consultants can be available for individual or group consultation outside of class hours or they might attend selected classes. Faculty and consultants are free to organize themselves as they see fit. The OSR is only requesting that the consultants assist students with their research or creative activities for **10 hours per week** during the quarter with the exception of the final week.



Role of the Peer Research Consultant

The Peer Consultants are paid by the OSR to perform 10 hours per week during the quarter at the rate of \$14.85/hour. Faculty members select their own Peer Research Consultant. Peer Research Consultants' responsibilities and requirements are listed below.

Peer-Research Consultant Responsibilities

1. Peer Research Consultants are asked to help students enrolled in the course with all the tasks associated with the completion, creation, development, investigation, and publication of the results of their projects or creative activities.
2. Provide guidance and direction to student participants in order to help students become independent learners.
3. Encourage students to attend faculty office hours.
4. Meet with faculty throughout the quarter as needed.
5. Meet with OSR Director and staff as expected.

6. Maintain confidentiality of student performance and faculty feedback, except as required for reporting purposes to the OSR.
7. Complete all required paperwork prior to the start of the quarter (or hire date).
8. Refer students to appropriate college offices, departments or professionals when necessary
9. Maintain regular and accurate records of lab sessions and/or relevant forms.
10. Take attendance during each lab session.
11. Report any problems to the OSR Director and staffs.
12. Perform other duties as assigned by OSR.
13. Administer, collect and input survey data by due date.
14. Perform other duties as assigned by OSR. Please note that as a participants in this program, Peer-leaders are expected to attend the annual “Meeting of the Minds” Symposium opening ceremony. More information to be given at a later time.

Peer Research Consultant Job Requirements

Please see below for a complete list of job requirements and application procedures.

1. Eligible for work on campus as determined by the Student Employment Office.
2. Maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 (B) or above.
3. Attend mandatory training during the quarter.
4. Commit to working a minimum of 10 hours per week.
5. Provide a recommendation form from your professor for the course you plan to provide assistance.
6. Excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills.

Please note: All international students who apply must obtain a work authorization from the Center for International Studies and Programs CE 356 (909) 537-5193.

Management of Peer Research Consultant

The OSR is responsible for training, monitoring, and supervising the Peer Research Consultant. If faculty members are concerned about the Peer Research Consultant in any way, they should alert the Director of the OSR by phone (909) 537-5709, (909) 537-3177 or email (fbeer@csusb.edu and dnwhite@csusb.edu). The Director of the OSR monitors the Peer Research Consultant performance and evaluates the Peer Research Consultant in a variety of ways: through observations, meetings and trainings, student evaluations, faculty surveys, and self-assessment.

Outcomes

Studies demonstrate that conducting research as an undergraduate correlates with several positive student outcomes, including increased retention and persistence to graduation/ degree completion, increased grade-point-average, increased satisfaction with the undergraduate academic experience, and increased likelihood of enrollment in graduate school (Nagada et al. 1998; Hathaway et al. 2002; Gregerman 2009). Additionally, undergraduates who engage in research experiences report positive changes in psychosocial characteristics, such as increased self-confidence and the ability to work independently (Brownell and Swaner 2010; Lopatto 2010). We hypothesize that participation in courses that expose students to research and creative activities will be similarly beneficial.

The Peer Research Consultants will also benefit from the experience. The OSR Peer Consultants are selected and trained to meet the needs of CSUSB specific student population. As such, these students improve their research skills. The OSR Peer Research Consultants are students who have been successful in their courses, their programs and their accomplishments at CSUSB. The ultimate goal of the consultant is to help undergraduate students to become independent researchers.

The following outcomes will be evaluated using indirect assessment techniques. Specifically, the OSR will develop pre and post student surveys as well as exit interviews.

Outcome(s) Peer Research Consultants
Peer Research Consultants will discover the essence of being a positive role model.
Peer Research Consultants will better appreciate the importance of teamwork and collaboration and exercise effective communication with teams.
Peer Research Consultants will gain assurance in their abilities to make a difference in their lives and the life of their peers.

Peer Research Consultants will learn about the challenges other students experienced and become more considerate about those challenges.
Peer Research Consultants will become more skilled at all activities involving research and creative activities.
Peer Research Consultants will develop relationships with faculty
Peer Research Consultants' ability to identify and make informed decisions about appropriate career interests will increase
Peer Research Consultants professional credentials will increase
Peer Research Consultants' self- confidence will increase
Peer Research Consultants will benefit from greater recognition by peers
Peer Research Consultants will benefit from been known as an academic role model

As far as recipients are concerned, we expect gains in knowledge and skills. These skills will be measured by performance on traditional evaluations (exams, quizzes, papers, reports, etc.) and demonstrated by self-reported improvements in intellectual and practical skills. We also expect improvement in academic achievement and educational attainment measured by grade point averages, persistence, and pursuit of advanced degrees. Finally, professional growth and advancement will be assessed by students' survey.

Outcomes Recipients
Master of course content
Enhanced ability to put classroom knowledge into practice
Increased creativity and critical thinking
Enhanced problem-solving skills
Enhanced communication skills, both oral and written
Enhanced technical skills within the discipline
Higher retention rates
Greater increases in course grades
Greater persistence in the major
Higher graduation rates
Higher rates of acceptance into and enrollment in post-baccalaureate education (graduate/professional schools)
Enhanced ability to work collaboratively with others in teams.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can I come to the sessions?

Students who attend the sessions are guaranteed anonymity so that they can feel free to ask any questions and are able to reveal any weaknesses in understanding the project assigned or the creative activity undertaken. The presence of instructors may inhibit students from revealing weaknesses and students may not feel comfortable answering questions or in participating in discussion.

How much do I have to do?

The program is open to courses where instructors invite and support Peer Research Consultancy. It is recommended that instructors and consultants meet periodically to discuss the assignment(s). During that meeting, consultants should show instructors the activities they have planned.

What are the qualifications to become a Peer Research Consultant?

Generally, consultants are upper-division and graduate students who have taken and earned a high grade in the targeted course. Ideally, consultants are selected by the faculty and approved by the OSR. The OSR looks at a potential consultant's interpersonal skills, leadership style and ability to be trained and receive feedback, and compatibility with the consultant model. After OSR reviews the qualifications and experiences of all candidates, the faculty will make the final selection.

Can the Peer Research Consultant substitute for me in class when I am out of town?

Consultants are not allowed to substitute for a faculty member.

Does the Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) or UCF permit me to provide exam grades to the Peer Research Consultant? How is this confidential information handled?

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) disclosure provisions 99.31 allow those with a legitimate educational interest to handle student records without prior consent provided that Peer Lab facilitators sign a confidentiality agreement (FERPA, 1988). Peer Lab has been permitted access to exam scores nationwide subject to permission from existing campus committees for using students' records in research.

Peer Consultant Contact Information

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