

Guidelines for Students

The Description and Explanation of the Research Process carries the most weight in the judging for the ECU Libraries Research Award for Undergraduates, followed by the Bibliography. These are the components that form the articulation of the research process, and the utilization of library resources that form the basis of the award. The points below are designed to guide you in focusing on the important elements in the Description and Explanation of the Research Process and the Bibliography.

Score Card

Research Component	Point Value
Description & Explanation of the Research Process	20
Bibliography	15
Completed Project	10
Supporting Letter	5
Total Possible:	50

Description & Explanation of the Research Process

The *critical* piece of your application is an **800-1000 word** Description and Explanation of the Research Process that explicates, in detail, your research strategies, along with your use and evaluation of library tools and resources. This is the most important part of your application!

Research is a process you will repeat throughout your life – for work, for consumer decisions, and for social and citizenship responsibilities. The Award review panel is interested in your ability to perform university-level research, and strongly suggests that you fully describe and explain the process by which you selected, acquired, and evaluated the information that went into the development of a project, the solution of a problem, or the making of a personal decision. You will need to communicate the specifics about the growth in your understanding and use of information tools and resources in the discipline appropriate to your project. As you develop the description and explanation of your research process, consider the following questions and suggestions: (You do not need to systematically answer each question, but use them as a guide for your Description and Explanation of the Research Process).

• **Developing research strategies:**

Describe, in detail, your search strategies--both the successes and the problematic searches. Tell us what you know and have learned about the process of doing research, and why you made the choices you did. How did you think about and refine your preliminary research topic? Did the library help to incubate your ideas? Reflect upon the process of adapting your interests to the scope of the project, the time you had available for research and writing, the required length of

the project, and the nature of the information you found. How did you modify your original thesis as a result of what you discovered during your research?

What specific strategies did you develop for finding and using relevant information? What discoveries did you make by chance and which were made through planned search strategies? How did these events impact each other? Highlight the strong points of your use of your sources in supporting your thesis or argument. How much of your research was done independently? Did you seek and/or receive guidance from others in how to locate or best utilize the resources available to you?

• **Evaluating search tools & information:**

What specifically did you discover about tools and techniques for research? Tell us which research tools you used (research databases, library catalogs, websites, bibliographies, etc.), but in an evaluative way -- not just a list of things you tried. Is there a particular tool that you felt was invaluable to your research during the creation of this project?

What did you learn about finding and evaluating information on your topic or in your discipline? What criteria did you use to evaluate your sources? Did you have trouble finding some kinds of information? Describe your decision-making process for solving this challenge. What were some of your reasons for not selecting specific sources, even though they appeared promising? Were you able to recognize bias or contradictions in information sources? How did you balance these viewpoints with your own? Tell us how you reconciled differing viewpoints through the course of your research process, and how it influenced your choice of resources.

Finally, take a look at the [scoring rubric](#) by which submissions are judged.

Prize-winning Reflective Essay examples:

- [EKU examples \(These include the research processes of last year's three winners\)](#).

Bibliography

When preparing your bibliography keep in mind these points:

- Format your bibliography using a style guide appropriate to your project's discipline.
- Cite all sources you used, even if you did not directly quote from them.
- To help the judges understand your unique set of resources, it may be advisable to include an explanatory note identifying specific characteristics of these sources that were important in your selection and use for your project.

Supporting Letter

- Your instructor must compose and send a letter of nomination for you and your paper or project to kevin.jones@eku.edu
- The nominating faculty member must have been the instructor or mentor of record in the course for which the research project was completed.
- Ask your instructor to read [Information for Faculty Nominators](#)
- Send your instructor a copy of your research project to re-read. In addition, send a draft of your Description and Explanation of the Research Process. This will help him/her to write a better letter of support.
- Send your instructor a reminder email or phone call a few days before the deadline.

Final Version of Completed Project

Projects in all media are encouraged!

- Written reports should be double-spaced. There are no other formatting requirements. There are no page requirements outside of the requirements of the discipline.
- Digital projects may be in any common digital format. If the file is too large to email (>10MB), you can copy the files to DVD or CD and send them to Kevin Jones at Library 204P by the due date.