GUIDELINES

GRADUATE RESEARCH FAIR 2026

Date of Event: Friday, April 24th ● 9:00 am – 12:30 pm ● Participants arrive by 8:45 am

Where: Millennium Student Center, 3rd Floor

Participant Registration Deadline: April 10th, 2026

Awards

- ✓ *In addition*, students that are awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in each broad category (A or B) after the second round will receive prizes respectively.
- ✓ Non-thesis students can win these prizes and will be judged separately.
- ✓ Prizes will be allocated to student accounts.

Eligibility

Any active graduate student may participate in the GRF. The Graduate School welcomes research from across academic disciplines. All applicants to the GRF must have the approval of any co-authors to be considered. Applicants presenting a thesis project must have the approval of the thesis advisor. Acceptance into the GRF competition will be determined by the Graduate School Senior Director based on a review of each submitted Abstract Approval Form (to be discussed further below).

To Apply

1. Complete the Intention to Participate Form – due March 27th. Completing this form signals to event organizers your plans to participate. Information you provide on this form may be updated later. One form per presentation. If presenting in a group, please designate one person to complete the form and include all group members' names where indicated.

2. Download the Abstract Approval Form and complete it in Adobe Acrobat Reader DC *(you may download the reader here)*. Alternatively, you may copy and paste the link to the Abstract Approval Form (https://www.umsl.edu/gradschool/files/eventsdocs/abstract-approval.pdf) into your browser to fill it in and save it to your computer.

   - Students presenting a thesis should use this form:

   - Non-thesis students should use this form:

3. Follow the instructions provided in the form to complete it. **Abstracts must be 400 words or less.**

4. Collect co-author signatures (if applicable) and your advisor's signature (if a thesis

project) on the form by emailing the filled-in form to them. Please name your complete abstract file with your firstinitial + last name. For example, Jane Doe would upload the file named "jdoe".

5. Once the form is complete with signatures and names, it is time to upload it as an attachment into the Registration Form. You must access the Registration Form through your student Microsoft account.

  ▪ When you click the registration form, you may be prompted to sign into a Microsoft account. **Make sure you sign into your UMSL student account** – otherwise you may encounter issues accessing the form.

6. Once you have submitted the form, you will receive a confirmation email from Microsoft Forms. You will be contacted by graduate@umsl.edu to confirm your acceptance into the competition after the deadline passes on April 10th.

Presentation Basics

✓ The GRF is designed for posters. There are no platform presentations.

✓ The Graduate School will provide an easel for each participant. **Any other items needed to facilitate the presentation- poster, backboards, pushpins- must be supplied by the participant.** Generally, posters have been mounted on a 3' x 5' poster board. **It is suggested that participants discuss best practices for presenting with their advisors if unsure.**

✓ Other student contributors should be listed as co-authors on the posters of collaborative projects.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF INTELECTUAL PROPERTY

✓ Posters should be viewable by 9:00am. The room will be available starting at 8:45am for set-up. **All participants must arrive by 8:45am.** The Graduate School staff will be there to help arrange the posters in numerical order by their assigned poster number.

✓ Participants should be available 9:00 am – 12:30 pm for judging and to discuss their poster with other visitors.

✓ Participants should offer to walk visitors through their posters and explain their research. Some visitors may prefer to read the poster without input, so the poster should be as self-explanatory as possible. Be sure to number or arrange poster sections in a manner that makes following the project's narrative easy for readers.

Your poster presentation constitutes a public disclosure of university and/or your intellectual property (IP), which may result in the loss of foreign patent rights and put a time limit on filing a US patent application. As part of the service provided by the UMSL Office of IP Management & Commercialization, we will read your abstract and work with you and your faculty advisor to determine whether protection of university and/or your IP is recommended prior to the research fair. Please note that your poster presentation constitutes a public disclosure of the university and/or your intellectual property (IP), which may result in the loss of foreign patent rights. As a service, the UMSL Office of Research Administration will read submitted abstracts and provide advice on IP protection. For more information, contact Tamara Wilgers, Director of Technology Commercialization and Economic Development (314-516-6884 or wilgerst@umsl.edu).

✓ Posters should be understandable by anyone who visits. For example, a psychology poster should be understandable to students and faculty from the social sciences.

Judging Process

- ✓ The Graduate School expects to divide posters according to thesis/non-thesis and by discipline:
  - **Non-thesis**
  - **A** (math/computer science/natural sciences)
  - **B** (social sciences/humanities/business/education)
    - *Depending on the number of posters submitted, these broad groupings may be further subdivided.*

- ✓ There will be separate judging for all categories.

- ✓ Posters will be assigned to a team of three faculty judges. Abstracts will be submitted to the judges in advance of the event by the Graduate School.

What are Judges looking for?

Presentations and posters will be reviewed on the following criteria:

a) CONTENT: The research examines a relevant problem; research design is appropriate and compelling; rigorous research methods have been used; conclusions are consistent with the evidence.

b) EASY TO READ OR COMPREHEND: Title and author(s) are given. Any text is legible and limited to the essential. The flow of the poster is easy to follow. The use of technical language or another medium of communication is appropriate to the general area of study, e.g. natural sciences, social sciences, business, humanities.

c) ATTRACTIVE: Color scheme is consistent; lists and figures are used effectively; illustrations and labels are clear; any text is edited for spelling and punctuation errors.

d) ORAL PRESENTATION: There is a clear explanation of the project in the five minutes allocated for judging. The explanation must convince the judges that the work was done properly, the results are significant, and that the participant personally (not their advisor) understands the work being presented.