

Announcement:**Flores Award for Undergraduate Research in Biology**

Application deadline is Friday, April 4, 2025 11:59 pm

Submit your application and supporting materials to: jpspinicchia@smcm.edu as a single pdf file

The Flores Award for Undergraduate Research in Biology

The Flores Award was established by a biology alumna of St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) to support research carried out by undergraduate **biology majors** at the college. The donor of this award is a former SMCM biology major who went on to obtain MS and PhD degrees in zoology. The intent of the Flores Award is to support the research of aspiring young biologists. This year, she has made funds available to support three (3) grantees for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Who May Apply for the Flores Award? All full-time undergraduates at the college **majoring in or intending to major in biology** are eligible to compete for the award.

What must be included in the application?

In consultation with a biology faculty mentor, students must prepare a **three-page proposal** that clearly describes the project they intend to pursue. The proposal must include the following:

- 1) a descriptive title.
- 2) the research question and hypothesis that will be addressed.
- 3) why it is important to answer this question.
- 4) the necessary background and references to place the question in an appropriate context.
- 5) outline of the experimental design to answer the question.
- 6) timeline for carrying out the project.

Proposals should be under three pages doubly spaced. An appendix will be attached with a budget outlining the costs associated with the project. In addition, the application must contain an unofficial copy of the student's transcript, a letter of support from the mentor and a second letter of support from a faculty member who has been the student's instructor in a science class. Finally, a short writing sample from a previous class must also be included (1-2 pp. max).

Application Checklist

- Three-page project proposal (see above)
- Appendix: Organized, itemized budget
- Unofficial student transcript
- Two letters of recommendation (see above)
- 1-2 pp. writing sample

What criteria will be used to judge the proposed project? Judges will address the following questions when evaluating the projects: Is the application complete? Is the scope of the project reasonable for the time period allotted for the work? Is the project feasible given the resources available? Is the application scientifically sound and clearly written? Final decisions will also consider the importance and impact of the research project.

When and where will the research be carried out? The student must devote the equivalent of about 350 hours of time (equivalent to approximately 8.5 weeks of full time employment) working on their research project. The student may carry out the research during a concentrated time period (e.g. in the summer) or over a more extended time period. The project may be the student's St. Mary's Project (SMP) and thus may be carried out over two semesters during the academic year. The student may carry out the research on the St. Mary's College campus or may accompany their mentor to an alternative site. These grants also support directed science research of biology majors with SMCM biology professors.

When must the application be submitted? The applications must be submitted to the Flores Award Committee **by April 4, 2025** prior to the summer or academic semester in which the student plans to conduct the project. The Flores award Committee will be composed of three Biology Professors and/or staff. The Committee will rank the proposals based on the criteria indicated above. If a member of the Committee is the mentor of one of the students submitting a proposal, the mentor will be recused from judging that proposal. **Notification of awards will take place by the last week of classes the semester in which the application materials were received.**

What is expected of recipients of the Flores Award?

In addition to devoting the equivalent of 350 hours to carrying out the proposed research, the awardee is expected to submit a progress report to his/her mentor midway through the proposed duration of the research. The report should be two to three pages in length and describe the results obtained up to this point in the project. In addition, following completion of the project the awardee must present their findings in a public forum an example of which might be the Fall or Spring Poster Research Day sponsored by the Biology Department. The student must also write-up the findings of his/her research in the conventional format of a scientific report and deliver it to the mentor within two weeks of completion of the project. This report and the mid-term report will be shared with members of the Flores Award Committee and the donor of the award.

Summary:

- 350 hours of work
- progress report at midway point
- Scientific format final report within two weeks of completion of the project
- Public presentation of the project

What is the nature of the award?

In addition to costs associated with the project as listed in the budget, the awardees will receive a stipend of \$3000 to be dispersed in two installments-one when the project is begun and the second, midway through the proposed project duration and following submission of the progress report.

Summary:

- **material costs** (up to \$2000.00)
- **stipend** (\$3000.00)