

Evaluation Criteria for Richards Scholar Application

Richards Grant: *The Richards Grant is awarded to superlative students with ambitious yet achievable projects. It is intended for a two-year project. The goal of the Richards Grant is to support students' best original work in its many forms. While the guidelines below will be used to evaluate student applications, the committee is open to innovation and unique proposals.*

Completeness: All required materials submitted on time.

- Application (everything filled out and consistent)
- Project Description (description of project/timeline/description of original contribution to the discipline)
- Personal Essay
- Budget Justification
- Three letters of recommendation (typically from advisor, work supervisor, and mentor)
- CV/resume

Quality of the Project:

- Student clearly articulates the project, showing their familiarity with the required knowledge base and methods.
- Student describes the significance of the project in non-technical language suitable for a general audience (proposals are read by an interdisciplinary committee). Student describes how the project makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.
- Student clearly delineates how the research will be conducted (when describing the research methodology, the use of technical language is appropriate), and provides a reasonable timeline for completion of the project.
 - o If the student's project includes part of a larger research project that includes faculty or other students, the applicant has clearly identified what part of the project they will complete. The student demonstrates that they will bear responsibility in carrying out the design, execution, and dissemination of the research, with mentor guidance throughout.
- Student has defined a project that possesses scholarly or artistic merit and creates an original scholarly or artistic contribution as defined by their discipline, but the project objectives/anticipated outcomes are also achievable at the undergraduate level. Examples of previous Richards Scholar projects are available on the Berry Scholars Program website (<http://berry.edu/Templates/general.aspx?id=51539615191>).
- Student specifically notes plans for disseminating results of the project.
- Student is aware of any approvals necessary (IACUC, IRB, or ELM) and has those approvals/had taken steps to secure them.

Quality of Budget:

- Projected costs are reasonable, are in line with what the award covers, do not exceed the award maximum, and are verified through supporting documentation.

Quality of the Student:

- GPA of 3.0 or higher. Strength of GPA is important, but not absolute.
- Student must have completed 24 credit hours at Berry, must be a rising sophomore or rising junior, and must be a full-time student.
- Personal Essay:
 - o Student shows they are an active member of the Berry community.

- Student shows their commitment to the relevant field of study either through work experience or performance in the classroom.
- Student shows the connection between these experiences, the project, and their future endeavors.

Letters of Recommendation:

- Letter writers clearly support the student in this endeavor.
- Letter writers know the student and speak specifically about the student's development and project.
- The faculty mentor demonstrates the willingness and ability to guide the student throughout the project successfully.
 - Mentor explicitly states how they will guide the student while making sure the student takes responsibility for the project.
 - Mentor will be accessible to the student during the duration of the award or has made arrangements with other faculty members to mentor the student if they will be absent from campus during part of the award (for example, on sabbatical).
 - While not necessary, past examples of successful mentorship are viewed favorably as they demonstrate the faculty member's commitment to mentoring and ability to successfully mentor students. If the faculty member has mentored named scholars in the past, they should briefly comment on the outcomes of those projects.