

# Call for Submissions to the 6th Annual Image of Research Competition 2024-2025

## Guidelines and FAQs

### Description of the Annual Image of Research Competition at Illinois State

The annual ***Image of Research Competition at Illinois State*** invites graduate and undergraduate students to create or capture one compelling static image of their research to share with the public along with a brief narrative (150 words maximum) that **explains how the image relates to their research**. The competition gives students the opportunity to engage creatively with their research, share behind-the-scenes views of their research processes, or portray their scholarship in visual form.

Static images may take any form, including photographs, drawings, data visualizations, or digital creations, but they must be created by the student. (See [“What Kinds of Images Are Allowed”](#) below)

All entries will be evaluated by a jury. Finalists’ entries will be included in pop-up exhibit and reception, *February 13, 2025, 4-6pm*, at the University Galleries in Uptown Normal. Winners will receive monetary awards of up to \$200; and will be featured in university media and during events on campus including recognition at the spring University Research Reception.

The Image of Research at Illinois State Competition is sponsored by the Office of Student Research, Milner Library, and University Galleries.

### Who is eligible?

All Illinois State University graduate and undergraduate students who currently enrolled and are in good academic standing may submit an entry. Each person may submit only one entry. Only individual entries are allowed (no groups). Each submission must include a faculty mentor. Students are responsible for submitting their own work.

### What counts as research?

Every discipline has standards for scholarly exploration and contributions. At Illinois State, *student research* is defined broadly as any mentored investigation or creative inquiry that seeks to contribute to scholarly or artistic knowledge. Students from **all disciplines** can compete in the Image of Research Competition. The research can be based on course-based projects, independent study, thesis or dissertation research, both on and off-campus. If you need assistance finding a mentor for a research or creative project, please contact us at [studentresearch@ilstu.edu](mailto:studentresearch@ilstu.edu)

### What kinds of images are allowed?

The submission must be an original, static image that represents your research subject, process, or findings. It may represent your research either concretely or abstractly. Photographs (taken by the researcher), microscopy, drawings, digital images, data visualization, graphics are all permissible,

however the image should not include a substantial amount of text. For instance, an infographic is acceptable as long as the research is communicated primarily through imagery rather than words.

The submission must be original—that is, created by the student researcher. If the submission includes imagery taken from another source, the student must have permission to use it. AI generated images are permissible but require additional explanation. For more information on permissions and AI generated content, see the section on [Additional Requirements and Guidelines](#), below.

## How do I enter?

Follow the submission link on [OSR's Image of Research webpage](#). You will need your @ilstu email and password to log-in.

Your submission will consist of:

1. Completed application form (on InfoReady Application site).
2. One high-resolution digital image that meets the following technical criteria.
  - Maximum file size of 50 MB
  - Minimum resolution of 300 ppi.
  - Image must be at least 10 inches on the longest end.
  - Image must be in TIFF, JPEG, or JPEG2 format

For help formatting your image, contact [studentresearch@ilstu.edu](mailto:studentresearch@ilstu.edu)

The application form will ask for an *Alt text* (alternative text) description of your image. This text describes the image for those who are unable to view it, such as individuals using screen readers. The Alt text must be clear and concise (max. 125 characters).

3. A brief abstract (150 words maximum). The abstract should convey *the question your research addresses and how the image captures or reflects your research question, process, or findings*. The abstract must be written for a general audience (jargon-free) and should clearly communicate the connection between your image and your research/creative scholarship.

Ask your mentor to proof-read your submission—writing counts!

Your abstract may be edited for grammar and clarity before it goes to judges. If major changes are suggested, you will be given the opportunity to accept or reject the revisions and one week to reply to our request for revisions.

4. Approval from a faculty mentor or sponsor. Once you have completed your submission, the faculty member will receive an automatic email asking them to approve your submission.

## Additional Requirements and Guidelines

Within the online application, students will be asked to affirm and address the following issues:

- a) Applicants must give Illinois State permission to display and archive their image and abstract.

All finalists must sign [Institutional Repository Submission Statement](#). This statement allows ISU to archive your image in ISU ReD, Milner [Library's Research and eData Institutional Repository](#) for long term preservation. See the previous years' [Image of Research Exhibits](#).

- b) Applicants must affirm that they are **principal creator and owner** of the image, OR that you have the **right to use** the imagery.

If the image is not of your own creation, you *may be able* to use it, please send an email to the Office of Student Research ([studentresearch@ilstu.edu](mailto:studentresearch@ilstu.edu)) and we will help you determine whether the imagery falls under “fair use” for the IoR Competition or what steps you need to take to acquire rights.

For more detail: If your submission contains imagery or material that you took from another source (i.e., “third-party content”), you must provide evidence you have the right to use the material. If the image you submit contains third-party content, it might still be allowed if it has been altered and mixed with other content to form an original creation (e.g, in a collage for example). Submission of an unaltered third-party image is not permitted. Any use of images or materials that are under copyright by a third party must either fall under [fair use](#) or the entrant must obtain the relevant permissions and signed release forms. These forms will be held by the Office of Student Research. If you use third party content, or are unsure, you must discuss your submission with OSR before it is accepted.

- c) If the image or abstract includes content created by a Generative AI tool (e.g., ChatGPT, Adobe Firefly, etc), the applicant must explain the use of the tool.

Generative AI is a potentially powerful research tool. If you used Generative AI to create all or part of your image, please cite 1) the tool you used; 2) the prompts and processes used to generate it, 3) your rationale for using it. This text, or part of it, will be appended to your abstract.

For further information, see [Illinois State's Recommendations on the Use of Generative AI in Research and Scholarly Activity](#).

- d) If the submission portrays identifiable individuals, the applicant secure appropriate permissions. Please use [Photo Release Forms](#) available on the University Marketing website (Release forms also available in Spanish).

## How will the winners be determined?

All submissions will be judged by a multidisciplinary panel of jurors for:

- Visual Impact and appeal – Make it compelling!
- Overall originality/creativity– Make it original!
- Strong connection between image, text, and research – Explain the image and research concisely in your abstract.
- Clarity of the written description and title

Previous years' jurors have included professional artists, art critics, a *New York Times* editor, directors of art divisions at major corporations.

In addition, the public votes for a Peoples' Choice winner during the Finalists' Exhibit and Reception.

## When will finalists and winners be announced?

Finalists for the competition will be announced early Spring 2025 semester. Their images will be printed in large format for exhibition.

Winners of all awards will be announced at the Finalists' Exhibit and Reception, Thursday, February 13, 4-6pm at [University Galleries](#), 11 Uptown Circle, Normal, IL.

Winners/Finalists are often also displayed at events in venues throughout the Spring semester.

## What can I win?

Winning submissions from both the Graduate and Undergraduate student categories will receive a cash award. If you are an international student, please note that your award may be subject to tax withholding:

1<sup>st</sup> place - \$250

2<sup>nd</sup> place - \$150

Honorable Mention - \$50

People's Choice - \$100

## What if I have questions or need help with my image or abstract?

Contact Gina Hunter, Director of the Office of Student Research, [glhunt2@ilstu.edu](mailto:glhunt2@ilstu.edu)