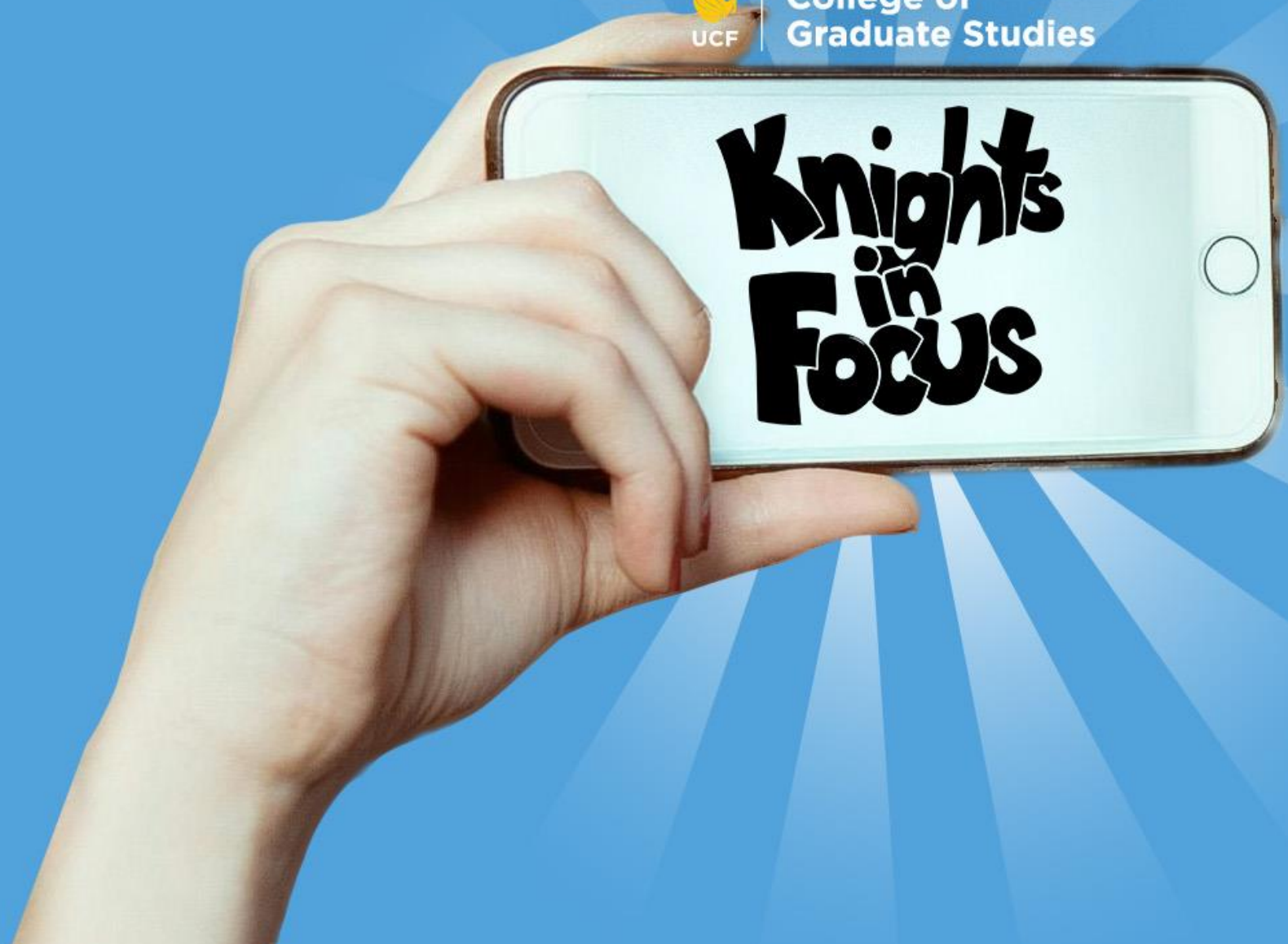
UCF | College of Graduate Studies



COMPETITION OVERVIEW

- Knights in Focus was created to spotlight our graduate community.
- The competition invites graduate students to share how their experiences are shaping the future.
- Open to all currently enrolled master's and doctoral students at UCF.
- Participants **must maintain enrollment through the Spring 2027 term**.
- Previous winners are not eligible to compete.



HOW IT WORKS

- Create a video (1 min or less) about your area of research or creative work and how your UCF experience has shaped your journey.
- Video submissions will be screened and then evaluated by a panel of judges.
- Selected finalists' videos will be shared on the CGS social media platforms.
- Graduate students will vote for their favorites through Qualtrics.

JUDGING PROCESS

- All submissions will be reviewed to ensure they meet the **baseline competition requirements** *(eligibility, video length, submission of a model release form, etc.)*
- Eligible videos will then be evaluated by a **panel of judges** including students, faculty, and staff using provided criteria.
- The judges will select the **first and second-place winners** of the competition and identify a **group of finalists** for the People's Choice Award.
- The People's Choice **finalists will be posted** on College of Graduate Studies social media pages, and **student voting** through Qualtrics will determine the winners.
- An additional award will be given to the video receiving the **highest combined likes** across the official CGS Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube accounts.

JUDGING CRITERIA

What to Consider When Creating Your Video:

- **Clarity** – Is your message clear and easy to follow?
- **Delivery** – Are you confident, authentic, and engaging?
- **Relevance** – Does the content align with the competition prompt?
- **Impact** – Does your story leave a strong impression?

AWARDS

$2,000 WINNER (Judge selected)

$1,500 RUNNER-UP (Judge selected)

$1,000 PEOPLE'S CHOICE 1st (Student vote)

$750 PEOPLE'S CHOICE 2nd (Student vote)

$500 PEOPLE'S CHOICE 3rd (Student vote)

$250 MOST LIKES ON SOCIAL



GETTING STARTED – CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE

Prompt: *Discuss your research or creative work and how grad school at UCF has shaped your academic/professional journey.*

- Use a strong hook
- Keep it concise and engaging
- Use layman's terms (avoid technical jargon)
- Consider your audience
- Think of what content you like to see



REVIEW THE VIDEO REQUIREMENTS

- Keep your video to 60 seconds or less.
- Include your name, academic program, and research/creative focus.
- You can use a smartphone, DSLR, or mirrorless camera.
  Do not use webcams or Zoom recordings.
- Use clear, steady footage (no blurry/pixelated shots).
- Make sure your voice/audio is clearly understandable.
- Submit your video as an MP4 or MOV file.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

UCF Libraries offers free high-end audio and visual equipment rentals through Technology Lending and Support.

Check out cameras, microphones, and other tech:

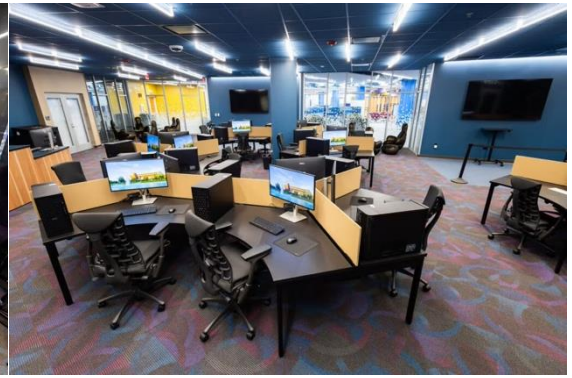


RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

The Digital Exploration Center on the 4th floor also has various spaces and resources for filming and editing, including:

A production studio, immersion studio, podcast studio, extended reality stations, and high-performance workstations.



FILMING TIPS

- Use good lighting
- Make sure your filming space is neat
- Dress presentably
- Record yourself in a relevant environment
- Include footage of your subject matter
- Have a friend record you
- Keep it natural, don’t read from a script
- Limit background noise and echo (use a microphone if needed)



VIDEO EDITING TIPS

- Cut out long pauses and interruptions
- Make sure pacing is consistent
- Add footage of the subject matter you're discussing
- Limit use of flashy effects and transitions
- On-screen text should have good contrast
- Balance audio levels so narration is prominent
- Use royalty-free music if using background music
- Do not use heavy filters or distracting animations



PLATFORMS FOR EDITING









Adobe Express





DAVINCI RESOLVE







Premiere Pro

PAST VIDEO EXAMPLES

Winner: Jethro

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STPVmBu2_8k

Runner Up: Andrew

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_k0UfwjCDQg

People's Choice Winner: Mario

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htPmwLYGuXQ

Finalist Highlights:

Mary

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Oo0j97Mp6hY

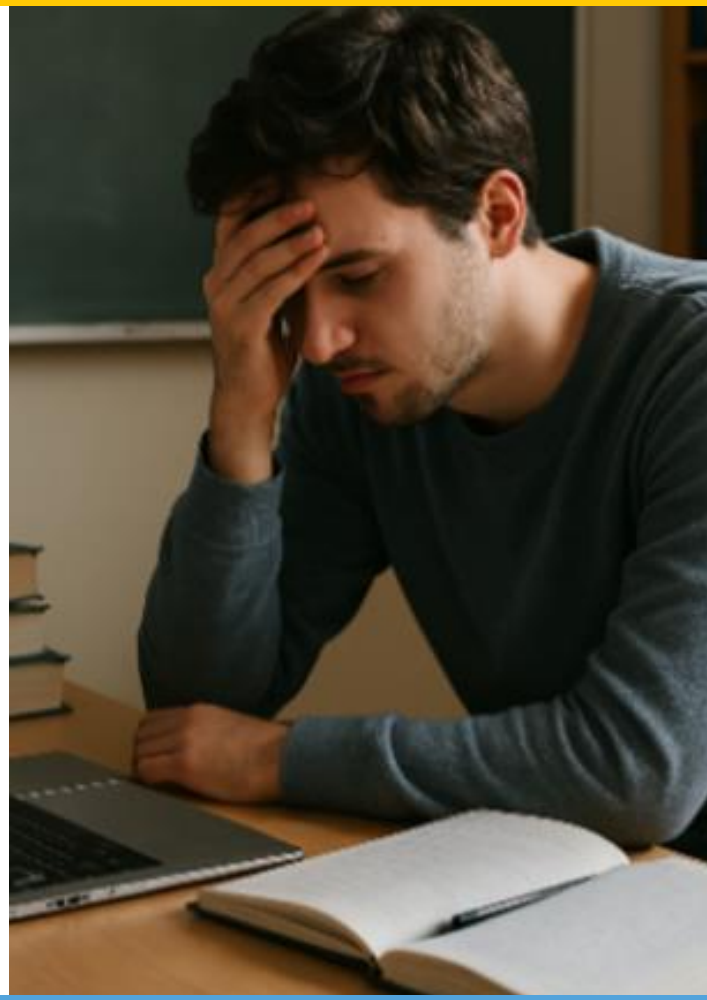
Kassadi

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/zAFeH0Jlaxc

AVOIDING DISQUALIFICATION

Violations of competition guidelines:

- Submission exceeds 60-second time limit
- Content submitted after the deadline
- Inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory content
- Discussion of highly controversial topics or confidential or sensitive information
- Violation of copyrighted material or intellectual property rights
- Use of AI to generate, edit, or enhance video content, audio, visuals, or other creative elements of the submission
- Failure to submit a completed model release form



CONFIDENTIALITY

- Any data or information discussed or presented in video submissions should be considered **public**.
- We will not ask judges, reviewers, staff or the audience to sign non-disclosure statements.
- If your research is being/has been conducted under contract with an outside sponsor or includes confidential or culturally sensitive material, we advise that you **discuss your competition entry with your advisor** before entering.



SUBMITTING YOUR VIDEO

- Submit your final video through the Qualtrics Form on the KIF website by **December 31 at 11:59 PM** (EST). *Late submissions will not be accepted.*
- **You must sign and submit a Model Release Form.** We will not consider entries submitted without this signed form.

VIDEO PERMISSIONS

When you submit your video, you:

- Confirm that you created all content and did not violate any third-party rights.
- Grant the College of Graduate Studies a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide, perpetual license to use, publish, and share your video in print, digital, and promotional formats.

You will retain full ownership of your work.



CELEBRATE YOUR HARD WORK

Join us for a viewing party during UCF Student Research Week, where we'll celebrate and showcase our top submissions.

Tuesday, March 23

3pm – 4pm

Graduate Student Center Presentation Room

Trevor Colbourn Hall 208




Questions