SUMMER RESEARCH EXPERIENCES FOR UNDERGRADUATES

What are they good for? How does it all work?

Finding and Applying to Programs

WHAT IS “SUMMER RESEARCH”? Research experiences for undergraduates give students a chance to work in meaningful ways with faculty and researchers conducting ongoing research programs or projects. These programs offer a hands-on experience in the lab or in the field with professional development support. It’s meant to build your skills, to be fun and inspiring, and it’s often paid – most programs offer a stipend and many cover travel and housing as well. It’s often in the summer – but not always! Some programs occur during the academic year as well.

WHY SHOULD I APPLY?

⇒ Build your academic foundation.
⇒ Get hands-on experience in the field.
⇒ Explore fields of interest.
⇒ Make valuable connections with faculty.
⇒ Enjoy travel, new friends, and fun!
⇒ A stepping stone to graduate school.

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GREAT! SO HOW DO I APPLY?

It takes time and effort to search for, select and apply to programs you are interested in – and it’s time and effort that has to fit in around all your other schoolwork! Here’s a suggested timeline that will help you plan for success.

CONGRATULATIONS! Have a great summer, and enjoy your undergraduate research experience!

For more details, visit The Resource Toolbox at www.pathwaystoscience.org and print PDF handouts on:

- The Benefits of an Undergraduate Summer Research Experience
- Discussing Summer Research with Your Family
- Searching for a Program: Great Online Search Tools
- Creating a Winning Application
- Writing Strong Essays and Personal Statements
- Getting Strong Letters of Recommendation

I. SUMMER / EARLY FALL
- Get organized
- Begin drafting cover letter & personal statement
- Update and revise your resume
- Use your campus career and writing centers!
- Discuss the potential of summer research experience with family

II. FALL
- Search for programs. Use www.pathwaystoscience.org!
- Note application deadlines, requirements and contacts
- Seek input from peers and mentors
- Make use of extra time during Thanksgiving break!
- Identify & talk with potential recommenders
- Research process for requesting transcripts
- Stay organized!

III. EARLY TO MID WINTER
- Make your final selection of programs to apply to
- Request letters of recommendation 2 months in advance
- Polish - and re-polish - your essays & cover letter
- Request transcripts

IV. MID TO LATE WINTER
- Make use of your winter break to work on your apps.
- Follow up with your recommenders
- Make sure your contact info will be active in spring
- APPLY! Complete and submit applications.
- Call to confirm your application was received in full.

V. SPRING
- Keep a look out . . . check your email!
- Consider offers: stipend? housing? travel?
- Select and respond

VI. EARLY SUMMER
- Receive and read materials for your program
- Sign and return forms as appropriate
- Join the program’s listserv or social media tools
- Touch base with your recommenders - let them know your successful outcome, and say thank you!