WHAT IS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH?

• The two main activities at a university are a) teaching and b) research or scholarship, the pursuit of new knowledge and understanding.

• In your classes you learn what university researchers have discovered.

• By participating in your professors’ research or scholarly work you become directly engaged in the process of discovery.

• Students in all majors/schools can engage in undergraduate research.
WHO SHOULD DO UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH?

• Anyone who is intellectually passionate about a subject would benefit from engaging in the research process. You will:
  • Gain a deeper understanding of your subject
  • See firsthand how new knowledge and understanding comes about
  • Learn valuable new knowledge, skills, procedures, and habits
  • Develop strong relationships with mentors and peers who share your intellectual curiosity
WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH LIKE?

• It may be paid or unpaid.

• You will carry out your activities anywhere from around 4 to more than 10 hours a week – this varies widely, and is up to you and your mentor.

• You should either have, or receive, training in any necessary skills.

• It’s a real responsibility – your reliable and conscientious participation is important to the success of your professor’s project.
SOUNDS GREAT! HOW DO I GET STARTED IN RESEARCH?

1. Get on top of your studies; doing well in your coursework, especially in the subject where you hope to gain research experience, is important.

2. Talk with the professors teaching your classes and with your major advisor.

3. Talk with any peers you know are already doing undergraduate research. Your Teaching Assistants are graduate students doing research – talk with them.

4. Visit your major department’s website and learn about the many different research interests and activities of its professors.
YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT FACULTY'S RESEARCH PROJECTS BY VISITING THE FACULTY DIRECTORY WEB PAGE FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT.
The Maryland Student Researchers (MSR) database is a great way to learn about research projects that are actively looking for student assistance. Many MSR projects are open to beginners and provide training; others specify any required skills or background. About 150 projects are listed on the MSR database each semester. You can search for listed opportunities in your subject of interest here: http://www.ugresearch.umd.edu/current-studentresearchers.html Follow the advice and apply! Remember that MSR is the tip of an iceberg....
Faculty interested in posting undergraduate research opportunities please click here.

The Maryland Student Researchers (MSR) program helps connect undergraduate students with professors seeking assistance with real research projects. The MSR program consists of a database that enables professors to post details about their research opportunities, and permits undergraduates to search effectively for opportunities that are a good fit for their interests and qualifications.

MSR research opportunities typically look for undergraduates willing to spend four to ten hours a week working under the mentorship of a professor on the professor’s own research. Participating in an MSR project enables undergraduates to develop mentoring relationships with faculty, to learn more deeply about the process of discovery of new knowledge and information, and to make significant contributions to real research. Participating students gain valuable skills and experiences that will enhance their future studies as well as graduate school and/or employment qualifications.

MSR opportunities are open to students of all majors who want to engage in undergraduate research. Students interested in being considered for an MSR-listed research opportunity should apply directly to the researcher using the provided contact email address in each announcement—all MSR placements are by mutual agreement between the researcher and the student applicant(s). The MSR program does not place students in research positions.
I’VE FOUND SOME INTERESTING PROFS AND PROJECTS THROUGH MSR OR ON MY OWN – WHAT NEXT?

• When you’ve identified a few Professors doing research that looks relevant and interesting, contact them by email or visit their office hours.

• The MCUR website has clear advice and suggestions for contacting professors effectively: http://www.ugresearch.umd.edu/current-whatwhenwhy.html

• Be organized, polite, and persistent. Few students find a research opportunity on their first contact with a professor. Persistence pays off.

• Follow-through matters – when you’re offered an opportunity, take it seriously and do your best!
Introduction and Overview: How Do I Get Involved in Research?

All undergraduate students wanting to get involved in research do so through their own initiative. MCUR cannot find a research opportunity for you, but we can advise you on a search strategy for finding opportunities and point you towards appropriate resources.

When starting a search:

- Think carefully about whether you can commit to spending six to ten hours per week during the semester to working on a faculty-mentored research project. Your course work should be your priority, so do not take on a research project if it will put your academic work in jeopardy.
- Start by talking with people you already know—Talk to your current or past professors or your undergraduate major advisor.
- Survey the research being done by faculty members in your department or major. (The Research in My Major page on the MCUR website includes links to faculty directories for each academic department and program).
- Identify faculty members whose research looks interesting to you.
HOW CAN I EARN CREDIT FOR RESEARCH?

• Navigate to [http://www.ugresearch.umd.edu/current-researchinmajor.html](http://www.ugresearch.umd.edu/current-researchinmajor.html)
NEXT STEPS:

• Assess how ready you are to pursue a research opportunity.
• Get started on your search for a research opportunity that is a good fit for you by talking with professors, peers, etc.
• Make an appointment to talk with MCUR staff about your plans and interests.
• Be realistic – the best way to find a rewarding first research experience is to be flexible, be willing to take ‘no’ for an answer, and be willing to learn.
• Be organized about your search.
• Be persistent – it can take a semester or more to find the right fit for you.