Finding a Summer Research Experience

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TEXAS INSTITUTE OF DISCOVERY EDUCATION IN SCIENCE
Serves as the clearinghouse for information on experiential learning opportunities in the sciences
Provides consultations and support for students interested in undergraduate research
Connects students to international study, internship and entrepreneurship opportunities
Hosts the annual Undergraduate Research Forum, the College's annual research symposium
Organizes events and workshops on experiential learning opportunities throughout the year
Why Summer Research?

Overview
- Competitive
- Formal Application Process
- Strict Deadlines
- Hosted at institutes, universities & agencies across the country
- Full-time (paid!) employment for eight to ten weeks

Benefits
- Skills heavy experiential learning
- Network building opportunities
- Direction over scope of project
- Explore research career paths avenues
- Travel!

Common Types
- Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU)
- Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP)
- Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF)
How to Find a Program

Academic Aggregators
- National Science Foundation
- Professional Societies
- Pathways to Science
- Science.gov
- TIDES Portal
- CNS Health Professions
- CNS Study Abroad Office

Government Institutes
- ORISE
- National Institute of Health
- US Department of Agriculture
- Food and Drug Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Defense
Determining Program Fit

How to Figure Out if a Program is Right for You!

**Topic**
Does the program cover a topic that either relates to or complements your interests well?

**Location**
How comfortable do you feel being in a different state or country? If they don't offer travel compensation, will you be able to get to the location comfortably?

**Dates**
What other engagements will you have over the summer? Does the program work around those priorities?

**Benefits**
Does the program cover any resources you might need? This includes monetary compensation and/or disability accommodations.

**Structure**
Are you looking for a program that's structured for you or something that offers you more independent direction?
How has the coronavirus changed summer programs?

• Great question!
• There's currently no one-size-fits-all answer to this question.
• Some are offering in-person, hybrid and virtual options.
• Some are only virtual options or have decided to cancel the program for this summer.
• Others have open applications, with the amendment of programs potentially having to be shut down in the event of a surge in coronavirus cases.
• We recommend frequently checking the web page with the program description for the most up-to-date info.
Read carefully! Not all applications have the same requirements. For those that do, take some time to come up with unique personal statements and supplements for each of them. Tailoring applications by researching the culture of the institution can be impactful and set you apart from applicants.
Exercise:

What do you think are the most important things to include in a personal statement?
Personal Statement

1. Read the prompt.
2. Show your story. Paint a mental picture for the reader of you are!
   a. The best litmus test is if you can hand the application to friends and family and they can immediately tell it's your unique voice.
3. Use specific anecdotes and examples of your experiences to show how you are a good fit for opportunity.
4. Make it clear that you understand the opportunity by referring to the program description or specific faculty who are involved.
5. Explain how this opportunity will help you achieve your goals and future plans.
6. Write clearly & have multiple people proof-read your work. For writing assistance, visit the University Writing Center.
A Guide to Asking for Recommendation Letters

1. Select someone you think will be supportive.
2. Ask someone before you list them as a reference.
3. Waive your right to read the letter.
4. Provide any necessary materials such as information about yourself, your portfolio, resume, personal statements, etc.
5. Give them enough time to write it.
6. Send a thank you note.
Exercise
Which email do you think professors will be more receptive to?

Hey Dr.----:

   My name is -----. I was in your CH 301 class 2 years ago. You might remember me. I would like to ask for a recommendation letter for my application to a summer research position.

Thank you, Student A

Dear Dr.-----

   I hope this email finds you well. My name is -- -. I was in your CH 301 class a year ago. I enjoyed that class very much, and I am writing to ask if you would write a letter of recommendation on my behalf. I am applying for.....

During the past year, I have been....For your convenience and more information, I have attached my resume and the personal. I will be glad to meet with you in person to discuss the letter and the opportunities I am considering.

Sincerely, Student B
Resume Assistance

CNS Career Services offers:

- Resume resources – guides, templates, formatting tips
- All assistance is currently being offered virtually
- Connect with Career Coaches at cns.utexas.edu/career-services
TIDES Support

TIDES will review your completed summer program application materials

- Email your materials to tides@cns.utexas.edu
- Allow at least one week for review
- Set an appointment to go over comments and suggestions