Getting Involved in Undergraduate Research
How to find a research experience at UT Austin

Texas Institute of Discovery Education in Science (TIDES)
Why do research?

- Networking
- Rec letters
- Knowledge
- Self-discovery
- Skills
- Grad school
- MORE!
When do I start?
Step 1: Explore your interests.

- What are you interested in? What excites you? What drew you to science?
- Search key words on the Eureka database [www.utexas.edu/research/eureka/](http://www.utexas.edu/research/eureka/)
- Browse faculty websites. Read research summaries, and see what catches your interest.
EUREKA is a searchable database designed to support undergraduate participation in research and creative activity across campus. EUREKA includes profiles for University of Texas at Austin faculty members with information about their research interests and links to their department web pages.

STUDENTS: Using EUREKA, you can identify faculty who are doing research that matches your interests and search for research opportunities. Enter keywords into the search bar above to find faculty members who share your interests. EUREKA only lists exact keyword matches, so if you don't get the results you're looking for right away, try other related keywords. Be sure to search for more general terms as well as specific ones. For example, if you don't get many search results for "second language acquisition," try "bilingualism" or "linguistic" to find professors who may study similar topics.

EUREKA also offers a projects section where you may view research assistant positions posted by faculty members. Many of these projects are ongoing, so don't be afraid to look at projects that were posted several months ago. The projects list is by no means comprehensive; faculty members may be willing to work with you even if they have not posted an opening.

Examples: Bilingualism, Civil War, Education Inequality, Genetics, International Business, Modernism, Urban Policy
Browse CNS faculty websites.

**DEPARTMENTS AND MORE**

**RESEARCH AREAS**
- Bioanalytical Chemistry
- Bioinorganic Chemistry
- Bioorganic Chemistry
- Biophysics
- Catalysis
- Chemical Biology
- Chemical Physics and Dynamics
- Chemical Theory and Computation
- Drugs, Drug Discovery & Diagnostics

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Step 2: Prepare for contact

• Plan to contact 2 or 3 people. (Hint: talk to your friends, professors and TAs for suggestions too!)

• Find the list of recent publications by this person; browse titles and abstracts. (Use google scholar.)
Step 3: Contact Faculty

What should you include in an e-mail?

• Keep it short (3-4 sentences)
• Introduce yourself
• Explain how your interests are directly related to theirs
• Mention your plan to volunteer for 10-20 hrs/week for a semester or summer
• Consider attaching a resume (include lab techniques, research experience, programming abilities)
• Ask for a meeting
Sample email

Dear Dr. ______, 

My name is ___________, and I am a ___________ year ________ major interested in conducting research related to _______________. I have read your recently published articles on _______________ and find them very interesting and relevant to my goal of _______________. I would like to speak with you about your research and the possibility of assisting you on your projects.

Is there a convenient time for me to stop by? I am available from ___________ to ___________ during the week.

Thank you,

___________
Step 4: Meet with Faculty

Prepare to answer these kinds of questions:

1. What type of project are you interested in working on in my lab?
2. How could you potentially contribute to a project in my lab?
3. How much time can you dedicate to research? (hrs/week and number of semesters)
4. I don’t have any funding to pay an undergraduate, are you still interested in doing research?
5. I don’t have any space in my lab right now. Do you have any other questions for me?
Step 5: Follow Through!

What if all goes well and you join a lab?

- Clear communication is important
- Negotiate a plan with your faculty mentor. Ask Key questions like
  - May I register for a research course with you, such as CH369K, BIO377, and UGS310?
  - Is there a weekly lab meeting I should plan to attend?
  - Who should I schedule my lab time with?
  - Is there any reading I should do to prepare?
  - What other expectations do you have?
- Keep your commitment. Ask if anything is unclear.
Recap

1. Explore your interests.
2. Prepare for contact.
3. Contact the faculty member(s).
4. Meet with the faculty member(s).
5. Follow through and do research!
Walk-in advising each week
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Tuesdays 1-3pm
Thursdays 10am-12noon

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