



THE OFFICE FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

How to Become a Part of the UNC-CH Research Community: A Guide for Carolina Research Scholars

Where will your curiosity lead you? We at the Office for Undergraduate Research (OUR) are eager to provide the information and resources that you need to engage in original inquiry, scholarship and creative work while you are an undergraduate. The way YOU will choose to get started in undergraduate research is up to you—there are many “right answers”. We welcome you to the Carolina research community!

What is the research community? Faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, undergraduates and research support staff across disciplines make up the dynamic research community at UNC. Within this community, undergraduates can find opportunities to learn, connect with research mentors and other undergraduates, and engage in research, mentored scholarship and creative performance.

What are the advantages of participating in the research community? By engaging in research as an undergraduate, you will learn to apply what you know and are studying to new issues that interest you, and have the opportunity to influence others. Along the way, you are likely to develop new skills, meet others with similar interests, gain confidence, define your own style, deepen your connections to the Carolina community, and use your experiences to help you choose a future career path. You may also create new works that are appreciated by the campus community and beyond, experience the joys of scholarship and the thrill of discovery, and watch with pride as your ideas are adapted and implemented by others.

Where can I find the research community? Researchers and scholars are on campus working in places such as labs, performance spaces, libraries and special collections, individual offices and special research centers; and they're working off campus, investigating, collecting data through fieldwork, experiments and interviews, doing oral histories and ethnographic research, using archives, and creating through performance. You can also find members of the research community in courses and department seminars discussing ideas, methods and findings.

Where can I find other undergraduates doing research, scholarship or creative performance? You can find substantive numbers of undergraduates participating in research in every department across the four divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences, and in the twelve Professional Schools. More than 50% of the faculty across disciplines in the College of Arts and Sciences report mentoring undergraduates in research last year. This number includes 56% of the faculty in Fine Arts, 49% in Humanities, 54% in Natural Sciences and Math; and 54% in Social Sciences. Regardless of your research path, we suggest that an integrated and continuing process involving learning, connecting with the research community and engaging fully in research will make your years at Carolina remarkable!

What are some useful resources to support my research? **Office for Undergraduate Research** University Libraries (including the Rare Book Collection and the Southern Historical Collection) **Odum Institute for Research in Social Science** Office for Human Research Ethics **Office of Research Services: Internal Funding Database** Center for Global Education **Honors Program**

I. Learn

Explore new areas and learn more about what interests you. Discover the research questions that peak your curiosity and begin to ask your own questions. Learn the methods of the discipline that will enable you to pursue your questions. And learn what research questions others are interested in at UNC, nationally and internationally.

A. Take courses.

- Enroll in a research-exposure [First Year Seminar](#) .
- Enroll in IDST195, [Modes of Inquiry](#), to learn about faculty research in many disciplines.
- Take short courses on research methods in your discipline such as those offered by the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science.
- Enroll in courses that are research-exposure or research-intensive (OUR website).

B. Attend department or center/institute research symposia and colloquia.

C. Read academic research journals in your area of interest.

D. Work and learn experientially.

II. Connect

Connect with others in the research community and find ways to do your own research. An important step in this process is to find a research mentor to help you get started and to advise you during your research. Your research mentor can be a faculty member, a postdoctoral fellow, or a graduate student. There are many excellent mentors at UNC but finding the right mentor for your research likely will take initiative and perseverance on your part.

A. Connect with faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students.

- Check department websites for faculty research interests and current projects.
- Review the current postings in the Database of Research Opportunities (OUR website).
- Talk with faculty in your courses about their research interests.
- Ask graduate student teaching assistants (GTAs) and graduate student research consultants (GRCs) about their research interests, and about other research on campus.
- Request assistance from University librarians concerning Carolina faculty research expertise, publications and performances, and review the websites of faculty whose work interests you.
- Request a meeting with a potential mentor to explain your research interests.

B. Connect with other undergraduates.

- Find out what students with interests similar to yours have accomplished by looking at their research summaries and abstracts of work they have presented at the Annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research, and plan to attend the next symposium (OUR website).
- Talk to students you know who are doing research and ask them for mentor suggestions and effective ways to contact those mentors.

C. Connect with Directors of Undergraduate Studies

Each department in the College of Arts and Sciences has a Director of Undergraduate Studies. This faculty member is the point person for the undergraduate curriculum in a department and may be able to give you information about courses that offer research opportunities. They may also be able to suggest connections between your research interests and faculty doing similar work.

III. Engage

A. Plan and carry out your research, scholarship and/or creative work in your courses or during the summer with a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship.

B. Present your research findings at campus symposia and professional meetings, and publish your work.

C. Mentor other undergraduates by joining the OUR Speaker's Bureau, Peer Advisor Program, and/or Ambassadors Program.

D. Register for the Carolina Research Scholars Program (CRSP).

Wherever your curiosity leads you, continue to learn, connect, and engage!