

Learning about Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities at Michigan State University

Goals

- Introduce students to the components of undergraduate research.
- Share diverse undergraduate research experiences and projects.
- Facilitate conversations among students about their research interests.
- Provide resources for participants to search and learn about undergraduate research opportunities.

Exploring your research interests

1. What are some of your general interests?

2. What was your most interesting class?

3. Is there a problem/issue you wanted to understand some more?

Identifying a potential research mentor

- Visit your department/major faculty website
- Browse faculty profiles
- Utilize scholars.msu.edu to learn more about the types of research faculty are conducting

Reaching out to faculty – Some considerations

- An initial interest email does not need to be too long, you want to express interest in their research first.
- Talk about your needs later. You may “need” an experience for graduate school, but this does not necessarily promote greater engagement with the faculty member.
- With email, be professional and brief by stating the context of why you interested and your desired outcome of the meeting or experience. Remember to Follow-up if there is no response, but do not pester them too much because faculty are busy too.
- A recommended timeline is to follow-up two weeks after the initial email was sent and then maybe a month later. Keep in mind, because of their busy schedules, sometimes they will not respond until the end of the semester. In fact, for some, it took a year to get a response from faculty, so be patient.
- We suggest you apply to 3-5 positions at a time and contact a good variety of disciplines
- Last, get help from your neighborhood engagement center or the writing center!

Sample Email

Hello Dr. _____,

I recently learned about your research on _____. I am thinking about [this aspect of research] because _____. Based in your expertise on _____, I would like to talk about _____.

I would be very interested in meeting with you. What is the best way to schedule a meeting with you? Please advise.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.
Regards,
Suzie Spartan

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FIND UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

<p>Find a project or position on Handshake, MSU's online job board for students</p>	<p>www.careernetwork.msu.edu</p> <p>The Handshake platform is MSU's first stop for all student jobs, internships, career events, and more. Using the platform provides a convenient way for students to search for research openings and other jobs. Students from across the university can search by keywords, such as "research" and filter by location, such as "on-campus."</p>
<p>Inquire with Faculty and Academic Advisors in your college</p>	<p>https://scholars.msu.edu/dashboard</p> <p>Many faculty find undergraduate researchers through the courses they teach. Talk about research opportunities to your professors and graduate teaching assistants. Academic advisors are also a great resource. Talk to your advisor about specific opportunities that they might know about in your college.</p>
<p>Attend Workshops for Undergraduate Researchers</p>	<p>http://urca.msu.edu/event</p> <p>Open to the entire campus and addresses topics such as learning about undergraduate research, academic integrity, troubleshooting your research experience, finding an REU, how to create a research poster and write an abstract.</p>

FIND UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FUNDING

<p>Conference Travel Support for Students</p>	<p>http://urca.msu.edu/funding</p> <p>Matching funding is available for undergraduate students presenting research or creative work at regional and national meetings. The students' research mentor, academic department, or college must contribute towards the expenses in addition to the UR Office.</p>
<p>Research Abroad Scholarships</p>	<p>https://educationabroad.isp.msu.edu/students/getting-started/compare-programs/research/</p> <p>Financial support for students to participate in approved accredited study abroad programs that have an undergraduate research component. Applicants must be MSU undergraduate students with a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher at the time of application and have applied for a research study abroad program. Financial need is not a factor in awarding this scholarship. Scholarships of \$500 will be awarded twice a year with the application cycle taking place in October for spring semester programs and in February for programs taking place in summer, fall or full academic year.</p>

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