

Getting Started with Research at UCSB

More than half of UCSB undergraduates participate in some sort of research or creative activity during their time at UC Santa Barbara. Interested in becoming one of them? Read on!

How to get started:

- 1. Identify Areas of Research:** Visit your department's research page and read the descriptions for the research areas. Identify one or more areas that sound interesting to you. If you want to know more about research in general, go to your Professor and TA's office hours and ask them about their research. They can tell you about their experiences in the department and why they do research.
- 2. Identify Faculty Aligning with Your Interest:** Look through your department's faculty page and read the research descriptions for faculty members who fit your research area of interest. Identify a few faculty members you would like to contact about their research. Don't forget about the professors you currently have class with. Get to know what research they are working on and see where you can fit in.

You may find it easier to build the connection with faculty first, and then see what research they are doing. Get to know your professors when you go to office hours and then perhaps ask about their research. This can be a more effective intro than sending cold emails, although this is completely fine too!

- 3. Reach Out:** Send emails to the faculty members you've chosen. Ask if they would be available to meet with you to talk about their research and the possibility of joining their labs. You can also reach out to your teaching assistants (TAs), both past and present, to talk about their work as graduate students. See email templates from the Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities (URCA) office and/or meet with an URCA representative to get help with writing emails.
- 4. Have that first meeting:** Come prepared with a few questions about their research/projects. If they don't have a position available now, it is okay to ask them for recommendations on courses or activities to prepare you to participate in their lab in the future.

Looking for Research Opportunities: Search for open research opportunities at UCSB. Here are a few places to start:

- Undergraduate Research Assistant Project Directory
- UCSB Undergraduate Research Programs & Opportunities
- Early Research Scholars Program (CS & CE)
- Center for Science and Engineering Partnerships (CSEP)
- Materials Research Laboratory (MRL) Undergraduate Opportunities
- National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergrads