

Quick Tip Sheet

Finding a Research Opportunity

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What is it?

Participating in research as an undergraduate can involve assisting with many of the steps of conducting research such as collecting/analyzing data, running experiments, reporting findings, etc. You will be working with a team of individuals to provide potential explanations for phenomenon or solutions for problems which can take months or years.

Why Research?

Participating in research is a great way for students to explore the many unique career areas that their major can offer. Research also provides students with valuable experience on their resume to prepare for the job search. Additionally, research is sometimes required for students to continue on with education, particularly graduate school.

Am I Qualified?

Many students have concerns that they may not be qualified to do conduct research. However, there are various programs and opportunities for students as early as freshman year to engage in research. For example, it is very common for professors to take on interns who have had no prior experience but instead showcase a motivation and work ethic to want to learn and get more involved in their respective field. There are even research programs that specifically provide opportunities for students who have various identity characteristics.

Research Opportunities Outside of URI

Many other college and universities have their own research programs that are open to all students. These opportunities are more commonly referred to as *Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs)*. REUs are structured research opportunities at institutions that are often paid and made available all throughout the academic year but are more popular during the summer. Explore the links below for more information regarding REUs.

National Science Foundation REUs Master List - https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.jsp

REUs in Ecology, Plant Biology, and Animal & Marine Sciences - <https://people.rit.edu/~gtfsbi/Symp/ecology.htm>

Pathways to Science REU Search Engine - <https://www.pathwaystoscience.org/undergrads.aspx>

Participating in Research at URI

There are numerous opportunities for URI students to get involved in research right here in Rhode Island. Below is a brief overview of some of the structured research programs at URI as well as additional methods for getting involved with research at URI.

Coastal Environmental Fellowship Program

The Coastal and Environmental Fellowship program provides URI undergraduate students with opportunities to participate in ongoing environmental research, education, or public outreach programs designed to address current environmental and/or societal issues. Learn more at <https://web.uri.edu/coastalfellows/>

Science and Engineering Fellowship Program

The Science and Engineering Fellows program provides students from under-represented populations with interdisciplinary experience addressing real-world challenges. Learn more at <https://web.uri.edu/cels/diversity/sef/>

Energy Fellowship Program

The Energy Fellowship Program provides students with experiential learning opportunities with top energy companies and organizations. Learn more at <https://web.uri.edu/coopext/energy-fellows-program/>

Additional Helpful Links for Research Opportunities at URI

College of Environment and Life Sciences Research Hub - <https://web.uri.edu/cels/research/>

Research with Professors

URI professors are here at the university to not only teach classes but also to conduct research. Professors need the help of undergraduate students to assist them with their research. As a research assistant, you may be involved in all of or some of the processes involved with conducting research.

How do I do it?

With REUs and many other structured research opportunities, the process for acquiring them is fairly self-explanatory: simply complete the requested application materials and you are on your way! However, for getting involved with a professor's research here at URI, it's a bit more of a self-directed process. Here's a few ways that you can initiate that process:

- Professors typically make announcements in class or via email about themselves or a colleague needing a student to assist with research. Follow-up with them when you hear about these opportunities during their office hours or via email.
- Many faculty/professors at URI have their research interests posted on the URI website. If you go to your major department's website and click on the "Faculty/Staff" tab, you will see a list of all the professors within that department. From there, you can click onto professors' biographies to learn more.
- Directly contact a professor to schedule a time to discuss their research or inquire about assisting with their research.

~Sample Email Requesting for Meeting to Discuss Research~

Hello Dr. _____,

My name is Gene Yuss and I am currently a sophomore biology student here at URI. I have interests within plant biology and genetics and noticed that your research program focuses on developing an understanding for molecular genetic mechanisms within plants that specifically focus on regulating gene activity. I have recent completed BIO 102 and will be taking genetics next semester. I would love to stop by your office hours or schedule a time to learn more about your research and potentially determine if I would be able to assist you with your research.

Thank you for taking the time to reading this email. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Gene Yuss



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