Undergraduate Research at the UW

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What is research?
Research is...

A creative and systematic process of asking questions and discovering new knowledge
This is what research looks like.
UW is a Research Institution

- Faculty in all disciplines do research
- In 2018, UW received over $1,350,000,000 in grants and contracts for research

UW awarded $23.5M to build floating robots as part of NSF project to monitor the world’s oceans

The University of Washington is among leading U.S. oceanographic institutions that have received National Science Foundation funding to build and deploy 500 robotic ocean-monitoring floats to monitor the chemistry and biology of the world’s oceans.

Read more
1. Use & gain knowledge
2. Apply yourself to real world problems
3. Build relationships & career connections
4. Explore what you like and dislike
5. Earn credit or get paid for your experiences

Why do research?
Ask Yourself Some Questions

> What do you like?
> What do you want to learn more about?
> What questions do you have about the world?
> What field or career do you want to explore?
> Don’t limit yourself to a specific field or major!
The Office of Undergraduate Research helps students engage in research through **multiple pathways**, and **find a mentor** that is a good fit for them!
How do I reach out?

> Do your homework
> Think about transferable skills
> Send an introductory email
  – Practice timely communication
Do your homework

> Read about the mentor’s past work
  – check out their previous students’ work for inspiration

> Take note about the specific aspects of their work that interest you

> Think of questions to ask

> Prepare to be asked, “Why does this specific project interest you”
Think about transferable skills

Reflect!

– Consider a previous non-research experience you had. What skill(s) may be useful in a research context?
Send an introductory email

Introductory Email About Research Opportunities

In this document, we will provide guidance on how to construct a brief introductory email that can be sent to a potential mentor about engaging in research.

Why do I need to send an introductory email?

The email allows you to introduce yourself to a potential mentor who would oversee your research experience and to set an appointment (in person or online) to discuss opportunities further. Introducing yourself via email is a good way to start the process of securing an academic research position that does not have a formal application process.

If the research role has a formal application, an introductory email helps the research mentor remember who you are when they review your applications.

Who can I send an introductory email to?

Introductory emails about possible research opportunities can be sent to a faculty member, postdoctoral scholar, graduate student, teaching/research assistant, or other academic researcher. Many students feel intimidated by the idea of ‘cold’ emailing mentors. Remember, mentors are accustomed to receiving these types of emails. It’s normal to them, don’t be afraid to reach out!

Tips When Sending an Introductory Email:

1. Whenever possible, use your UW email address so they know you’re a UW student
2. Keep your email brief, three short paragraphs maximum
3. It is completely optional to attach a resume, CV (a resume that highlights experiences favorable for research roles), or transcript in an introductory email
4. Attachments should be in PDF format with a professional naming system (e.g. “Last Name_Transcript”)
Meeting a potential mentor

> Be punctual & thank them for their time

> Ask questions

  – about their research

  – about their professional journey

  – about possible opportunities
Next steps

> Explore our website for resources and opportunities
  – Subscribe to the newsletter
  – Schedule an advising appointment
  – Come to Research Café (First Friday of every month from 12:30-2pm)
QUESTIONS?
FAQs

> How do I know when I’m ready for research? I haven’t taken any classes in my major yet...

> How do I balance research with my classes/work/life?

> How many hours per week do I need to do research?

> How do I find a research opportunity?

> Can I get academic credit?

> Can I get funding to do research?