

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Identify Your Research Interests

The first step in getting involved in research as an undergraduate is to figure out what you want to work on. This is a critical step in helping you narrow down potential faculty, projects, or programs to explore further. Most likely, you are still discovering and developing your interests, and that's okay. However, without having some ideas about what you're interested in, you'll quickly find that searching for opportunities can be overwhelming. This handout will help you think through and identify what you may want to research. Then complete the form on the next page and bring it with you when you meet with the Division of Biological Sciences Director of Undergraduate Research.

Map Your Interests

- What subjects covered in biology interest you most?
- Which class(es) have been the most interesting, and what specifically made them interesting?
- What questions or problems are you most interested in exploring?
- What other topics are you interested in outside of Biological Sciences?
- What research topics relate to your hobbies, personal interests, or extracurricular activities?
- Are there specific skills you are interested in developing that aren't addressed by your major?
- Lastly, think a little bit about the things you know you don't want to do or are not interested in and make a note of them

Talk to People

- Meet with an Undergraduate [Research Ambassador](#), who can give you a student's perspective on doing research.
- Talk to fellow classmates who are already doing research to get their advice and pointers.
- Ask your TA. They work closely with professors and will know about research projects. Plus, they were recently undergrads and will have valuable advice.
- Your academic advisor also is a good resource and may point you to labs who fit your interest.

What Experience Do You Want?

- Do you want to work in a lab, in the field, or with computers?
- Do you prefer to work on a larger research project, or do you want to do your own original research?
- Do you prefer to be part of a big team or to work one-on-one with a faculty member or a graduate student?
- Do you want to do research to deepen your understanding/experience of the life sciences or do you want to learn a particular method, skill?
- When do you want to get involved in research: during the academic year or during the summer, or both?
- How much time do you have to devote to research?
- What do you want to get out of your experience: course credit, compensation, experience?

Do Some Homework

- Read faculty research descriptions on departmental websites. Identify at least one thing about each person's research that seems "cool" to you and that you would like to know more about.
- Attend seminars and other science-related presentations and talks.
- Sign up for the "Getting Started in Undergraduate Research" [workshop](#) and the Student Training for Advancing Research ([STAR](#)) program sponsored by the MU Office of Undergraduate Research.



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INTERESTS

What subjects covered in biology interest you most and why?

What topics are you interested in outside of Biological Sciences?

Are there any research topics that relate to your hobbies, personal interests, extracurricular activities, or career goals?

Are there specific skills you are interested in developing that aren't addressed by your major?

DESIRED EXPERIENCE

I would prefer to do research (check all that apply):

- in a lab at the bench in the field with computers
 on a large research project as part of a team on my own original research
 during the academic semester during the summer
 for course credit for capstone credit for compensation

Other preferences:

What do you hope to gain from your research experience (e.g., learn a new skill, deepen your understanding of a particular topic in science, pursue an interest, prep for medical school)

How many hours per week do you have to devote to research?

POTENTIAL LABS/MENTORS

List 3 labs/mentors who interest you and one "cool thing" about their research

Lab/Mentor		Cool thing	
Lab/Mentor		Cool thing	
Lab/Mentor		Cool thing	

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE

