



Gaining Research Experience

Supervised Research Experience

- ✓ If you have been attending university for any length of time, you have probably conducted research. In general, research is the prolonged study of a subject and results in a final product such as an article, paper, or presentation
- ✓ For those pursuing a career in academia, a background in research is vital. Most graduate schools are looking for innovative students to bolster their ranks, and there is no better way to prove your academic worth than solid research experience
- ✓ Research can be beneficial if you are pursuing a non-academic career as it provides practical experience
- ✓ Research can also be of personal importance, as it can expand your career and academic horizons in new and unexpected directions

Getting Your Foot in the Door

Gaining supervised research experience can prove challenging, especially while engaging in your undergraduate studies.

Volunteer

- ✓ Hospitals, charities, and non-profit organizations are common places to engage in volunteer research work. They frequently have positions available in a number of fields, from life sciences to social work
- ✓ These volunteer opportunities are competitive, which means that it is important to apply with a well-developed résumé and cover letter
- ✓ Be sure to pick up your copy of the *Volunteering* tip sheet which lists several suggestions and resources

Supervised Study Courses

- ✓ Another excellent method of gaining research experience is through a supervised study course. Offered in the majority of programs, these courses allow students to conduct an extensive examination of literature in a selected topic, or perform laboratory and/or field work in their area of study
- ✓ In order to qualify for a course, students must locate a professor who will agree to supervise the course, and register for it. For further information, consult the course calendar or see your Program Supervisor

Research Assistantships

- ✓ Working as a Research Assistant (RA) provides experience in research methodology and hones your expertise in a particular field. It also allows you to work alongside a professor, focusing on one or more developed research projects
- ✓ During August/September and April/May across all three campuses, research positions are posted through the Work-Study program and in On-Campus jobs on the Career Learning Network (cln.utoronto.ca)

Develop Your Research Network

The best way to obtain an RA position is to get to develop a good relationship with your professors and thereby build networks in your field of study.

- ✓ Demonstrate an interest in their research by attending office hours
- ✓ Once they get to know you, inquire about their current research projects and whether they are in need of additional help
- ✓ Find out if they are willing to share contacts
- ✓ Ask friends, family, colleagues, etc., if they are aware of any professors currently involved in research

Studentships and Fellowships

- ✓ Studentships and fellowships are awarded at both the undergraduate and graduate level
- ✓ The terms 'studentship' and 'fellowship' are often used interchangeably; however, studentship tends to refer to undergraduate positions and fellowship tends to refer to graduate/post-doctoral positions
- ✓ Studentships provide students with the opportunity to work on a research project in an academic, laboratory or clinical setting, generally under the guidance of a supervisor who is established in the field. These positions are essentially research internships and usually present with a stipend attached. The level of compensation varies between studentships
- ✓ Visit your department and check the bulletin boards for research opportunities
- ✓ Many programs and departments (particularly in the sciences) maintain a collection of resources on studentships. Visit your department for more information

Research Opportunity Websites

- ✓ **Career Learning Network (CLNx)** – clnx.utoronto.ca
- ✓ **U of T Scarborough Library Undergraduate Research Prize and Forum** – www.utsc.utoronto.ca/research/u-t-scarborough-library-prize-and-forum
- ✓ **Undergraduate Research Opportunities**
glse.utoronto.ca/undergraduate-research-opportunities
- ✓ **How to find an undergraduate research opportunity in Life Sciences at U of T**
glse.utoronto.ca/how-find-undergraduate-research-opportunity-life-sciences-university-toronto
- ✓ **Undergraduate Summer Research Awards**
www.physiology.utoronto.ca/undergraduate-summer-research-awards
- ✓ **Summer Undergraduate Research Program**
ims.utoronto.ca/programs/summer-undergraduate

Please note: While every effort is made to avoid errors, information is subject to change. This tip sheet is intended as an informational document only.

Need More Help? Please visit the AA&CC and speak with with a career counsellor or employment coach.