Undergraduate research is an eye-opening experience! Experience in a research laboratory opens up career opportunities and perspectives that classroom education is unable to provide, improves your critical thinking skills, and will give you an appreciation of the research process.

There are nearly 2500 biology majors at GSU. GSU has a strong biological research program with opportunities for committed undergraduates to be involved. As you explore your options, you need to embrace the following principles:

- I must possess excellent work ethic.
- I must be independent, persistent, and reliable.
- I must be informed about the research of faculty prior to requesting an opportunity to serve in their laboratory.
- I must respect the substantial time, effort, and research funds faculty invest to train and professionally develop undergraduate researchers in their lab.

**How do I find a host research laboratory?**

Note: Your interest in research must be genuine. Faculty look very poorly on student efforts solely intended to improve a resume in preparation or gain recommendation for medical school.

1. **Plan on working with a faculty researcher for at least 2 semesters and for no fewer than 10 hours per week** (in focused blocks of at least 3 hours).
2. **Read individual faculty research summaries on the Biology website** ([http://www.biology.gsu.edu/1343.html](http://www.biology.gsu.edu/1343.html)).
3. **Familiarize yourself with at least 3 articles written by potential faculty mentors** and summarize, in writing, why their research interests you. Many of their articles can be found by searching PubMed ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed)). This process sets you up for success and will establish you as a serious candidate for research opportunities.
4. **Prepare a resume specifically for seeking a research position.** Effective resumes appear professional and are grammatically correct. Include your GPA on your resume. (You will be asked for it! Bear in mind that faculty will likely only consider you for their laboratory with a **minimum** overall GPA of 3.0.) Emphasize strengths that you feel will be valuable in a laboratory context. Reliability (showing up on time, every time), problem solving skills, independence (searching for solutions to difficulties on your own and planning the next step prior to seeking help in a work setting), and thinking outside the box (novel hypotheses are great to hear from students!) are rare but important qualities for you to cultivate.
5. **Write, edit, and rewrite your introductory email to the faculty member,** asking if they are available at a specific date and time to meet in person. A single introductory email may take you 20-30 minutes to write! Extensive effort in preparing an introductory email greatly improves your probability of being received well. (I suggest that you begin your email with the formal introduction "Dear Dr. __________,.") Mention in your email why their research interests you, referring to one or two of the papers you read in Step #2. Conclude your email with a request to follow-up in person at a specific day in the coming 2 weeks. **Attach your resume to the email.**
Getting involved in research via the Undergraduate Research Center

The Department of Biology at Georgia State University is committed to undergraduate academic excellence, and research exposure is an essential element of developing well-rounded students with critical thinking skills and readiness for the demands of the work environment of the future. Consistent with this commitment, students in the Department of Biology are encouraged to pursue lecturer-supervised, research projects in the Undergraduate Research Center (URC). The URC is located in Kell Hall 406 and 407. The undergraduate laboratories in Kell Hall are outfitted with equipment that will accommodate projects spanning organismal, cell, and molecular biology. With this set of tools, undergraduates can participate in projects in a wide array of research projects.

How do I get involved? Research activities in the URC are available only with the oversight of a faculty mentor.

1. Seek out a faculty mentor.
2. Work with your faculty mentor to identify a project and determine if space and resources are available to perform research in the URC.
3. Faculty mentor and students must be approved by the URC laboratory coordinator and meet training requirements.

Approval by the URC coordinator is necessary when any new person is involved in research in the URC. A complete research summary form must be submitted by the faculty mentor to the coordinator and approved prior to beginning work or access to the laboratory. Approval is contingent on availability of space in the URC.