

The ACES Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program



College of Agricultural,
Consumer &
Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Empowering Innovation and Discovery Since 1982

Introductory Overview

Since 1982, the College of ACES has been introducing highly qualified undergraduate students to the fascinating and challenging world of scientific research. Through the ACES Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program, you can investigate important scientific problems, generate new knowledge, increase your professional competency, and prepare yourself for even greater challenges in your future career. You can conduct your research project under faculty guidance comparable to that which is given to graduate students. This is an excellent opportunity for you to explore the rapidly expanding frontiers of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) research, meet major new intellectual challenges, and contribute to the development of new scientific knowledge.

You are eligible to apply for the ACES Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program if you meet the following general criteria:

- ✓ You are officially enrolled as a full-time student at the University of Illinois with a declared academic major in the College of ACES.
- ✓ Your GPA for your two most recent semesters is ≥ 3.00 .
- ✓ You will have attained sophomore, junior, or senior standing in your undergraduate degree program by the time that you start conducting the research or scholarly project.

Approved projects can be funded up to \$1,500, based on a project budget submitted with the proposal form. (Please see below for details.) In addition, **students with approved projects are also awarded a \$500 merit scholarship** for the academic term during which the project is begun. The applications for the supplemental travel award and the supplemental publication award need to be submitted separately.

At the conclusion of your project, you will need to provide an abstract of your research findings (usually 2-3 pages in length) to the Honors Director by emailing them to aces-jshp@illinois.edu. If you are an ACES James Scholar, then you will instead be required to present a poster display summarizing your research at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium (in April), a departmental meeting/seminar, or a professional/scientific conference.

How to Get Started

To get started on a research project, you will need an original idea, a helpful professor, and a sound proposal. There are several ways to take the first step on your pathway to discovery.

- ✓ Talk to your academic advisor and ask about faculty researchers in your home department.
- ✓ Go to your departmental homepage or the College of ACES website and look for faculty profiles. Often there is a listing of professors by "research interest." Write an email message to a professor and see if you can meet to discuss options.
- ✓ Talk with other students in your major. Ask them what kinds of research or scholarly projects they did and how they got started.
- ✓ Consult with your Departmental Honors Advisor, who can help you identify potential Faculty Mentors based on your and their fields of interest.

Note: When meeting with faculty members, always make sure that you have taken the time to investigate what kinds of research they do so that you will be able to explain your thoughts and ideas clearly and concisely.

Directory of Departmental Honors Advisors in the College of ACES

Department/Major	Honors Advisor	Email Address
ABE	Anne Marie Boone	<i>aboone@illinois.edu</i>
ACE	Lisa Gundersen	<i>lcgunder@illinois.edu</i>
ACES Undeclared	Logan Honegger	<i>lhonegg2@illinois.edu</i>
ALEC	Gary Ochs	<i>garyochs@illinois.edu</i>
ANSC	Alicia Schneider	<i>schneid6@illinois.edu</i>
CPSC	Patrick Tranel	<i>tranel@illinois.edu</i>
ETMAS	Travis Johnson	<i>travisj2@illinois.edu</i>
FSHN	Yuan-Xiang Pan	<i>yxpan@illinois.edu</i>
HDFS	Kelly Tu	<i>ktfrantz@illinois.edu</i>
NRES	Piper Hodson	<i>phodson@illinois.edu</i>

Application Process

Proposals for projects are accepted and reviewed on a semi-annual basis. Applications for fall semester projects are due by **May 1**, and applications for spring semester projects are due by **November 1**. You are strongly encouraged to choose a clearly defined topic for your research or scholarly project well in advance of your anticipated starting date. Application forms and additional information are available from <https://aces.illinois.edu/academics/scholarships-honors/undergraduate-research-scholarships>.

Preparing the Proposal Form

Project proposals should follow the format shown on the application form and are limited to 2-3 pages plus a title page. **An itemized budget, along with a signed note (or printed-out email message) from your Faculty Mentor, affirming the originality and appropriateness of your project, should also be attached to your application.** The signatures of your Faculty Mentor and your academic advisor (or the Honors Advisor in your department) need to appear on the completed application form. (The Honors Director will sign the form after it has been reviewed and approved.)

The project budget should itemize all funds necessary to support the proposed research. Allowable expenses include laboratory supplies, other disposable supplies, and off-campus travel necessary to collect data. **Funds may not be used for wages or major equipment purchases.**

Academic Credit

With your Faculty Mentor's approval, you may receive academic credit (usually one to four credit hours) by registering for a "Research or Thesis" course (usually listed among the **290s** or **390s** courses in your Faculty Mentor's department). As a rule, **396** courses are reserved for use by James Scholars and Chancellor's Scholars, and **295** courses should be used by all other ACES Undergraduate Researchers. (In the Department of Animal Sciences, **ANSC 398** may be used by all students.) The final course grade will be assigned by your Faculty Mentor after all project requirements have been met.

Presentation of Your Research Findings

All ACES Undergraduate Researchers are encouraged (and ACES James Scholars are required) to present their findings as a poster display at the Undergraduate Research Symposium (in April), a departmental meeting/seminar, or a professional/scientific conference. Additional information about preparing your

poster presentation is available from the Office of Undergraduate Research at <https://undergraduate-research.illinois.edu>.

Supplemental Travel and Publication Awards

If you write a paper or prepare a poster (based on your project) that you have been invited to present at a professional/scientific meeting, then you may apply for a travel award of up to **\$800** to help defray your travel expenses.

Projects that lead to publication of papers in peer-reviewed journals may qualify for up to **\$500** toward publication expenses. To qualify, the published paper needs to list you as an author or contributor and acknowledge the support of the ACES Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program.

Requests for supplemental funding should be emailed to aces-jshp@illinois.edu, using the forms provided at <https://aces.illinois.edu/academics/scholarships-honors/undergraduate-research-scholarships>. You will need to provide documentary evidence that an appropriate research/scholarly paper or poster has been scheduled for presentation and/or accepted for publication. **All travel award applications should be submitted at least thirty (30) days before the professional/scientific meeting takes place.**

The Undergraduate Research Certificate

All ACES Undergraduate Researchers are encouraged to consider the possibility of earning an Undergraduate Research Certificate through the Office of Undergraduate Research (<https://undergraduate-research.illinois.edu/students/research-certificate.html>). For ACES James Scholars, completing an Undergraduate Research Certificate can be substituted for one course with honors credit on the Honors Completion Plan.

Challenging Tomorrow's Scientists

Our resource systems in the agricultural, consumer, and environmental sciences are complex and rapidly changing. Advances in information technology and biotechnology serve to underline the profound importance of today's agricultural science to society. Scientists are using modern tools to improve the production and utilization of food, fiber, fuels, chemical feedstocks, and other agricultural-related commodities while preserving our fragile environment and depletable natural resources.

Tomorrow's scientists will be at the forefront of scientific investigation, exploring ever more sophisticated means of producing high-quality products, maximizing the use of our resources, and enhancing the quality of our daily lives. Many professionally trained graduates of the College of ACES will fill these critical roles. By providing opportunities for undergraduate researchers to investigate important scientific problems and present new knowledge, we seek to increase their professional competency and help them to prepare for even greater challenges in the global world that is their future.

Contact Information

The ACES James Scholar Honors Program
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