How do I get started?

1. Choose an area of research that interests you: Cardiology? Thermodynamics? Whatever topic you choose, be sure that you find it interesting so you can get the most out of your research experience.

2. Find a Faculty Mentor in that area of interest: You’ll need to find your own mentor. We recommend students do 2 things: 1) visit the Undergraduate Research Portal under the Academics tab on MyUCLA to view open, active research positions; and 2) Browse department websites to find faculty to contact directly. Make a list of at least 10 contacts from both department websites and the portal.

3. Draft your CV and cover letter: Visit the URC-Sciences website for sample cover letters and CV’s. We recommend sending the cover letter as the body of an email with your CV as an attachment. Send a follow up email if you don’t hear back within a week. Also utilize the Career Center and Writing Center for help writing a competitive CV.

4. Earn academic credit and funding for your research:

   SRP 99: Earn 1-2 units of credit of lower division credit and receive a Pass/No Pass grade at the end of the term. Great for entry-level research. Can be done during summer session as well.

   Departmental 199: Earn 4-5 units of upper division credit and receive a letter grade. Great for more advanced, independent research. Note: some departments require SRP 99 before 199. Check the requirements first!

Scholarships and Programs: URC-Sciences offers many opportunities for funding that transfer students of all backgrounds may be eligible for. Visit our office or visit our website to learn more!

Undergraduate Research Portal

The Undergraduate Research Portal is a platform on MyUCLA where faculty can post and advertise active research opportunities in their labs. This is a valuable resource for finding a lab to join.

Undergraduates also have the ability to create custom profiles for faculty to view. This means a faculty can contact students directly if their qualifications interest them.

The Portal can be accessed on MyUCLA under the “Academics” tab.

Keep in mind the opportunities posted on the Portal are not comprehensive of all opportunities available at UCLA. We recommend you also visit department websites’ faculty pages to find a faculty mentor you would be interested working with.

UCLA Undergraduate Research Center - Sciences

Research at UCLA for Prospective and Admitted Transfers

Office Information

Monday—Friday: 8am—5pm

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A guide to getting started in research, securing funding, and joining the UCLA research community.
**What is Research?**

- Research is independent study, usually done in a lab ran by a faculty mentor, or principal investigator (PI).
- Entry-level STEM research is usually done as part of a larger project in the lab. Tasks vary by lab and individual experience level.
- Research can require anywhere between 5-20 hours of work per week in lab. The schedule is determined by you and your PI or immediate supervisor.
- Research is an essential part of the UCLA educational experience as it allows you to immerse yourself in your field of interest.
- It also provides an opportunity to receive direct mentorship from experts in your field of interest.

**Why Does it Matter?**

- Research is essential for graduate school! Requirements vary depending on the program you are interested in but generally a minimum of 2 years of research is considered competitive.
- Building a relationship with a faculty mentor can set you up for success after you graduate. You can receive strong letters of recommendation for applications to medical school, graduate school, research career positions, and job opportunities.
- Once you are in a lab, you may be eligible to apply for funding!

**Tips for Prospective Transfers**

- Maintain a competitive GPA (3.25 minimum) especially in your STEM courses
- Meet with your Community College Academic Advisor before you matriculate to ensure you are enrolling in the proper STEM core and prerequisite courses, as required by UCLA for your major and to prepare you for your field of research
- Participate in any student research experiences available to you, such as summer research programs or volunteer experiences during the academic year. Previous research experience will make you a stronger candidate for a university research position sooner.

**Transfer Timeline**

**Fall Quarter/Quarter 1**

- Meet with your UCLA Academic Counselor to establish what your graduation timeline is and what your future goals are. If you are interested in graduate or professional school, the amount of research you need to be a competitive applicant may vary depending on the program(s) you are interested in. You may also discover you require a 3-year plan to graduate. If this is the case, you may be able to delay your start in research if necessary.
- Contact our office to learn how to get into faculty-mentored research at UCLA as well as programs we administer that support students professionally, academically, and financially.
- Start contacting faculty you are interested in working with beginning in Winter. This process is just like finding a job and can take anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 months. Get started on this early and be persistent!

**Winter Quarter/Quarter 2**

- Start faculty-mentored research
- Enroll in SRP-99 to receive academic credit for the time you spend in lab.
- Apply to URC-Sciences programs to secure funding (e.g. CARE Fellows)
- Begin looking for Summer Research opportunities at UCLA and other institutions

**Spring Quarter/Quarter 3**

- Enroll in SRP-99 or a departmental 199 to receive academic credit for the time you spend in lab
- Apply for scholarships for advanced student research programs (e.g. URSP, MARC, UC LEADS)
- Finalize your summer plans (research, school, etc.)

**When should I get started?**

Your time as a transfer is limited at UCLA so make sure you take advantage of your time here. From our experience, we recommend transfer students use their 1st quarter at UCLA to look for a lab to join but wait until their 2nd quarter to actually begin research.

There is a learning curve to adjusting to the quarter system and the rigor of UCLA coursework. While you know your own worth ethic and capabilities, you don’t want to take on more than you can handle too soon.