

READ ME

UC Davis Undergraduate Research Opportunities in Ecology and the Environmental Sciences

This resource is for any undergraduate interested in ecology research, including students from any department and those with no previous research experience. Before applying, work with one of the resources below to develop an introductory email and resume. Many students apply for these positions, and first impressions can make a difference.

Being involved in science research is different from taking a class for a grade. As part of a research team you will be expected to develop a level of responsibility and independence appropriate to the position. As with any job, you are expected to arrive on time and communicate any changes in your work schedule. Many research positions support the completion of specific tasks of a research project. If you decide that the work is not what you want to do and leave before a replacement can be secured, you could be jeopardizing the entire project. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, you are expected to follow through with the commitment you make when you accept a position.

Research can offer experience, skills, mentorship, networking, and (with good performance) recommendations. It is important to commit to work hard in any role you accept. Research can involve doing tedious tasks which are not directly related to your ultimate career goals. However, this work is important for science and develops skills and know-how needed for more advanced research.

Time Commitment

Commitments vary from just a few hours to multiple days each week for a quarter or more. Short-term positions can be a great opportunity to learn more about ecology research and increase your skillset. The experience will help you decide if you would like to apply for a long-term position. Sometimes short-term positions can lead to long-term positions. Positions with a long-term commitment are more likely to offer advanced level research opportunities, such as independent student research projects.

Compensation

This list has paid and unpaid positions, some of which also offer academic units or transcript notation.

Qualifications

Don't be afraid to think creatively about how the skills you've developed in previous experiences (including non-science jobs) may be applied to a new position. These are called "Transferable Skills," and there is more information about this in the UC Davis Career Resources Manual linked below.

How to apply

In addition to the requested application materials, you should be able to explain why you're interested in the specific position you're applying for. Do some research about the lab or field; do not send generic inquiries for research experience. See the resources below for examples of how to format your email. If the position requests references, there are two types: contact information for people who can serve as references (more common for undergraduate positions) and reference letters (less common).

Resources: [UC Davis Career Resources Manual](#), [UC Davis Undergraduate Research Center](#), & [UC Davis Internship and Career Center](#)