



CNRE Research Support Fund – Undergraduate Research Fellowship

Funding for Spring 2023

Deadline: November 8, 2022

[Click Here to Apply](#)

Is undergraduate research right for me?

Are you naturally curious? Do you like an intellectual challenge? Would you like extra time in the laboratory or field to learn new skills? Or are you interested in gaining a competitive advantage for employment or graduate studies after graduation? If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these questions, then undergraduate research may be right for you!

Undergraduate research provides students an opportunity to engage in scientific inquiry under the guidance of a faculty mentor with the end goal being a scholarly contribution to knowledge (Council on Undergraduate Research, 2022). Through undergraduate research into a topic mutually agreed upon by you and a faculty mentor, you will gain depth of knowledge on your topic of interest and greater scientific skills. You will also learn about writing scientific objectives and hypotheses, hypothesis testing, experimental design, developing or implementing rigorous scientific protocols and analyses, analyzing data, interpreting results, and communicating your findings.

Available Funding

Funds are available from the College of Natural Resources and Environment to incentivize undergraduate student engagement in research. Students selected for an undergraduate research fellowship and their faculty research mentor can request **up to \$2,500** in support of a project to be completed during the Spring 2023 semester. Allowable expenses include wages for the undergraduate researcher, materials and supplies, analysis costs, travel, and other expenses that may be necessary to support the planned research.

Under the guidance of their faculty mentor, students may develop a unique research project or expand upon an existing research project. Students and their faculty mentors must agree upon a project and budget prior to submission of an application; thus, it is important that students speak with potential mentors before starting an application. It is anticipated that eight undergraduate student fellowships will be funded.

Students need not have prior research experience to participate in this program, as the initiative seeks to engage a wider array of students in undergraduate research. Selected fellows may sign up for undergraduate research credits in conjunction with this research activity, but they are not required to do so. Fellows wishing to enroll in undergraduate research credits should visit with their faculty research mentor and advisor regarding the details of doing so.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be undergraduate students enrolled in a major offered by the College of Natural Resources and Environment.
- Preference will be given to students with sophomore or junior standing who have yet to engage in undergraduate research.
- Students from underrepresented populations (e.g., Black or African American, Hispanic, Indigenous, and people of color) and underserved populations (e.g., first generation college, LGBTQ+, Pell Grant eligible, students with disabilities, and veterans) are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Students are required to be in good academic standing at the time of application.
- Research mentors must be faculty members with appointments in the College of Natural Resources and Environment.
- Students may only receive support from this program once during their academic career at Virginia Tech.

Expectations of Undergraduate Student Researchers

The fellows selected:

- must remain enrolled in a major offered by the College of Natural Resources and Environment and be completing coursework at Virginia Tech toward their degree during the Spring 2023 semester
- will work with the faculty mentor identified in their application to further refine, implement, and execute their funded research project
- are expected to complete 135 hours of work toward their undergraduate research project by end of the Spring 2023 semester
- shall maintain good academic standing throughout Academic Year 2022-2023
- will present their research findings at the Dennis Dean Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship Conference held at Virginia Tech during the Spring 2023 semester
- must submit a 1-page summary of their research to Associate Dean Goyne (goynek@vt.edu) by May 5, 2023

Expectations of Faculty Mentors

Faculty mentors agree to:

- complete a form acknowledging their willingness to mentor the fellow and guide the proposed research project prior to the application deadline
- help the fellows further refine, implement, and execute funded research projects
- assist fellows with the development of a budget and assist with the appropriate expenditure of awarded funds in support of the research project
- meet regularly with their undergraduate research mentee to discuss project progress and findings
- assist their mentee with the development of a professional presentation and a 1-page summary associated with the student's undergraduate research project

Application Process and Review

Complete the student application form through DocuSign ([click here to apply](#)). Application forms, including the faculty mentor form, must be completed by **5 pm on November 8, 2022**.

Prior to starting the application, students are encouraged to:

- speak with potential faculty mentors about their availability and willingness to mentor an undergraduate researcher and discuss potential research topics
- develop a title for the proposed research project
- write a brief description of the proposed research (250 words maximum)
- write a brief description of their interest in topic to be studied (100 words maximum)
- write a brief description of how participation in undergraduate research connects with their future educational or career goals (100 words maximum)
- develop a budget for the project (up to \$2,500 maximum) in collaboration with their faculty mentor; budget categories include: wages; materials and supplies; analysis costs; travel expenses; and “other”. A dollar amount will need to be entered on the application form for each category
- coordinate completion of forms with their faculty mentor; upon completion of the student application form, the faculty mentor will receive an email from DocuSign notifying them that the faculty mentor form is available for completion
 - faculty mentors must complete the mentor form before the application deadline
- download an electronic copy of their unofficial transcript from HokieSPA for inclusion in the application

Proposals from eligible undergraduate students will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Dean’s Office. Applications from individuals who do not meet eligibility requirements and incomplete applications will not be reviewed. The selection of proposals for funding will be based on:

- quality and merit of the proposed research
- student interest in the project
- connection of undergraduate research to the applicant’s educational or career goals
- preference for sophomores and juniors
- preference for students who have not previously participated in undergraduate research

Transfer of Funds

- Monies to defer the cost of expenses associated with a funded undergraduate research project will be transferred to the faculty mentor’s departmental account immediately after notification of the award. Faculty mentors and departments are responsible for (1) completing all paperwork necessary to hire and pay fellows an hourly wage from these funds and (2) appropriate accounting of these funds and their expenditure in support of the project.
- *Students are responsible for meeting with representatives of the University Scholarships and Financial Aid Office to understand how wages associated with the fellowship may impact their financial status and eligibility for financial aid.*

Contact for the Program. If you have any questions about the program or requirements, please email Dr. Keith Goyne, Associate Dean (goynek@vt.edu).