



Getting In: The Insider's Guide to Finding the Perfect Undergraduate Research Experience

Dr. David G. Oppenheimer, Paris H. Grey

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Readership: Undergraduates; research advisors and mentors; instructors and professors teaching classes on research in the sciences.

For Students

You're busy.

Research positions are competitive.

Faced with searching databases of outdated advertisements, and sending countless unanswered emails, it's no wonder that searching for a research experience is hard to do.

Getting In will help.

Getting In has the essential information you need with an easy approach that will save time and help you choose the research experience that is perfect for you.

Some of the topics addressed in *Getting In* are:

- **How much time will research take?** We help you estimate the time depending on your interests and goals.
- **How will you find the time?** Participating in research doesn't mean giving up your social life or risking your GPA. We give you a strategy to make room for research, and maintain a healthy academic/life balance.
- **When advertisements fail.** Advertisements are useful when they work and incredibly frustrating when they don't. For alternatives see, "Creative ways to find a research position."
- **Should you read a scientific paper?** We offer tips for you to decide if you should, and give an alternative if you decide to skip it. (And we tell you why you should never claim to have read a paper if you didn't.)
- **Mistakes to avoid.** Even the most persistent student will waste time if they make certain mistakes in the search, application, or interview.
- **Email that gets you noticed.** Professors receive a lot of emails—so how do you get yours noticed? We tell what you need to do to stand out, and provide email templates for you to customize.
- **The interview questions you should ask.** We give you a list of questions so you'll impress the interviewer, and be able to evaluate the position.
- **Tips to handle the awkward interview moments.** What if you don't know how to answer a question and panic? What if you're offered the position but it's not right for you? We help you prepare so you'll know what to do.
- **To register or not to register?** Should you take research as a volunteer or for GPA credit?

For Research Mentors How *Getting In* can help students already in the lab

Getting In helps address misconceptions about research that were brought up during our interviews with undergraduates and advisors alike.

If you follow us on social media or read our blog, you already know what we're about.

Some topics covered in *Getting In* include the following:

- **Research takes effort.** Throughout *Getting In*, we reinforce that it's important for students to be open to learning, and be determined to do quality work.
- **Upholding the time commitment.** Many students don't make the connection between upholding a time commitment and making progress on a project, being assigned "interesting" tasks to do in the lab, or earning a strong recommendation letter. We include a section, "Ten reasons that honesty is the best policy when it comes to your research time commitment." We also recommend visiting the campus counseling office if to help with time-management or stress as needed.
- **Research symposia and seminar tips.** The section, "Nine tips for attending a poster session at a symposium," includes questions to ask poster presenters as well as a section on etiquette for attending poster sessions and seminars.
- **Realistic expectations.** We cover misconceptions about research, and what is often the more realistic scenario. Two are: "I'm already an expert in the techniques from lab class, so research will be easy," and "I only need research experience to get a recommendation letter, so the project doesn't matter."

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Hazel Gannon:

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Karina McDermott:

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