

Think you might be interested in getting involved in research at SCU?

The basics:

Student researchers work under the supervision of a research-active faculty member in our department. Typically, the faculty member comes up with the ideas for the experiment and teaches the student all of the necessary skills to do the work. The experimental work varies widely from one lab to another. More details are in the FAQ's below.

FAQs about student research at SCU

1. *Who is eligible?*

There is no explicit prerequisite for research, but individual faculty may want you to have had some class as background to participating in their work—inquire with the faculty directly. You may start as early as your first year.

2. *Is it required for the chemistry or biochemistry major?*

No, research is not a requirement unless you're going for the ACS-certified degree track. Talk to your major advisor if you have questions about the differences between the tracks.

3. *Is it the right thing for me?*

Maybe. It's often a big time commitment (more on that below), so you'll need to think about all of the things that you need to do and want to do before graduation and see where research fits into that. If you want to go to graduate school in chemistry or biochemistry or if you're considering that path strongly, you'll want to have some research experience for sure. If you're not grad school-bound, research may be useful to you too. Talking with your major advisor and/or faculty engaged in research can help you prioritize and explore options.

4. *What are most professors looking for in a research student?*

It will vary a little from one professor to the next, but typically, we're looking for students who can commit to doing research over multiple quarters (and maybe a summer too); it's more rare to find a one-quarter or even one-year research opportunity, although these may exist. Faculty like to work with students who are excited about the projects and who are responsible and reliable.

5. *Do I get paid or get class credit?*

That depends on whom you work for and when. Some faculty can pay you for the time you work in the lab from their grants. Otherwise, you can receive credit for research work through classes in our curriculum, CHEM182, 183, and 184. See more info on each of these below.

CHEM182: This is a variable unit class (1-3 units). Students can sign up for it as many times as they want/need to. Often, a research faculty member will ask that you commit a certain number of hours per week for each unit that you're enrolled. Some faculty may ask that you submit reports on your work.

CHEM183: This is typically a senior research course (and counts as an upper division elective). It's 3 units and a student may take it once. Some faculty may have requirements that you write a report or do another presentation and/or summary of your research upon finishing this course.

CHEM184: Another senior research course that counts as an upper division elective and is 3 units. A student may take it once. Faculty usually require a written report and/or presentation of your research.

6. *What about summers?*

Again, it'll depend on whom you work with and when. Summers tend to be a very productive time for research for both faculty and students. Faculty may be able to secure funding to pay students for their work over the summer, or students may be able to win competitive fellowships for summer stipends.

7. *Okay, that all sounds great, and I want to get started in a lab. What do I do next?*

Contact faculty directly to inquire about their projects, space and resources. Use your answers to the questions on the form on Camino as a starting point for your conversation.

Research interest form
Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry

Are you interested in getting involved in research with one of the faculty in the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry? We as a faculty strive to get as many students as possible engaged in research within the limitations of our space and resources. Your answers to the questions on this form will get the conversation about research started with our faculty members. Please fill out this form and send it in an email to a faculty member (or faculty members) whose research is of interest to you. The faculty member will then follow up with any of his or her own questions. Each faculty member has a different set of criteria for evaluating prospective student researchers, and research opportunities are not guaranteed for all students.

1. Name, major, and quarter and year of expected graduation.

2. Why are you interested in research, and what do you hope to get out of this experience? This may be a tough question because it's likely you haven't been involved in research to any significant extent before, but do your best to speculate.

3. What are your plans for after graduation? These don't have to be set in stone yet, but please tell us what you're considering.

4. What amount of time do you have available and/or do you hope to spend doing research?
Include estimates of hours/week and number of quarters and summers.

5. What interests you about this professor's work?