

Finding and Funding Undergraduate Researchers at MSU

MSU is a national leader in Undergraduate Research. Due to our culture of incorporating undergraduates into research, students have numerous opportunities to get involved. We have done our best to create a comprehensive list here, but please reach out to Undergraduate Research if you know of an opportunity or pipeline that is not listed below.

Thank you for being an excellent mentor.

Ways to Find Student Researchers

Campus-Wide Platforms

- HireABobcat – Post an opening with MSU’s official job board for student employment.
- CatTracks (Handshake) – Some units use Handshake integration for internship and experiential learning postings.

Departmental Channels

- Departmental Listservs or Newsletters – Ask the department admin to include your research posting in their weekly or monthly emails.
- Advisors and Faculty – Academic advisors and teaching faculty often know motivated students looking for research or work experience.

Honors College

- Weekly Honors Email – Submit research positions to their student newsletter.
- Honors Research Symposium – This happens in the Fall. Present or pitch opportunities to research-oriented students, most of whom are freshman and in Honors, but not all.

Office of Undergraduate Research

- Peer Advising Appointments – Student research ambassadors often recommend students directly to faculty.
- Talk with the USP Coordinator about students who have already had some training.
- Connect with anyone in this office for help!

Classroom Recruitment

- Ask colleagues to announce positions in their classes.
- Visit introductory methods or lab classes to pitch your project.

Student Organizations & Learning Communities

- Present at meetings of student clubs related to your field.
- Ask Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) to share opportunities.

Undergraduate Research Conferences

- Attend the Student Research Celebration (late Spring) or the McNair Scholars Research Celebration (late Fall)
- Participate in the Undergraduate Research Fair (early Fall) connect with research-active students.

Social Media & Digital Boards

- Post flyers on departmental bulletin boards or student Slack/Discord groups.

Targeted Programs

- TRIO, First-Gen Network, Veterans Services, and others can share postings with interested students.
- Montana Space Grant Consortium, Montana INBRE, the Center for Biofilm Engineering, and others have extensive student researchers for faculty who are affiliated with their programs.

Ways to Fund Undergraduate Students at MSU

Undergraduate Scholars Program (USP)

- Individual Research Awards – Competitive stipends for undergraduates in research.
- Travel Grants—For students to attend conferences and/or workshops.
- All disciplines are invited to participate.

Work-Study Program

- Hire students approved for Federal Work-Study (FAFSA required).
- Employer pays ~25%, federal match ~75%.
- The USP office may subsidize the employer portion for new faculty; inquire with the USP coordinator.
- Typical employer contribution: ~\$400 per semester.

College & Departmental Funds

- Some colleges provide student hourly or mini-grants for research.
- Ask your Department Head or Associate Dean for Research about internal funding.

Centers & Institutes

- Centers like Thermal Biology, Biofilm Engineering, and IoE have student research funding lines.
- Grant Supplements
- Ask the Office of Sponsored Programs or Research Development Office how to add undergrad funding into a proposed budget.

- The Center for Faculty Excellence has some grants to fund students:
https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/research-creativity/research_scholarship/feg/index.html

Special Programs

- INBRE (biomedical research), MSGC (NASA), McNair Scholars, EPSCoR, and others often support undergrad research.

Honors College

- May provide research fellowships or symposium funding for student participants.

Course Credit

- Students can earn independent study credit (e.g., 491, 492, 490R) if funding isn't available. In fact, some students prefer this!