

## TIPS TO SECURE AN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH POSITION

If you are looking to apply to graduate school, we strongly recommend that you get involved with a research lab in the Department of Psychology as a research assistant (RA) or research volunteer. A research position is a valuable opportunity and can provide you with some of the following:

- Hands-on research experience
- Greater contact with graduate students and professors
- A sense of community
- Letter(s) of recommendation
- An idea of whether or not you would enjoy a research-based graduate program
  - Keep in mind that the following programs are (usually) research-based:
    - Clinical
    - Clinical-Developmental

Research opportunities are most often extended to students with an overall GPA of 7.0 (B+) or higher who are in their second or third year (i.e., have completed 23-83 credits). **However**, even if your GPA falls below 7.0, we still encourage you to apply if you have work or community experience.

Before you apply to research positions, make sure to prepare the following:

- A [CV](#) or Resume\*
- Unofficial transcript
- A cover letter (optional)

*\*We **strongly** encourage you to complete the Tri-Council Policy Statement Tutorial and add it to your CV or resume: <https://psyc.info.yorku.ca/research/research-ethics/>*

Faculty research interests cover a broad range of theoretical and applied issues. Students interested in learning about the type of research conducted by faculty in the Department of Psychology can browse our [Research Labs](#) page.

If you are interested in gaining research experience, and can commit to 5 hours or more a week in a lab, it is recommended that you:

1. Identify up to 3 to 4 full-time faculty members with whom you might like to work with. Take a look at their research interests and (recent) publications.
2. Compose an email outlining your interest in becoming a research assistant in the faculty member's lab. You should highlight what skills and experiences you would bring to the position/lab. Before you hit 'Send,' proof-read (and proof-read again) your email and attach your CV or resume and unofficial transcript. We highly recommend that you do not email multiple professors on the same email thread; ideally you will tailor your email to each professor or at the least contact each individually.

**Once you have secured a position in a lab:**

This is your opportunity to make a favorable impression, so be sure to do your best. Great RAs are detail oriented, professional, will take initiative, have a positive attitude towards whatever task they are asked to do, and work well both independently and with others. Even if you are working primarily with a lab manager or graduate student, be assured that they will share their impressions with the professor leading the lab.

## F.A.Q.

**What if I do not hear back from the faculty member?**

Do not be discouraged! Professors are busy people and receive many emails. Try following-up with another email 1-2 weeks later. If you do not hear back, try applying to additional labs.

**What if I am not successful in securing a position?**

Try and try again, but strategically! If your GPA is on the low side, put more energy into improving your grades before looking for additional research experiences. You should also have a peer give you feedback on your email and CV.

**I secured a research position! Now what?**

This is your opportunity to make a favorable impression, so be sure to do your best! Even if you are working primarily with a lab manager or graduate student, be assured that they will share their impressions with the professor leading the lab. We also strongly suggest that you complete the Tri-Council Policy Statement Tutorial by your first lab shift:

<https://psyc.info.yorku.ca/research/research-ethics/>.

**Are there paid opportunities?**

There are some, but you would need to apply through the university's career website:

<https://careers.yorku.ca/online-system>. Alternatively, you can find paid opportunities within the department [here](#).