Frequently Asked Questions

Garvan Institute

Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP)

Introduction

The Garvan Institute Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) is a scheme designed to give undergraduate students an early opportunity to experience real life in a research laboratory and gain insight into careers in biomedical research.

How does it work?

Students undertake a project which is part of the research program of a research laboratory. They are supervised by a research scientist in a mentoring role and work alongside other research staff and students in the team. The project can be experimental and based in a laboratory, bioinformatical or statistical.

While the scheme is not a formal part of undergraduate coursework, it aims to provide a vertical integration of practical research into the undergraduate years. Students will be able to practice the knowledge and skills obtained in undergraduate science-based courses in this program and vice versa.

What are the benefits of participating in the Program?

There are many benefits to participating in the program. As a student, you will:

- Be part of the excitement of working in an internationally competitive lab
- Experience being part of a research team
- Develop expertise in laboratory techniques and experimental design
- Potentially contribute to scientific publications, patents and presentations
- Create future job and post-graduate opportunities through networking
- Benefit from workshops in scientific and career development

How much time does participation require?

In general, the students are expected to spend 8 hours per week on their project. The times are arranged between supervisors and students to fit in with both the student's and supervisor's commitments. During vacation periods, students would usually work in the laboratory full-time for a total of at least 6 weeks during the summer or winter recess. It is desirable that students commence their project during the vacation period, so they can integrate into the laboratory before semester recommences.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to any undergraduate in any Australian tertiary institution. Students can join the program from the second year onwards of their undergraduate course onwards (or third year onwards in the case of double degrees). Students currently in the first year of their course (or first two years in the case of double degrees) or in their final semester are not eligible to apply.

When are applications open?

There are two rounds of intakes per year to coincide with the winter and summer vacations.

How can students apply?

A call for expressions of interest is distributed via e-mail through some university student databases for science and related fields. Students submit a letter of application, a CV including the name of one academic referee, and a copy of their academic transcript to the coordinator

How are students selected?

The selection process occurs in 3 stages:

1. Students are selected for interview based on their entire application.
2. At an interview, particular subject areas of interest can be discussed. These are used to assist matching the student to a particular project.
3. After the interview, selected applicants are introduced to a suggested supervisor at an informal meeting, to discuss the scope of the proposed project. If successful, students receive a letter of offer containing an outline of the work to be performed. If the meeting with the proposed supervisor is not successful, we would endeavour to find an alternative placement for the student.

Are students paid?

Students receive an hourly casual rate of pay for the time they work on their project. They are required to fill out time sheets to confirm their attendance.

What conditions apply to projects?

Students receive full safety training upon induction into Garvan. In the time that they are present at Garvan, they are covered by all regulations and conditions governing the organisation, including occupational health and safety, good scientific practice, ethics, intellectual property and confidentiality.

What are the students' responsibilities?

Students are required to:

- Work in a manner that complies with codes of good scientific practice, animal and human ethics regulations and occupational health and safety procedures.
- Sign the Intellectual Property and Confidentiality agreements of the Garvan.
- Work in a cooperative manner with other members of the research team, sharing results and meeting regularly with their supervisor.
- Keep to the hours of work agreed to between the student and supervisor and give reasonable notice if they need to suspend work on their project in order to concentrate on their studies. Note that the students' performance in their undergraduate course must come first and academic performance will be monitored to ensure it is not detrimentally affected by participation