Getting Involved in Research- Frequently Asked Questions

**Why get involved in research?**

Most graduate school programs in psychology prefer their prospective students to have research experience. Research involvement enables students to work closely with faculty and graduate students, acquire publications, present findings, and learn the fundamental skills of obtaining psychological data.

**What will I be doing?**

Typical work includes data coding, running experiments, animal care, proofreading documents, acquiring literature reviews, acting as a confederate, and administering tests.

**How can I get involved?**

Because there is no single way to guarantee research experience, it is best to be proactive with the department faculty. Each professor has his or her own specific interests, meaning no two labs are the same. Professors want students with strong grades, upper-division coursework in statistics and assessment, and professional references. Try and get involved as early as possible.

Take professors who have research interests similar to your own to build relationships.

<http://www.csulb.edu/colleges/cla/departments/psychology/faculty>

**Will this count for credit?**

It can. Independent Study (Psy 499) is designed for students involved in research. To enroll in this course, you must obtain approval from the faculty member as well as the department. Psy 499 counts as upper-division psychology elective credit, but it will **not** satisfy any of the six units needed to fulfill the Psychology 400-level course requirements.

**Helpful Hints**

•Get to know your professors, especially if they are actively involved in conducting research.

•Even if you have not taken a specific professor, you can attend office hours and email him/her to inquire about their research interests

•Become actively involved in the department. Join PSA/Psi Chi Honor Society to network with other peers and find out about research opportunities. Some professors post open lab positions around the department.

•Many professors train new assistants **BEFORE** the semester starts. Therefore, it may be best to email them in either winter or summer to inquire if they are accepting new students.

•Useful courses for research: Psy 310, Psy 314, Psy 315, Psy 411, Psy 412, Psy3 41, Psy 373

•Flexible schedules are often required. Professors vary in the types of commitment they seek from their students, but it is best to expect at least six to eight hours a week of work. Professors often seek students who can commit to at two semesters of research.

•Consider working on an independent project under a supervisory professor. This can give you the opportunity to draft and even publish your own research.