The Faculty Mentor Program (FMP) at UC San Diego offers invaluable undergraduate research experience to students of all majors who have completed a minimum of 90 credits and have a grade point average of at least 2.7. The FMP prepares undergraduates for post-baccalaureate success by providing the opportunity to work directly with UC San Diego faculty on research projects. Students build lasting academic and professional relationships.

**FMP Requirements**

- Registered student at UC San Diego for as long as you are in the program (all majors, transfer students, international students are welcome)
- Maintain at least a 2.7 GPA
- Conduct at least 10 hours of research a week
- Take an independent study course (199) for two Quarters
- Meet regularly with your mentor
- Turn in a research proposal and research paper
- Present at the FMP Research Symposium
- You cannot be paid for research you do through the FMP

**Benefits**

- Work one-on-one with UCSD Faculty
- Start developing your research skills now
- Contribute to the cutting edge research being conducted at UC San Diego

**Timeline**

The FMP is a dual quarter program during Winter and Spring Quarters of each academic year. Depending on the needs of individual faculty mentors and what is standard for specific departments, FMP students may develop their own research interests, help a professor with his or her own research, or work in a laboratory on campus. Transfer students and international students are welcome to apply!

**Fall Quarter**

- Turn in application (November)
- Biology students need to register for 199 course

**Winter Quarter**

- By week 2: Student/Faculty contract are due; 199 forms are due for all students (except biology)
- Make a research plan with your professor.

**Spring Quarter**

- You will need to re-register for a 199 for Spring
- Paper Proposals are due the first week of Spring Quarter
- The FMP Symposium will be held Week 9
- Final papers are due by the end of the Quarter
During Winter & Spring Quarters, FMP provides a series of workshops on how to present at a conference, how to network in academia, applying for scholarships, writing research proposals & papers, applying to graduate school, handling stress & time management, as well as other topics.

**How to Find a Mentor**

- Look through the list of mentors on the FMP blog, http://fmpucsd.wordpress.com/
- Look at department websites. The URL for most departments is department name.ucsd.edu
- The REAL portal also has a listing of faculty looking for research assistants, www.real.ucsd.edu.
- Contact the undergraduate representative for the department
- Once you’ve found professors you are interested in, first prioritize, and then email them.
- Follow an email up with a telephone call, follow a telephone call with an office visit.
- Be assertive! You are not the only student looking for a mentor—it’s very competitive.
- Don’t expect the professor to find you, YOU must be motivated and find him or her.
- Academic departments have faculty profiles that include background and research foci.
- Some departments have over 70 faculty members!

**Questions to ask yourself before looking for a mentor**

- What are your research interests?
- Where would you like to develop?
- What are your goals?
- How do you rate these qualities in a mentor?
  - Interested in developing your career
  - Commitment to mentoring
  - A match with your professional and personal needs
  - Professional competence
  - A successful track record in mentoring
  - Good communication skills
  - Will provide networking opportunities
  - Is well-known in his/her field
  - Is institutionally savvy
  - Expresses interest in you as a person
- What can you offer your mentor?
- What do you hope to gain through your research experience?
- What do you know about research in your field or area of interest?
- Is there a faculty member working in your area of interest?
- Are there particular skills you need to develop or courses you need to take before embarking on your project?
- Will your project require special approvals, such as working with human or animal subjects or hazardous materials?
- Will your project require funding?
- Will you be able to commit the minimum 10 hours a week to your project?
- Will your project be done independently on your own schedule, or will you need to mesh your research with other ongoing research?

**Improving your chances of finding a mentor**

- If you are looking to work in a lab, complete the lab safety training course for your subject. Be sure that your shots are up to date if you want to work in a hospital or school.
- If the professor asks that you have a certain skill, GPA, major, etc., do not apply if you do not have that skill, GPA, etc.!

- ALWAYS GO TO OFFICE HOURS. Have something specific to discuss.

- Network! Go to talks, seminars, etc. offered by your department or the School of Medicine. Get to know the professors and TA’s who teach your courses. Even if they don’t have room for a new student, they might know someone who does.

- Do not be late; do not cancel an appointment.

- Familiarize yourself with the professor’s research. Look at a few papers, books, etc. that they have written. When you contact a professor, be sure to explain why you want to work on that specific research.

- Learn Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; also, if you can, familiarize yourself with platforms/programs/protocols frequently used in your research area, such as MATLAB, SPSS, LINUX, etc.

- Go to library training, and be familiar with how to use various databases, including governmental databases, as well as subject-specific ones, such as MLA, PubMed, and NUCMC. You need to know more than just JSTOR!

- Even more than being able to present yourself well, it is important to explain why you are passionate about this type of research. Think about this, write it down, and be able to talk about it.

Sample email to a professor

Dear Professor ________,

My name is _________. I am applying to participate in the Faculty Mentor Program, which includes two quarters of faculty-mentored research during winter and spring. I would like to conduct research in ________. I am interested in your project on [description].

Your work interests me because ____________. I would like to get involved in research in this area because it will help me to better prepare for [your project and professional goals]. I am a ________ year student with a GPA of ____. I have taken [relevant courses] and [brief additional relevant experiences]. I am aware of the commitment required to complete a two-quarter research project and I am confident that I will fulfill it.

Would it be possible to further discuss your project and my possible involvement in it? I am available at your earliest convenience. For more information about the structure and requirements of the Faculty Mentor Program, please to fmp.ucsd.edu and www.fmpucsd.wordpress.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Your Name
Student ID / E-mail / Phone