**Research FAQs:**

Q: When should I start doing research?

*A: As soon as you are ready, you should begin reaching out to potential mentor. Many labs are willing to take eager freshman and sophomore students, particularly if you express interest in staying in the lab for several semesters. It is possible that a mentor might ask you to volunteer in the lab for a small amount of time (see below) before starting. Other labs might want you to have completed a specific class first. It will be lab/ research mentor specific.*

Q: How do I find a research lab?

*A: First, get an idea of* [*CBIO faculty*](https://cbio.franklin.uga.edu/directory/) *research on our web page There are also other faculty doing research outside of CBIO that is research in cellular biology and it might be approved for your requirement. A good sampling of faculty likely doing CBIO-related research can be found on the UGA* [*ILS page here*](https://ils.uga.edu/)*.*

*We recommend reaching out to a potential mentor first by email. It would be helpful if you have read about their research and can speak to your interest in the research in your email. Inquire about any undergraduate research opportunities and maybe offer some time you have in your schedule to meet with the faculty to discuss their research. Come armed to a meeting with questions!*

*Note: you may be one of several candidates for a position, and you may have an interview.*

Q: What if my intended mentor asks me to volunteer or do a reading class with them first?

*A: Especially if you are a freshman or sophomore, it is quite possible that a faculty member might ask you to volunteer in a lab prior to registering for research credit, particularly if you have not worked in a lab before. This might be to teach you some simple lab skills and have you trial the lab before committing. This should not be for more than 1-2 hours/ week.*

*Regardless of your rank, sometimes a research professor prefers that you take for credit either CBIO 4960 or 4970 which is directed reading or a reading/research combo. This could be for you to spend significant time learning about a field through reading/ written assignments OR to shadow and learn specialized technical skills for your independent research. Taking CBIO 4960 or 4970 prior to 4980R is research mentor specific whereas 4980R is required by the department. It is best to speak with your mentor to see how best to register. CBIO 4960 or 4870 can count for CBIO major elective credit in addition to CBIO 4980R.*

Q: What if I wish to do research with a UGA faculty member outside of the Department of Cellular Biology?

*A: As mentioned above, there are many faculty at UGA that perform research in cellular biology but are not in the CBIO Department. A question you might ask yourself when assessing a lab is does the work focus on a cellular process? How a cell behaves? If so, you should complete the form found* [*here*](https://cbio.franklin.uga.edu/undergraduate-research) *to submit the research project for formal approval to* (klonowsk@uga.edu). *The faculty Undergraduate Coordinator will review your request and reply with approval (or not) via email.*

Q: What do I do once I find a research lab?

*A: First, if you are registering for research, you must get a CRN for your registration. If you are working with any* [*CBIO or adjunct research*](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Clf72670%5CDownloads%5Ccbio.franklin.uga.edu%5Cdirectory)  *faculty, you will directly contact Ms. Freeman* (cellbio@uga.edu) *in the CBIO office for registration. If you are trying to register for research outside of CBIO that you have had approved by the Undergraduate Coordinator, simply forward the approval email to Ms. Freeman* (cellbio@uga.edu)*. In either case, she will set up a class for registration for you with your mentor as the instructor and email you the specific CRN. Subsequently, you should work out a schedule and start date with your research mentor.*

Q: Can a summer research experience on another campus count for my research requirement?

*A: There are many summer Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs) available for undergraduates across the country. REUs are intense research experiences that are between 10-12 weeks over the summer. These positions often include a stipend and housing, and full weeks of research, professional workshops, and student presentations. These programs are highly competitive. Some REUs are broadly focused on biomedical research and others more narrowly on a specific topic (ie regenerative sciences or neuroscience). There also are a significant number of programs that specifically support underrepresented minority students. You can find a links to REU programs* [*here*](https://pslsamp.uga.edu/stem_resources/)*.*

Q: How many hours will I expect to be in lab?

*1 credit of research is typically 3-4 hours (minimum) in lab. So when you register for 3 credits, you should be spending at least 9 (and possibly up to 12) hours/ week doing lab related activities. This may fluctuate week to week based on your project and gained enthusiasm for your lab experience! Most students will break their research into 2 semesters @ 3 credits each.*

Q: Who will I work with in the lab?

*A: It depends. In most cases, you will work directly in the lab with a post-doctoral fellow, graduate student, or even a senior undergraduate student. You will likely have direct contact with your laboratory principle investigator (PI)/ faculty member at group laboratory meetings or 1:1 meetings.*

Q: What will I be doing in lab?

*A: You will be doing independent research. You will likely spend a significant amount of time at the bench. Like a good scientist, you will read scientific papers to assist your understanding of your project, to place your work in context of the overall field of study, or to design experiments/ develop a technique. You may also be given written or oral assignments. You should discuss what a potential project would be and what you would be doing with a potential mentor before you start in lab. Communication is key to a good laboratory experience.*

Q: How will I be graded for my lab experience?

*A: Your PI is the instructor of record for your research course; as such, they will be assigning your grade. It is best that you meet with your PI prior to or at the start of your research semester and discuss expectations, 1:1 meetings, learning outcomes, and specific assignments for your research credit. Some research mentors will provide a syllabus which outlines these things in detail but others do not and that is fine as long as you have discussed these things and understand your role and responsibility, and how you will be graded for the course. Some mentors require a paper of some sort, a presentation, both, or neither. The Department of Cellular Biology has no specific requirement and leaves the assignment to the instructor of record. They can reach out to the Undergraduate Coordinator* (klonowsk@uga.edu) *directly for any further clarification.*

Q: Should I stay in the same lab for both semesters?

*A: Research mentors have the ability to write a good letter of recommendation for you. The longer you remain in the lab, the better they will know you and can describe your positive attributes in detail. Additionally, most PIs prefer a commitment of at least 2 semesters of research in a lab; research labs are making a serious investment in training you. It may be difficult to find a lab for only 1 semester. For these reasons, barring any unforeseen circumstances, it is recommended that you try and stay with the same research lab.*

Q: How many semesters can I take research for credit?

*A: Many students complete more than the 2 required semesters of research. However, only one additional semester (3 credits) of 4980R (or 4970, 4960 as well) may be used for an upper level CBIO major elective.*

Q: What is the Laboratory Group Meeting class (CBIO 4040)?

*A: You are required to take 1 credit of this class for the CBIO major. The goal of this course is for you to learn how to effectively communicate your scientific research in cellular biology. A significant amount of scientific communication happens at your laboratory’s weekly meeting. The format of this meeting is lab-specific. It might be that all lab members present their work informally at each meeting OR there is a rotation of formal (powerpoint) presentations with each student taking a turn. A typical presentation of this sort, the student would orally present the background rationale on their project, results, data interpretation, and conclusions/ future directions. Because it is not likely a student would have the confidence, knowledge, and data for this, we suggest students register the second semester of research. As a registered student, you will also be required to participate (attend every meeting; ask questions of your lab mates).*

*However, we do advise students to attend their lab's lab meeting the first semester in order to get a feel for the format/ expectations/ dynamic of the meeting. It also gives you time to observe how grad students and other senior undergrads present and engage at lab meeting*

*Your PI assigns your grade for this class, so you should discuss expectations, grading, etc. When you are ready to register for this, you will contact Ms. Freeman (cbio@uga.edu) and she will open a section of CBIO 4040 under your mentor and provide you with a CRN.*

Q: What if my lab’s weekly meeting conflicts with my semester course schedule?

*A: It is best for you to try and schedule your course schedule around your current lab meeting the semester you plan on taking CBIO 4040. Many labs have a permanent day/ time for their meeting and it is not flexible. If you find yourself unable to avoid conflict, you can alternatively participate in either the neurobiology journal club or immunology journal club, but must have taken either CBIO 3800 or CBIO 4100 to participate, respectively. For more details on this option, contact the Undergraduate Coordinator (klonowsk@uga.edu).*

Q: What opportunities are available for me to present my research?

*A: Cellular Biology majors that participate in undergraduate research are highly encouraged to present their work at the annual Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) Symposium held each April, usually at the Classic Center (details found* [*here*](http://curo.uga.edu/symposium/index.html)*). Students present their work in either an oral or poster format. This opportunity allows for students to communicate their research to our broader community, and is an excellent addition to a CBIO major’s curriculum vitae (CV).*

Q: Is funding available for me to present my research?

*A: Additional opportunities to present your research are lab-specific and you should inquire with your research mentor. Funding is available from CURO to attend these meetings (reimbursement up to $1500) and information can be found* [*here*](https://curo.uga.edu/students/conference_grant.html)*. You must have been accepted to present at a conference to apply for these funds.*

Q: Can I write a thesis on my research?

*A: Yes! Cellular Biology majors enrolled in* [*CBIO 4990R*](http://www.bulletin.uga.edu/CoursesHome?cid=6997) *will prepare an honors thesis under the supervision of their research mentor. A CBIO faculty member must be either the student’s research mentor or the additional thesis examiner. CBIO 4990R can count as an upper level of CBIO elective in the absence of a 3rd semester of research (CBIO 4980R) OR CBIO 4960 OR CBIO 4970.*