

# GCDS Undergraduate Research FAQs

At GCDS, we study child and adolescent development and how families build resilience.



## What does a URA do day-to-day?

You will support data collection, cleaning, and participant recruitment/retention for our **BRANCH Grant**, which examines resilience in children aged 6.5 to 9 (at baseline).

- **In-Lab Shifts:** Calling participants, preparing materials, and organizing data.
- **Data Collection Visits:** Meeting participants and assisting with multimodal data collection (including MRI).



## Will I get to do my own research?

Yes! Alongside daily lab tasks, you will work on an individual research project using already-collected data.

**CURO:** You will be guided in building towards a research poster presentation through the Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO).



## Do I work for credit, as a volunteer, or can I be paid?

We **strongly encourage** all undergraduates to work for academic credit, and this is the expected starting point for joining the lab.

We offer CURO credit using the Honors, Biology, and HDFS prefixes (*Note: students do not need to be in the Honors College to enroll in Honors CURO credit*). "CURO Credit" means the credit has an -R suffix and you are committing to presenting a poster at the CURO Symposium in 2027.

**Volunteering:** Occasionally, highly reliable returning students are approved to volunteer, but this is rare. If taking summer credits is financially prohibitive, please reach out to the URA coordinators.

*\*We do not generally offer paid undergraduate opportunities.*



## What is the required time commitment?

Most URAs register for **2 to 4 credit hours** per semester. Your weekly hourly commitment is tied directly to the number of credits you are registered for:

Spring & Fall

3 hrs/wk per credit

Summer

4 hrs/wk per credit

**Biology Students:** Those registering under the BIOL prefix will likely need to take 4 credit hours during their first semester in the lab.



## How are lab hours scheduled?

Lab hours are completed in **2- to 4-hour shifts**. Longer shifts are generally not permitted to ensure sustained focus and availability. These recurring shifts are completed during **business hours M-F**. However, many URAs will be asked to help with data collection in **evenings and on weekends**.

*Example:* A student registered for 4 credit hours in the summer (requiring 16 lab hours per week) would **not** be permitted to complete their hours by working two 8-hour shifts.



## What if I need time off over the summer?

Because summer data collection moves quickly, students **cannot miss more than one week's worth of lab hours**.

If you do need to take time off, you are required to make up the missed lab time *in advance* of your absence to ensure project continuity.



## Is there a long-term commitment?

Because training takes time, we expect URAs to commit to the lab for a minimum of **two semesters**. This allows you to fully engage with your research project and the team.

**Letters of Recommendation:** Please note that you must meet this two-semester requirement to be eligible to request a letter of recommendation.