

Undergraduate Research Assistantships and Thesis Opportunities

Department of Psychology – East Carolina University

Fall 2025

Calling all Pirate Scholars!

The Department of Psychology at East Carolina University offers hands-on research experience opportunities for all undergraduate students.

Our faculty members are engaged in a variety of active research programs that span a number of specializations, methodologies, populations, and designs. Undergraduate students are encouraged to become a part of this research by assisting faculty with new and ongoing projects—an experience valuable for students who are interesting in learning more about one or more areas of psychology in greater depth, becoming an informed consumer of research, and developing skills and abilities valued by employers and graduate schools.

Undergraduate research assistants typically register for supervised course credit as an elective in psychology (e.g., PSYC 4501) in the semester or session that they are involved.

Below is a list of psychology department faculty who have demonstrated a commitment to mentoring undergraduate students in scientific research practices.

After studying this document, please complete the online application by using the following web address:

https://ecu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_br9oRmuhOKZRzHo

The deadline is Friday, March 28th.

The link to the application will become inactive after the deadline, so please complete the process as soon as possible if you are interested.

For more information, please visit <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/psyc/StudentResearch.cfm>

List of Faculty Mentors

Dr. Courtney Baker

Field of Specialization: Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Research Description: I am interested in how we perceive others related to their identities and social features, how others perceive us, and how this impacts the way in which we treat others and perceive discrimination. I would classify myself as a diversity, equity, and inclusion researcher, with a primary focus on aging, gender, and disability. I also look at leadership perceptions, perceptions of humor use, multitasking, and workplace mistreatment as some secondary areas of interest. Currently, my lab is focusing on what it means to age healthily in the workplace and designing some projects related to worker experiences based on their age categories. In my lab, I typically coordinate lab tasks based on the needs of the projects that are actively occurring, so it is hard to

predict exactly what you'd be engaging in, but I try to give experiences across the research process. This means that tasks you could be helping with include, but are not limited to, pretesting surveys, coding data, literature searches, APA reference checks, and collecting participant data. I do require that research assistants attend a once per week lab meeting to coordinate tasks and a lab project. Each semester, my students in my lab help to develop and facilitate a lab project together and engage in the full research process based on my lab's research focus. For first time lab students, I would like that they register for the course credit and after that could volunteer in lab rather than taking course credit if they desire. Undergraduates who work in my lab for at least one semester are eligible to be considered for a senior thesis.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes

Senior Thesis option? Considered after one semester

Dr. Shahnaz Aziz

Field of Specialization: Clinical Health Psychology

My area of interest lies in the domain of employee well-being and health, specifically, workaholism, work-life balance, work stress, and burnout. Student researchers would typically be involved in subject recruitment, data collection/entry, and discuss relevant literature.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes

Senior Thesis option? No

Dr. Matt Whited

Field of Specialization: Clinical Health Psychology

Research Description: The Cardiovascular Psychophysiology lab is broadly interested in understanding and modifying behavioral factors that influence cardiovascular disease. You can learn more about the lab from Dr. Whited's website (<https://psychology.ecu.edu/people/whited/>). We are currently conducting a study investigating college student self-knowledge of blood pressure and BMI. We are interested in understanding how their self-knowledge relates to various health behaviors that are associated with cardiovascular disease. Undergraduate lab members will gain experience with both psychological and physiological assessment and learn about the history and background of this research project.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes

Senior Thesis option? No

Dr. Sam Sears**Field of Specialization:** Clinical Health Psychology

Cardiac Psychology Lab Research Internship

Cardiac psychology is a specialization of psychology that focuses on helping cardiac patients cope with life and physical changes associated with heart disease. Cardiac psychologists can help every step of the way: prevention, pre-surgery, post-surgery, and rehabilitation. Our research primarily focuses on patients' quality of life post cardiac surgery and/ or cardiac device implantation.

This research internship will provide students with hands-on experience in both psychological and medical research. Research assistants will have the opportunity to assist with research participant recruitment, data collection, and literature reviews, among other tasks. Cardiac psychology is an interdisciplinary field and will interact with other medical professionals, researchers, and graduate students. This internship is ideal for students considering graduate school for professional careers in psychology or medicine. There will be routine meetings and regular in-person requirements.

Undergraduates who have worked in our lab for one semester or more are eligible to be considered for a senior thesis.

Please send a resume and brief summary of interest to Sam McCrary at

mccrarys24@students.ecu.edu

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes**Senior Thesis option?** No**Dr. Marissa Baudino****Field of Specialization:** Clinical Health Psychology

Research Description: My research focuses on promoting youth and family adjustment to chronic medical conditions, increasing engagement in disease self-management behaviors (treatment adherence), and improving health outcomes. Specifically, I am interested in identifying factors that predict resilience and psychosocial adjustment difficulties in youth with type 1 diabetes and their families that can be targeted through clinical intervention. I am also interested in identifying factors that contribute to or reduce health disparities in children and young adults with type 1 diabetes and developing culturally appropriate interventions to improve psychosocial, behavioral, and health outcomes across populations.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? No**Senior Thesis option?** No

Dr. Christy Walcott

Field of Specialization: School Psychology

Research Description: Walcott's Lab examines behavioral health promotion for children/youth with & without health-related conditions, links between education disparities & health disparities, and outcomes related to ADHD & attention problems.

Fall 2025 tasks will include: Data collection for a study on teacher-student relationships; work with data for a few survey projects; help with literature reviews; other related lab tasks.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? Yes

Senior Thesis option? Yes

Dr. Michael Baker

Fields of Specialization: Social Psychology, Personality, Evolutionary Theory

Research Description: This fall I will need assistants to help with data collection for a project examining how people spend money depending on whether the money was earned or received as a gift. Student research assistants get hands-on experience running participants through a psychological experiment in a laboratory. Assistants are expected to attend weekly lab meetings to discuss progress on the lab project as well as assigned readings from psychological journals.

Available to Freshmen/Sophomores? No

Senior thesis option available? No