



Why is Undergraduate Research Important?

The BS degree in chemistry at FIU is certified by the American Chemical Society. To meet the certification requirements, a research experience is required. However, there are many important reasons to engage in undergraduate research. Undergraduate research promotes deeper understanding and greater satisfaction with the college experience. In addition, students who are engaged in undergraduate research take an active role in inquiry, improve their speaking and writing ability, and gain the necessary skills to troubleshoot and think "outside the box." More importantly, participating in undergraduate research provides an opportunity to develop lasting associations with research mentors beyond the undergraduate experience. In short, undergraduate research is an invaluable academic experience and the sooner you begin, the more you will gain from the experience.

Be sure to visit the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department's Undergraduate Research Portal!

<http://chemistry.fiu.edu/academic-programs/undergraduateprograms/undergraduate-research-portal/>

When is the Best Time to Begin?

That will really depend on your interest and the advisor that you select. Organic faculty will typically want students to have nearly completed Organic Chemistry II at the time that they begin. In rare instances, some students begin as early as their freshman year. One thing is certain though: it is nearly impossible to complete a project and write a final report in a single semester. Waiting until your last semester to begin would be a BIG MISTAKE!

How Do I Get Started?

Some students know exactly what they want to do in the way of undergraduate research and in their careers. Other students have no idea whatsoever and that is perfectly fine. Your undergraduate research experience does not define you as a chemist. You are not necessarily deciding what you will be doing for the rest of your life. It is more about gaining the skills that are common to all researchers than gaining skills in any one particular discipline.

You can start by attending some of the many research related events which are sponsored by the department, the Honors College or the University Graduate School. By doing so you can learn about the various research projects which are ongoing in the department. Talk to your graduate teaching assistants. Every one of them is doing research towards their graduate degree. Once you have a better idea of your interests, you should interview faculty to discuss specific projects and whether or not they have openings in their lab. You may not be able to get a spot in your desired lab right away. All the more reason to start early!