

Undergraduate Research Experience

Interesting in gaining hands-on research experience with a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at East Carolina University? Our faculty 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, while developing skills and abilities valued by employers, graduate programs, as well as useful in being an informed consumer of research.

The following faculty are seeking undergraduate research assistants for Fall 2009 and/or Spring 2010. Please contact faculty directly if you are interested in assisting with their research.

Faculty Name	Specialization	Accepting Students for Fall 2009?	Accepting Students for Spring 2010?	Description of Undergraduate Research Opportunities
Dr. Mark Bowler	Industrial/Organizational Psychology	Yes		Dr. Bowler's research is focused in four primary areas: (1) the design, implementation, and evaluation of managerial assessment centers, (2) the development of conditional reasoning measures of personality and the interactions between these measures and traditional self-report measures of personality, (3) the impact of personality traits – particularly aggression – on team performance, and (4) utilizing Monte Carlo simulations to evaluate statistical and methodological techniques utilized by industrial/organizational psychologists.
Dr. John Cope	Industrial/Organizational Psychology	Yes		Work will be centered on revising a survey instrument examining the use of cell phone messaging in organizational and other work environments including automobiles and other vehicles.
Dr. Christyn Dolbier	Health Psychology	Yes	Yes	During the 2009-2010 academic year, I will have three projects students can get involved with. The first is the Community Child Health Network project, which examines maternal physiological wear and tear as a mechanism by which stress may lead to preterm birth. The second project will explore personal growth resulting from becoming a parent, and how that growth may vary

				as a result of certain biomedical and psychosocial factors. The third project will focus on developing and testing parts of a mind-body intervention to reduce stress during pregnancy.
Dr. Laura Edwards	Health Psychology	Yes	Yes	We are conducting research on the psychological and physiological correlates of forgiveness. We are also interested in self-report studies of religiosity, forgiveness, and other positive psychology variables and their relationship to health. These studies involve monitoring physiological equipment, administering surveys, scoring and entering data, as well as basic descriptive statistics.
Dr. Heather Littleton	Clinical and Health Psychology	No	Yes	I conduct women's health research including projects focused on sexual assault and sexual assault recovery, body image, women's mental health during pregnancy and other issues. Students who work with me could potentially assist with conducting literature reviews, recruiting participants, and serving as an experimenter.
Dr. Amy Lyndon	Social Psychology	Yes	Yes	I conduct both qualitative and quantitative research on perpetrators and victims of unwanted pursuit and stalking, as well as examining lay persons' judgments about both. Current projects include interviewing male victims, examining predictors of unwanted pursuit perpetration, and investigating the role of Facebook in romantic relationships, including unwanted pursuit.
Dr. Scott Methe	School Psychology	Yes		I conduct research in educational psychology, focusing on preventing learning and behavior problems. Specifically, I am interested in how children learn to read, calculate, and develop social skills. I also conduct research in the area of human relationships. Students that have worked with me in the past have prepared journal articles, presented findings at conferences, conducted in-vivo research, and developed data analysis skills, among other things.

Dr. Sam Sears	Clinical & Health	Yes	Yes	<p>Healthsteps Heart Failure Clinic: Students would be responsible for introducing a study on <i>medical decision making for a cardiac technology</i> (ICD), completing informed consent with patients, and assuring patients have completed all questionnaires. Students will learn about the psychological measures being used and be trained on the study protocol. This would initiate an excellent opportunity for students to participate in future publications related to this study as well. A student could participate 1 or 2 mornings a week (8-12) on either Monday, Weds, or Fri to help recruit patients at Healthsteps Heart Failure Clinic.</p>
Dr. Tuan Tran	Behavioral Neuroscience/ Developmental Psychobiology <i>(Program Director, BA/BS Program in Neuroscience)</i>	As Needed – Inquire if Interested	As Needed- Inquire if Interested	<p>My research involves studying fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), which include fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and other fetal alcohol-related congenital disorders, using rodents. Rodents are used to help explain the phenomenology, teratology, and pathology seen in human cases of FASDs. Currently, I am examining whether early alcohol exposure in rodents leads to learning deficits as measured by eyeblink classical conditioning, the most well-studied form of associative learning in mammalian neuroscience. To determine whether the early alcohol insult also results in brain dysfunction that correlates with the behavioral deficits, I use a variety of histological, histochemical, and morphometric techniques. It is hoped that answers about alcohol's impact on brain-behavior relationships can be better understood in animals, and in turn guide research that examines chemical or behavioral therapies that minimize or prevent such a deplorable condition in humans.</p> <p>Website: http://www.ecu.edu/psyc/trant/</p>

Dr. Cecelia Valrie	Health and Developmental Psychology	No	Yes	<p>My research is focused in two primary areas (1) examining adjustment in children and adolescents with sickle cell disease, a chronic disease seen primarily in the African American community and associated with acute pain and neurological problems, and (2) investigating how sleep influences other health-related outcomes and overall functioning in children, adolescents, and young adults. For more information, please see my lab website at:</p> <p>http://core.ecu.edu/psyc/ValrieC/Valrie.html</p>
Dr. Christy Walcott	School Psychology			<p>Fall 2009: I am collecting data for a national standardization of a new rating scale. We may have to extend into Fall. If so, my grad student will need help going to school sites to distribute and pick up packets, deliver classroom incentives, recruit teacher participants, etc. The student would have to have access to a car and be willing to travel to area schools. Data entry will also be needed for this project.</p> <p>Spring 2010: preK literacy project here in town. Again, student would need transportation capabilities to travel to an in-town preK center.</p>

Note: The information presented in this list is subject to change. Please inquire with individual faculty members for further information about availability and research activities.