How to Find a Summer Research Program that is Right for You

Summer Undergraduate Research Programs are all encompassing, paid summer internships in scientific research. They offer great experiences for undergraduates to live in a new city, develop the analytical skills and laboratory experience to pursue graduate work in the sciences and even pay students for doing so. However, there are over 1000 of these programs and the process of filtering through these many internships can at times seem overwhelming. When looking for a summer program that’s right for you be sure to ask the following questions.

1. **What kind of research do I want to conduct?** While knowing exactly what project you would like to work on is certainly not necessary, a scientific field of interest is. Many programs are tailored for either Biology, Chemistry or Physics, while some may cover all three areas or focus on even more specialized disciplines. Most applications will require applicants to choose from a list of topics in biology, chemistry or physics that they would be interested in doing research in. Furthermore, some applications even require students to pick a number of individuals who currently work at the institution with whom they’d be interested in working and write a short paragraph explaining why they would like to do so.

2. **Where do I want to conduct my research?** Summer programs usually require students to live at the institution they are conducting research at and provide travel, room and board for students who participate. These programs therefore offer great opportunities for students to live in another city, state or even country. However, if staying close to home is important you still have many options in the Chicago area and summer research programs are present in every state so you should be able to apply to programs close to home if you chose to do so. Keep in mind however, that the more desirable the location, the more applicants that will be applying.

3. **What are the eligibility requirements for a Summer Research Program?** Most summer programs require that interns be either citizens or permanent residents of the US to participate since many are funded by the US government. Additionally, students that have not started college or will have already received a bachelor’s degree by the start of the program are not eligible. However, since every program is directed by a different institution, additional requirements may be present such as
being an underrepresented minority or being socioeconomically disadvantaged. Be sure to double check each program’s requirements before applying.

4. **How competitive is each Summer Research Program?** It is important to realize that thousands of students apply to summer programs every year and many of them are very well qualified for the position. If your only concern is doing summer research, then applying to less competitive programs will maximize your chances. Generally cities that are thought of as less desirable by students receive less applicants, as are programs that require applicants to mail in application materials rather than being fully electronic. Furthermore, look for programs that are brand new as newer sites generally get less overall applicants because they are not as well known by students and this can vastly improve your chances of acceptance.

Be sure to check out all of the Summer Research Programs being offered this summer at:

http://luc.edu/lurop/opportunities/summerresearchprograms/

Further questions can be emailed to lurop@luc.edu