
Frequently Asked Questions

Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research

What is the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research?

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research, coupled with the Dean Keith Simonton Prize, is an annual award instituted in 1994. The award recognizes outstanding undergraduate students for their research, scholarship or creative activity tied to any academic subject that has been performed while at UC Davis.

Who is the eligibility for this award?

To be eligible for this award, you must be:

- An undergraduate student in good academic standing
- Graduating from UC Davis in the current academic year (fall, winter or spring)
- Eligible to participate in the June commencement ceremonies
- Have conducted your independent research under the direction of a UC Davis faculty member
- Considered an outstanding undergraduate researcher by your faculty research sponsor

Is there a GPA requirement for this award?

No, there is no GPA requirement, but you must meet the aforementioned eligibility requirements. The award is based on the overall quality of your research work and GPA is not a criteria for the award; however, students must be in good academic standing and considered to be an outstanding undergraduate researcher by their faculty research sponsor. Independent contributions to faculty-supervised research is highly valued. Research publications, presentations, and other major contributions are highly regarded.

Can my research be in any field?

Nominees' project may be in any major or academic subject at UC Davis. The project should highlight your contributions to the field and ensure that the contributions are clearly communicated to the selection committee.

What does the application consist of?

The application consists of:

- a copy of a full research document, thesis, project, or presentation (uploaded in PDF format)
- a 1-2 page summary describing your project in a way that emphasizes your independent contributions and communicates the project clearly to a committee comprised of faculty from diverse academic disciplines.
- a nomination letter from the faculty sponsor (no more than 2 pages long, 12-point font, single spaced).
- in addition to the nomination letter, at least one supporting recommendation letter is required. A second supporting letter of recommendation is optional. All letters should be no more than 2 pages long, 12-point font, single spaced.

How are students selected for the award?

The Chancellor's Award Selection Committee reviews each application. This committee is comprised of faculty from diverse academic disciplines and you should use the 1-2 page summary of your project to communicate clearly and effectively to committee members from diverse academic disciplines. Selection of awardees is based on the quality of the overall application materials and research project. Successful submissions should clearly demonstrate and communicate the outstanding contributions to research and discovery in their discipline, with an emphasis on the student's independent contributions.

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Who may nominate students?

Only faculty research sponsors (academic senate or federation members) may nominate students.

What if I have already graduated in December 2020; am I eligible?

Yes. You must apply for the award in the academic year in which you are graduating, e.g., if graduating December 2020, you can apply in April 2021 for the June 2021 ceremony.

Can my research partner and I apply as a team?

This award recognizes independent contributions to research. Therefore, only individual applications for research teams are allowed.

Who may write supporting letters of recommendation?

- Faculty (academic senate or federation members)
- Postdocs or staff
- Graduate students

I have more than three letter writers. Can I include more letter writers?

No, only three total letters are allowed. In addition to the nomination letter from a faculty sponsor, you may only submit two other supporting recommendation letters. If you have more than three total letter writers, you may consider submitting one letter that is co-signed by several people, or a letter may incorporate quotes about your work from another person. Any letters should be no more than 2 pages long, 12-point font, single spaced.

Can one of my recommendation letter writers be from off-campus?

Yes, as long as it is from a professor or professional you worked closely with, and someone who can speak favorably about your research work; however, your nomination letter must be from a UC Davis faculty that you have conducted your research with.

How can I best highlight my research?

In the 1-2 page summary of your paper/research project or design, be sure to emphasize your individual contributions to the project. The thesis project should be complete or nearly complete.

What are the benefits to winning the award?

Undergraduate recipients of the prestigious award receive:

- a \$500 Simonton Prize
- an engraved plaque
- special recognition at the Chancellor's Award Reception
- a seat on stage and special recognition during your commencement ceremony

How do I find out more about the award and the nomination process?

Students interested in submitting an application should consider attending an information session where they will learn successful strategies and advice to complete the application process.

Info Sessions TBD

For more information about the Chancellor's Award, [click here](#).

When is the deadline to apply?

The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, April 7th 2021 at 11:59 p.m.** Applications will not be accepted after this time so please plan to upload before 11:59 p.m. in case you experience any technical difficulties.