

EXSS Student Research Opportunity FAQs

When can I begin?

You may start volunteering in any lab as early as your freshman year. However, it may take a semester (or more) or information gathering and planning to find an UG research opportunity. It is never too early to start learning about opportunities in EXSS.

How do I begin?

The doctoral students that work with our EXSS faculty have provided a few resources to help students get started:

- 1) Sign up for the HMSC Research Interest Group at <https://go.unc.edu/HMSCInterestGroup>.



- 2) Explore current research opportunities at <https://go.unc.edu/HMSCStudentResearchOpps>.



This document provides information regarding the current studies occurring in the EXSS department. Make sure to check the different involvement levels to gauge your interest. We recommend picking one or two studies that pique your curiosity and emailing the designated contact.

Please keep in mind that each research opportunity's point of contact may do things differently than others.

Can I receive course credit?

If you want to receive academic credit, you must enroll in EXSS 395. To do that you must meet the following criteria:

- Find a faculty mentor

- Complete two or more ‘relevant’ courses completed with at least a “B” grade. Prerequisite course relevancy is determined by the faculty supervisor of the directed study in question.
- Complete the EXSS 395/396 Learning Contract found on the EXSS website and submit to the Online Course Management System (OLCM) (<https://olcm.oasis.unc.edu/olcm/>)
 - Once submitted, the Learning Contract will be reviewed and approved by your Faculty Research Mentor and the EXSS Director of Undergraduate Research.
 - Resources for OLCM can be found at: <https://curricula.unc.edu/independent-study-courses/>
- The Learning Contract is due **by 5pm on the first day of classes** in Fall/Spring. There are no exceptions.

How many credit hours can I receive?

Students should expect to devote the following amount of time.

- 1 credit: ~3-4 hours per week for a semester total of at least 48 hours per semester
- 2 credits: ~6-8 hours per week for a semester total of at least 96 hours per semester
- 3 credits: ~9-12 hours per week for a semester total of at least 144 hours per semester

Students approved to do the research course are expected to be self-motivated and largely self-directed. Faculty members supervising a research student must meet on a regular basis throughout the semester with each student pursuing an independent study under their direction.

NOTE: Students can take no more than a total of 12 credits in independent study. This excludes Senior Honor Thesis credits (EXSS 693H/694H), but includes guided research (EXSS 395), independent study and directed readings (EXSS 396), undergraduate learning assistants (EXSS 391), and internships/practica (EXSS 293, 393, 493, 593). There are also specific limits in the number of times and total credits that a student can take for each class.

Please consult the [UNC Course Catalog](#) and [UNC Academic Advising](#) for further information on your standing. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of these limits, not that of the EXSS faculty.

How do I find a faculty mentor?

Visit the websites of the faculty and laboratories in EXSS. If these interest you, email the lab directors. Ask the faculty who teach your classes about their research. Also, use the resources provided above by the HMSC doctoral students.