



Office of Undergraduate
Research & Creative Activities
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **DENVER**

EURēCA! Program Student Handbook

Education through **Undergraduate Research**
and **Creative Activities**

Updated Summer 2024

A program of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities with support from the Office of Academic Achievement, the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office, and LynxConnect

Note: This EURēCA! Program Handbook is intended to provide an overview of this program and to summarize policies described in detail in the [University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Student Employment Handbook](#), published annually by the Student Employment Office. All on-campus University employers should read, be familiar with, and adhere to policies described in detail in the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Student Employment Handbook in addition to this program overview document. Every student should also be familiar with the Student Employment Handbook, in particular, the sections on Student Employee Information and Policy.

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Welcome Students and Faculty!

Thank you for your interest in the EURēCA! Program. The **Education through Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (EURēCA!)** programs run by the **Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities**, are designed to provide CU Denver students an opportunity to engage in educational collaborations with faculty mentors as they explore what it means to be a scholar in their discipline. The **EURēCA! Student Assistant Program** facilitates the use of Federal Work-study and University-provided funds to support qualified undergraduates in professionally relevant paid research positions at CU Denver | Anschutz, either with or without academic internship credit.

Students, we are excited that CU Denver is able to offer you a variety of exciting opportunities to engage in mentored learning outside of the classroom. Take this time to learn to conduct original scholarship in your field, develop a professional relationship with a faculty mentor, immerse yourself in your discipline, explore academic and career options, follow your passion, and have fun!

Faculty, help us to introduce students to scholarship in your discipline, challenge our students by engaging them in professionally relevant and meaningful scholarly activities, and support them as they disseminate their findings to broader audiences. Ideally, participating in one or more of our EURēCA! Programs will advance your scholarship as well, as it has for many faculty members across our schools and colleges.

We are here to provide support as you navigate the process of joining our community of scholars and mentors. Please do not hesitate to contact our office with questions about this or other EURēCA! Programs. We are here to support you!

Sincerely,

Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Team
<https://www.ucdenver.edu/lynxconnect/undergraduate-research>
undergrad.research@ucdenver.edu





What is the URCA Office?

The **Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA)** connects CU Denver students with the research and creative mission of the University. Our **Education through Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (EURēCA!)** programs facilitate collaboration between students and faculty to incorporate inquiry, design, investigation, and discovery into learning experiences within and beyond the classroom.

Our vision is to build and nurture a **vibrant** and **inclusive** research community where all CU Denver undergraduates are afforded the opportunity to engage in state-of-the-field scholarship. As such, our programs are designed to support students from their first explorations into the research and creative enterprise through their emergence as independent scholars:

EURēCA! Student Assistants is an introductory program that leverages federal-work study dollars and grant funds to provide one year of entry-level salary support to undergraduates new to the research and creative enterprise. EURēCA! Student Assistants work alongside a CU Denver | Anschutz faculty mentor to explore what it means to be a scholar in their discipline. EURēCA! Student Assistants may participate in the program for multiple years but must apply annually for continued URCA support.

In addition to the [EURēCA! Student Assistant Program](#), URCA also runs the [EURēCA! Summer Fellows Program](#), [EURēCA! Grants Program](#), and organizes the annual [Research and Creative Activities Symposium \(RaCAS\)](#). Our office also provides seminars, workshops, and student advising services to CU Denver undergraduates interested in accessing mentored learning opportunities across the CU Denver | Anschutz campuses.

The EURēCA! Programs: Why Should Students Participate?

As Colorado's premiere public urban research university, CU Denver offers a wealth of learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. Here, undergraduates are building 3D printers, creating documentary films, developing new techniques to

detect cancer, and participating in an exciting world of discovery – all while being paid and receiving academic credit!

The EURēCA! programs help match undergraduates with faculty mentors who are eager to engage them in research and creative scholarship. Through these collaborations, students have the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their field, while learning skills needed to succeed in a professional setting. Starting salary is \$18.29/hour and you can choose to apply this experience towards a for-credit academic internship as well. Students who have a work-study award as part of their financial aid package are able to put that entire amount towards their EURēCA! position. With a standard award of \$3,250/semester, this normally allows for 175 hours per semester or approximately 10 hours per week. Students who do not have a work-study award are still eligible for these positions but are limited to 100 hours of URCA-funded work per semester, dependent on the availability of funds.

Why participate? Besides receiving hands-on training not generally available through traditional undergraduate curricula¹, a recent study found that CU Denver undergraduates who utilize their work-study awards have higher graduation and retention rates, as well as increased success at obtaining jobs after graduation².

From science labs, to field sites, to studios – undergraduate research experiences can happen in a variety of settings and take on many forms. Curious about the experiences available to you? Reach out to the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (undergrad.research@ucdenver.edu) or search for EURēCA! positions on [Handshake](#).

Unsure if you have a Work-study Award as part of your Financial Aid Package? Login to the UCDAccess Student Portal and select 'Financial Aid' from within the Student Center. From there click 'View Financial Aid' and select the current Aid Year. Here you will see the types of financial aid you have been awarded. Still not seeing a Work-Study award? Submit a **Request for Work-study Form** on the CU Denver Financial Aid website.

¹ "The Pennsylvania State University Division of Undergraduate Studies." The Mentor: An Academic Advising Journal. Accessed November 16, 2018. <https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/2013/05/undergraduate-research-students-perspective/>.

² Duran, L. Stroup-Benham, C. 2018. The Power of Student Employment.

HOW TO CHECK YOUR WORK-STUDY AWARDS

- 01 Log into your *UCDAccess student portal*
- 02 In your *Student Center*, select *Financial Aid*
- 03 Click *View Financial Aid*
- 04 Select the *aid year* you wish to view
- 05 Find *Work-Study* under the listed aid year:

**Please note WS awards are typically split 50/50 between fall and spring semesters*

If you've received financial aid but don't have work-study included in your award, you may still be eligible! To find out, visit the [CU Denver Financial Aid Office website](#), put in a [Request for Work-study Form](#), or contact your Undergraduate Research Advisor. **There are both need-based and non-need based work-study programs**, and we recommend that ALL students applying to the EURēCA! program look into their work-study eligibility, regardless of financial need.

CU Denver Financial Aid Office

Email: FinancialAid@ucdenver.edu

Phone: 303-315-5969

Website: www.ucdenver.edu/student-finances/financial-aid

Student as Scholar, What Does that Mean?

The term **scholar** denotes a person with a deep and profound knowledge of a specific subject. Whereas all scholars are students, not all students become scholars. One key differentiator in this process is **mentorship**. EURēCA! students are not employees, they are EURēCA! Mentees. Through this experience you can expect to be given individualized training from your mentor as they introduce you to the world of scholarship in their discipline.

Across studies, students report that the most important aspect of the undergraduate research experience is their relationship with a mentor³

- Students participating in the EURēCA! Programs can expect to be intellectually engaged by their EURēCA! Mentor. Under their guidance, students will learn what it means to be a scholar and come to understand the importance of scholarship to society.
- EURēCA! Mentees can expect to develop both discipline-specific and universal career skills. They will learn the techniques and methodologies needed to address relevant questions in their field as well as develop more general professional skills. These include creativity, judgement, communication, organization, and persistence, among others.⁴
- With guidance from their mentors, students will engage in key elements of research and scholarship, learning to distinguish between personal beliefs and evidence as well as to situate the concepts, practices, and results of their work within a broader context.
- Students will learn to communicate and disseminate their work to a variety of audiences. From one-on-one meetings to participation in the annual Research and Creative Activities Symposium (RaCAS), students will learn to coherently share their research and ideas.
- Students will receive guidance as they plan their future careers. Mentors will help students understand what is needed to become a professional in their discipline and aid in setting goals and milestones. The Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities is here to help students connect with additional training opportunities.
- EURēCA! Mentees should seek to develop an authentic relationship with their mentor. Communication is key to this dynamic. Just as you are depending on your mentor to train you as a scholar, know that they are depending on you to complete

³ Temple, L., Sibley, T.Q., & Orr, A.J. (2010). How to mentor undergraduate researchers. Washington: Council on Undergraduate Research

⁴ Showman, A., et al. (2013). Five essential skills for every undergraduate researcher. Council on Undergraduate Research Quarterly

an aspect of their own scholarship. Set expectations early, hold yourself accountable, and work together to come up with a plan for how you will communicate and resolve challenges.

- Research and scholarship are challenging, but we know you can do it! The Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities is here to help you connect with resources that will set you up for success: undergrad.research@ucdenver.edu

Who is Eligible to be a EURēCA! Mentee?

To be eligible to hold a EURēCA! position, a student must:

- hold degree-seeking CU Denver undergraduate status;
- submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and apply for a work-study award as part of their financial aid package;
- complete a University of Colorado Background Request Form, pursuant to the CU Denver | Anschutz Background Investigations Policy;
- be enrolled part-time or full-time (*at least 6 credit hours*) throughout the semester, including summer semesters (see CU Denver | Anschutz Student Employment Handbook for details);
- maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress assessed at the end of each semester based upon grade point average, completion rate, and overall attempted credit hour limit;
- have relevant coursework and demonstrated skills, which will vary with the proposed scholarly activity;
- commit to attending two URCA events each semester and to presenting outcomes of scholarly activity at the CU Denver Research and Creative Activities Symposium (RaCAS), held each spring.

Note #1: It is highly recommended that undergraduates interested in applying for EURēCA! positions meet briefly with an advisor or counselor in LynxConnect to answer questions about the program and to ensure that their application materials (i.e., resume, cover letter, transcript, work-study award letter) are appropriate for these positions.

Note #2: Students also may choose to use their research toward academic internship credit in addition to receiving financial compensation as part of their work-study award.

Application and Hiring Process: Student Assistants

How Do I Apply for a EURēCA! Student Assistant Job?

Obtaining a EURēCA! Student Assistant position is a competitive process. Furthermore, it represents a real commitment to students by faculty members. As such, receiving a Work-study Award as part of your Federal Student Aid does not guarantee a position. Start the search for a position early to maximize your chances for success.

To find available EURēCA! Student Assistant positions:

1. Submit your current FAFSA application and contact the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office concerning your work-study eligibility:
FinancialAid@ucdenver.edu
2. EURēCA! job postings can be viewed on **Handshake**, the University of Colorado Denver's student employment platform (<https://ucdenver.joinhandshake.com/>).
3. From the homepage select 'Jobs' in the top middle column.
4. Search "EURēCA!" in the search bar.
5. Read the job titles and descriptions to find opportunities relevant to your area of study and career goals. Make sure you review the expectations and qualifications required for each position. Job descriptions will have the name and information of the faculty contact (EURēCA! Mentor); don't hesitate to reach out to them for more information about the position.
6. Once you have found one or more jobs you want to apply to, **complete the EURēCA! Online Canvas Presentation and complete the quizzes at the end.**
7. After passing the online quiz, you will be notified by email that the label "eurekaok" is on your Handshake account by the Undergraduate Research Advisor (elizabeth.evans@ucdenver.edu). This is not an automatic process so allow 1-2 business days. **You cannot begin applying until you have this label associated with your Handshake account.**
8. **Contact the Undergraduate Research Advisor before applying** to answer any questions about the program and to ensure that your application materials (i.e., resume, cover letter, transcript, work-study award letter) are appropriate to the position. **You can also use drop-in hours with the LynxConnect Peer Advisors or set up an appointment with the Career Counseling Staff to review your application materials.** All advising appointments can be scheduled via Handshake.
9. Submit a complete application (incomplete applications will not be reviewed). Faculty mentors will reach out to schedule interviews with qualified candidates.

The Hiring Process

1. Once offered a position, you will work with the Undergraduate Research Advisor, Liz Evans, to finalize your hiring.
2. You will need to complete a Student Experience Learning Agreement (a.k.a. Experience) on Handshake before you are legally allowed to begin working. This document will be finalized during a Solidify Appointment with the Undergraduate Research Advisor. Together you will confirm your job description and role, set learning objectives for the semester, and review expectations of the EURēCA! Student Assistant program.
3. Once your Experience document is complete, it will be sent to your faculty mentor and the Student Employment Office for approval.
4. Students with an established university employee ID number typically do not need to complete a background check or I-9 verification in order to begin working. Students who do not have a university employee ID number will work with the URCA HR support to complete the background check and I-9 work eligibility verification process.
5. The semester hiring deadline for EURēCA! Student Assistant Mentees who wish to receive academic credit for this experience is **Census Date**. See semester-specific academic calendar for details.

Employment Requirements

All student employees MUST:

- complete the University of Colorado Background Request Form, pursuant to the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Background Investigations Policy;
- complete all relevant University trainings required to undertake the scholarly activity, which will vary depending on the job duties;
- complete an I-9 form;
- be enrolled at least part-time (at least 6 credit hours per semester). Students who drop below the 6-credit hour requirement, or withdraw during the semester, may only work through the last day of attendance;
- enroll in a “for-credit” or “not-for-credit” learning agreement through a Handshake Experience appointment during the semester in which the award is administered. Failure to do so will result in the award being withheld.
- fulfill the tasks and responsibilities assigned by their mentor and outlined in a learning agreement.
- conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner, acting as a positive representative of CU Denver as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

- complete the hours agreed upon with the mentor.
- notify the Office of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities in a timely manner of any changes to their Learning Agreement or if any problems develop during their research experience.
- complete the evaluation at the end of each semester (online evaluation form will be provided by URCA).

Student employees who are graduating may only work up to the last day of classes and/or finals week and may not earn funding past the last day of classes. **Note:** If you have graduated, you are not considered a current student and therefore, are not eligible for student employment.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please contact your Undergraduate Research Advisor, faculty mentor, and/or the Office of Financial Aid.

Application Process: Make it EURēCA!

'Make it EURēCA!' is a way for students currently in an unpaid research position to jointly apply with their mentor for the EURēCA! Student Assistant Program. This is an introductory program that leverages federal-work study dollars and grant funds to provide entry-level salary support to undergraduates new to the research and creative enterprise.

To apply, the faculty mentor submits a proposal to the URCA Office outlining the proposed EURēCA! Student Assistant position, including student details, and a co-written, signed mentoring plan. If approved, students will begin the hiring process without applying through Handshake. Application does not guarantee acceptance into the EURēCA! Student Assistant Program.

Application and details can be found on the URCA website:
<https://www.ucdenver.edu/lynxconnect/undergraduate-research/jobs>

General Requirements

Students hired as part of the EURēCA! Program represent the Office of Undergraduate Research and the University of Colorado Denver. As such, EURēCA! Mentees are ambassadors for this Program and are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

- ***Student Assistant Positions are Real Jobs!***

Your faculty mentor is counting on you to be there when you are scheduled. Much of lab work consists of precise timing or sequential work among various individuals. Consistent lateness or missing work may lead to termination.

If you have an unexpected emergency, contact and inform your supervisor so that adjustments can be made.

- ***Student Assistant Positions may be Funded by Work-study, but this Does not Mean Studying During Work***

During your scheduled hours, you are there to work. Most faculty mentors recognize that student employees are juggling an academic schedule, a work schedule, and personal responsibilities. Each student employee and mentor should plan a work schedule that best accommodates classroom hours and study time. Students are not able to schedule work hours during their regularly scheduled class times. When discussing your work schedule, be sure to leave time outside of work hours for studying.

- ***Satisfactory Academic Progress***

Federal and State financial aid rules and regulations require that students maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), in order to be eligible to earn Work-study awards. This progress is assessed at the end of each semester and is based upon grade point average, completion rate, and overall attempted credit hour limit. See the [CU Denver | Anschutz Student Employment Handbook](#) for details.

- ***Unprofessional Behavior on the Job Must be Avoided.***

This includes dressing inappropriately, cell phone use, unpreparedness, and threatening language and behavior. Use the appearance, behavior, and practices of others in your work environment as a guide. If you have any questions about what is appropriate behavior, ask your mentor.

Allotted Hours

All EURēCA! Mentees are paid \$18.29/hour. The average student work-study award is \$3,250, which allows for 175 hours of paid research time across the semester. However, in some cases, student work-study awards are less than \$3,250. **Please pay close attention to your work-study award amount, as it is ultimately your responsibility to make sure you do not overspend on your award.** Students will not be paid for hours beyond those in their Financial Aid Package, unless a previous arrangement has been made between their EURēCA! Mentor and the URCA Office.

For students without a work-study award, the Office of Undergraduate Research is able to fund up to 100 hours of work per semester. EURēCA! Mentors may be able to support additional hours depending on their funding situation, but this requires consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Once all hiring paperwork in Handshake and with HR has been completed, Student Researchers may begin working, **but not before so**. Students may work and report up to 25 hours per week or 50 hours per biweekly pay period during the Fall and Spring semesters. During Winter, Spring, and Summer Breaks, students may work up to 40 hours per week. Students may not work more than eight hours in one day and must take a 30-minute break when working six or more hours.

Schedule Setting

Students must arrange a mutually agreeable work schedule with their mentor or direct supervisor and adhere to it. Each student employee must:

- arrange a work schedule that does not interfere with their class schedule, including final and midterm exams, during which supervisors are required to accommodate the student's study/exam schedule;
- follow the schedule once it has been established. Notify their supervisor if there is an unexpected change;
- be punctual;
- provide prior notification to supervisor of inability to report for scheduled work hours.

Students cannot be paid for hours worked when it is determined that they should have been attending class during that time.

Timesheets and Pay Periods

Timesheets are completed through the online MyLeave system.

Time reports are due to your faculty mentor on the Friday before the pay period ending date unless you have made other arrangements with your mentor. ALL time reports received after 10 am on Monday following the pay period ending date may not be processed until the next payroll.

It is ultimately the student's and supervisor's responsibility to keep track of work-study earnings and awards throughout the semester. Furthermore, it is the sole responsibility of the student to be aware of possible funding and status changes, along with any work-study award reductions to their Financial Aid during the semester. It is also the sole responsibility of the student to immediately inform their supervisor and the

URCA Office of any changes that can affect their work-study award and employment eligibility.

Students are eligible to request additional work-study funds from the Financial Aid office, but this must be done before their original award is exhausted.

Students can contact the Financial Aid Office with any questions in this area: FinancialAid@ucdenver.edu or 303-315-5969.

Benefits and Sick Leave

As a student employee, you are eligible for jury duty pay but you are not eligible for, or entitled to; retirement, fringe benefits such as vacation, unemployment and/or paid holidays. As a result of the Healthy Families and Workplace Act effective January 1, 2021, you will earn .034 hours of sick leave for each hour worked. The maximum accrual is 48 hours per fiscal year, and these cannot be “banked” for use at the end of the semester. Please notify the URCA Office and your EURēCA! Mentor if you need to take sick leave.

Resignations and Terminations

Students should give a notification of *at least two weeks* if planning to resign from their Student Assistant Research job prior to the end of the semester.

A student’s continued employment is contingent upon satisfactory performance as determined by their mentor in consultation with their direct supervisor. If the mentor decides that a student’s performance is not satisfactory, the student may be dismissed following appropriate steps detailed above. Student employees may write a letter of appeal to be placed in their student employment file.

If they knowingly submit fraudulent information, students will be dismissed from the program and may face legal consequences.

Additional Information

Contact the following for detailed information about EURēCA! Programs:

- **Liz Evans:** *Senior Program Coordinator*
Phone: 303-315-4000
e-Mail: elizabeth.evans@ucdenver.edu
Location: LynxConnect, Tivoli 439
- **Financial Aid and Scholarships Office:** *Work-study awards and hiring*
Phone: 303-315-1850
Email: Financialaid@ucdenver.edu
Location: CU Student Commons Building, Suite 5105
- **LynxConnect:** *Resume and cover letter assistance, trainings, and workshops*
Phone: 303-315-4000
Email: LynxConnect@ucdenver.edu

Federal Work Study and FAFSA Information

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships at CU Denver offers opportunities for Student employment on campus. To learn more and apply for positions begin by logging into [UCDAccess](#), clicking the **Financial Aid** tab then **Student Employment** which will link to the **Handshake Job Board**. More information about Handshake can be found within this [student guide](#).

To be considered for a Federal Work-study Award at the University of Colorado Denver, you should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) through the [FAFSA website](#). ***Priority Deadline is April 1st and online applications must be submitted by June 30th!*** If you are initially not awarded Federal Work-study as part of your aid package, reach out to the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships and complete a Work Study Request Form. If you are subsequently awarded a Federal Work-study award, you will receive a revised award notification.

Questions? Visit the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships in Suite 5105 on the fifth floor of the Student Commons Building between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. You can also contact the office by phone at 303-315-1850 or email at Financialaid@ucdenver.edu.