Many Vanderbilt summer research programs pay a stipend. In addition, there are some research employment opportunities, and students may apply for research scholarships and fellowships. Nearly 40% of students at Vanderbilt participate in research. Of undergraduate student researchers, 29% earn academic credit for their research. Many Vanderbilt summer research programs pay a stipend. In addition, there are some research employment opportunities, and students may apply for research scholarships and fellowships. Among U.S. colleges and universities in federal research and development funding obligations, Vanderbilt is in the 21st.
Among the many decisions you are currently facing regarding your college search may be the choice between a top-tier research university and a teaching-focused liberal arts college. At Vanderbilt, you do not have to choose.

While our faculty members are dedicated to fostering the undergraduate academic experience in and out of the classroom, our students are also afforded numerous opportunities to “get their hands dirty” in the lab and out in the field, no matter their chosen majors.

Through their innovative work, Vanderbilt faculty and students have made notable contributions to the fields of health care, education, social science, humanities, music, and much more. At Vanderbilt, you will have the chance not only to absorb and apply invaluable lessons from your professors, but also to take part in their innovations and create new avenues of knowledge for future generations.
Vanderbilt students may engage in research projects that span nearly every academic field offered by the university. Most undergraduate students get involved by actively reaching out to professors, academic advisers, or graduate students whose current research projects interest them, while some faculty seek undergraduate assistance via departmental websites or classroom interactions.

Vanderbilt also offers summer research programs that include paid stipends, and the university continues to foster relationships with research programs at other institutions in the U.S. and abroad.

Each of the four undergraduate schools has honors programs that require research or independent study as part of the extended curriculum. Students can apply to have their work published in the Vanderbilt Undergraduate Research Journal or other academic journals, and students have opportunities to present on campus and at academic conferences.

Students involved in academic research join a community of collaborative scholars often engaged in research that spans traditional disciplinary lines. The combination of Vanderbilt’s low 8:1 student-to-teacher ratio and the culture of close faculty-student interactions mean that undergraduates frequently work one-on-one with faculty engaged in cutting-edge research.

Explore undergraduate research at Vanderbilt: research.vanderbilt.edu/undergraduate
“I work in a gastrointestinal (GI) lab in the Vanderbilt University Medical Center that studies H. pylori, the bacteria that causes most GI cancers. I got involved by visiting the Medical Center’s website and emailing the researchers in the department in which I was interested.”

– Erica Graff (’14, Miami Beach, FL), a pre-med student majoring in communications studies

“I work in a lab in the psychology department, studying the possible effects of musical notation on the visual system and visual perception in particular. I got involved in research by emailing a professor of a class that I really enjoyed and asking if I could have a position in her lab. I am a co-author on a paper that has just been submitted for publication.”

– Kristyn Fratus (’14, San Antonio, TX), double major in psychology and manifestations of culture, a self-designed interdisciplinary major
"Mismatched Tool: Determining the Properties by which Infants Categorize a Tool as 'Spoon'"
– Sara Greenberg ('13, Memphis, TN)

"Self-fulfilling Prophecies in Athletic Performance"
– Benjamin Herwitz ('13, Muir Beach, CA)

"Mindfulness, Depression, and Parenting Behavior"
– Brittany Thompson ('13, Arlington Heights, IL)

“I first started research through the Human and Organizational Development Honors Program. I have worked on three research projects with one professor, including research related to charter schools and a study about social and emotional health. The summer before my senior year, I designed a research study that looks at the efficacy of creative writing instruction and the moderating effect of community and creativity. I have presented my research at the Harvard College Undergraduate Research Association and the International Reading Association.”
– Mara Truslow ('13, Boise, ID), a human and organizational development major

“I work in a lab that studies the effect of media on young children’s learning. Specifically, I review past literature on bullying and help with studies that investigate two- to three-year-olds’ self-regulation and word learning with iPads. I got involved by asking a teacher if I could volunteer in her lab. I may be able to publish research my senior year.”
– Junyi Chu ('15, Singapore), a double major in child development and cognitive studies
“Development and Curation of General Modeling Environment Software”
– Amy Bergeron
('13, New Orleans, LA)

“Development of Fast Adaptive Next-Generation Ground Vehicles”
– John Narozanick
('13, Vero Beach, FL)

“Electrical Properties of New Composite Nanoparticle Material Systems”
– John Lantz
('13, Denver, CO)

“I assist with two separate projects, both of which involve the development of wirelessly operated robotic surgical capsules for use in endoscopies. I got involved in this research after my adviser suggested that I contact the professor who runs this lab. I plan to continue working in the lab, as well as delve deeper into a self-designed project.”

– Nathan Hall ('14, Oak Ridge, TN), a double major in mechanical engineering and mathematics

“I got involved in research when a professor said he was looking for a few undergraduate researchers and I sent him my resume. The professor I work with owns a consulting company that does a lot of litigation cases so a lot of the research is based on what types of products need to be analyzed for a trial. I am glad I have had the opportunity to work on real-world cases.”

– Meredith Quast ('13, Chesapeake, VA), a chemical engineering major

Explore undergraduate research at Vanderbilt: research.vanderbilt.edu/undergraduate
“I was awarded a Vanderbilt Undergraduate Summer Research Program (VUSRP) grant and I spent the summer conducting field research for my senior honors thesis, which explores connections between music, community, and sustainability in minor-league baseball affiliates in the Southeast’s music cities. I got involved in research when I decided to do a senior honors thesis. Once I had an idea for my thesis, I approached a faculty member whose classes I had taken to ask him if he would be my thesis adviser.”

–Katie Walden (‘14, St. Louis, MO), a musical arts (piano) major with a minor in viola performance

“I received a Vanderbilt Undergraduate Summer Research Program (VUSRP) award, which funded a 10-week summer trip to New York City to research ways that interactive performance art can be used to facilitate social activism for participants. In addition to studying with performance artists, helping to install shows, and attending lectures and live performances, I will use the insights I gain to stage several of my own performances. My research project will culminate in a solo, month-long exhibit at a Nashville gallery. To participate in this research project, I spoke with my professor and applied for a VUSRP award.”

–DeLesslin “Roo” George-Warren (‘14, Rock Hill, SC), a musical arts (voice) major with a concentration in composition
Learn about undergraduate research at Vanderbilt: research.vanderbilt.edu/undergraduate

Explore your next steps: admissions.vanderbilt.edu