

Research Lab Assistant Tips



WHY JOIN A LAB?

Joining a research lab offers hands-on experience to engage with researchers and content you learn about in class. Taking advantage of these opportunities can lead you to completing an honors thesis, improve your graduate school prospects, and provide you with valuable mentorship and networking experiences. Don't wait! Start now!

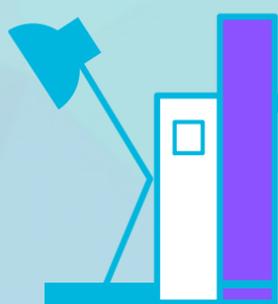
TIPS FOR BECOMING A RESEARCH LAB ASSISTANT

FIND A LAB OF INTEREST

- **Reflect:** Make a list of your research interests before joining a lab. Do not skip this very important step.
- **Explore Labs:** Learn about labs at psychology.as.virginia.edu/research-opportunities. The Research Programs Directory categorizes research labs and will include a lab description or webpage.
- **Lab of Interest:** Make note of labs that align with your personal research interests. This will make your work in the lab more fulfilling and personally meaningful.



DIVE DEEPER



- **Become more Familiar:** Be familiar with the lab and the principal investigator's research by visiting <https://psychology.as.virginia.edu/people> and read their brief biography.
- **Dive Deep:** Read the lab's principle investigator's research by using Google scholar or Psych Info
- **Graduate Students:** Make note of the graduate students currently in the lab you are interested in. Visit <https://psychology.as.virginia.edu/grad-students>

CONTACT THE LAB

- **Identify:** Determine the best point of contact(e.g. faculty, lab coordinator, graduate student, or general lab email.
- **Draft an Effective Email:** Remember to keep your inquiry short, direct, and informative. Visit psychology.as.virginia.edu/research-opportunities for guidance on formatting.
- **Include Resume or CV:** Visit <https://career.virginia.edu/professional-documents> for tips and format guidance.
- **Take a Deep Breath**, and click send! Labs may accept a limited number of research assistants.
- **Follow-Up:** If no response, remember that sometimes people are busy or may overlook a few emails. There's no harm in following up within a week.



QUESTIONS TO ASK

- **Responsibilities:** Ask about weekly responsibilities and expectations of a lab research assistant.
- **Lab Size:** Small labs may be best suited for 1st & 2nd year student seeking exposure to research and key developing skills.
- **Interactions:** Determine who you will be interacting with on a regular basis. Students in their 3rd and 4th year may seek out smaller labs where they closely interact with grad students and principle investigators.
- **Opportunities:** Do not be afraid to ask if there are opportunities for research assistance to present and/or publish research.

