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.