

Each summer, a letter is sent to all of the incoming freshmen mathematics and computer science majors inviting them to submit a letter of application to join the student research program. This letter briefly explains the program and asks the interested students to explain why they want to do this and to describe why they feel they are prepared to work in a project involving independence and leadership skills.



The students participating in the research program are assigned to teams based on their interests, talents, and to some degree on their personalities. Usually, the team will consist of one or two freshmen and a single upper-class student.

Generally, research teams are assembled to work on projects proposed by students who have approached faculty members for support and assistance.

The letter inviting the incoming students to participate makes it clear that while they are expected to contribute to the research effort, their primary role is to learn about the research process. In particular, they are not being called on to lead a research effort, but they are "interning" in the process. The letter specifies that they will be asked, and expected, to take leadership roles if they continue to work on research projects after their first year.

The research teams stay together for a period of one year, although it is possible for some teams to continue working on a project for longer periods. In the latter case, new students are introduced to the project as older students leave the team.

Students are expected to commit themselves for two semesters of work on a given project. A very active student could earn a total of eight credits for their research efforts over four years, but few are able to maintain this active program in mathematics alone.