

# McNair Scholars Program

[www.mcnair.ucdavis.edu](http://www.mcnair.ucdavis.edu)

Your pathway to a Ph.D.

Adversity

Embrace

Diversity

Succeed

EXPLORE A  
Ph.D.

I AM  
McNair!  
TRiO  
TRIO  
RACIAL AND ETHNIC  
GROUNDED ORGANIZATION

Honor

Integrity

In the Spirit of  
RONALD E. McNAIR  
Astronaut  
An American Hero

Discover

Achieve

True courage  
comes in  
enduring ...  
persevering ...  
and believing  
in oneself. ”

- Ronald E. McNair

Respect

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McNair, Ronald E.  
Professional Physics

## Frequently asked questions

### 1. Do I have to be enrolled full time to be considered for the program?

You must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at UCD to be considered for the program. The program prefers that students are enrolled full time, but makes exceptions for advanced students that do not need additional credits.

### 2. Are students from all academic majors eligible to apply?

Yes, we encourage undergraduate students from ALL majors to apply for the program.

### 3. I'm a post-bac student, am I eligible for the program?

No, students who have already completed a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science are not eligible to participate in the program. This program is for junior or senior level undergraduate students only.

### 4. I am a graduate student, am I eligible for the program?

No, students who have already completed a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science are not eligible to participate in the program. This program is for junior or senior level undergraduate students only.

### 5. I will be a senior this upcoming Fall; can I still apply for the program?

Yes, For example students that start the program in Fall 2017 will end the program at the end of Fall 2018 quarter. However, you will need to move your graduation date to the end of the following Fall term. You can participate in Spring commencement; however, you will receive your degree in December (end of Fall term). You're required to move your graduation date to the end of the Fall term because the research portion of the programs will be conducted during the summer. Students who have completed a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science before the summer term are not eligible for the program. Please note that in order to stay eligible for the program you must not graduate until you have completed the McNair program. The program runs from August to December.

### 6. What is the time commitment for the program?

The majority of your program content is delivered through academic seminars held on Friday's 10 am thru 2 pm. If accepted into the program, you will be enrolled in a 2-credit research seminar during Fall, winter and spring terms. The work load and time commitment are comparable to any other 2 credit class at UCD. The assignments and activities for the seminars are to help you complete your research proposal and create compelling applications to graduate and PhD programs. In addition, you're required to conduct 8-12 hours of research a week during the academic year .

During summer term, you will be attending summer research internships, preparation for GRE examination, focus on completing your research project to present at research conference. It is expected that you will work on your research project about 30 hours per week and attend 9 hours of seminar during the seminar. We ask scholars not to work or to take academic courses during summer term in order to focus on their research projects.





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### 7. Is this a scholarship?

No. While we are called the McNair Scholars Program, this is an undergraduate research fellowship rather than a traditional scholarship. The program does not provide money to pay for your tuition like a scholarship would. Instead, this is an undergraduate research program that helps prepare undergraduates for graduate school and academic research. There is a stipend associated with completing a research project.

### 8. I want to apply, but I'm new to UCD and I don't know who to ask to be my mentor. What should I do?

You are not required to have a faculty mentor at the time of applying. We encourage students to always make appointments with professors during their office hours. This is a great way to get to know your professors and to also get more out of the classes you are taking. Let your professors know that you are interested in conducting undergraduate research and that you are applying to the UCD McNair Scholars Program. Scholars are expected to have a mentor by the end of the fall quarter of the program.

### 9. Who qualifies as "low-income", "first-generation", and "under-represented"?

Please see the "Eligibility" page for more details.

### 10. I plan to take a full-time course load; can I still participate in the program?

Yes, you may apply. However, keep in mind that if you are accepted into the program you will be required to enroll in a 2-credit course. Anticipate about 2 credits work of academic work associated with each of these seminars.

### 11. Who should I ask to write my letters of recommendation?

Two letters of recommendation are required for the application. One of those two letters should be from a professor in your academic major, or the academic area that you are interested in for graduate school. Your second recommendation can also be from a professor, or an academic advisor, or someone who you have worked closely with in a research capacity, or someone familiar with your extracurricular activities.

It is always a good idea to ask people who you know will write excellent letters of recommendation for you. Look for someone who will be able to speak about your academic achievements, and your ability to do well and successfully complete the McNair Scholars Program and, eventually, graduate school. Letters from immediate family members are not acceptable.

### 12. I am an international student, am I eligible for the program?

No. Only US Citizens or Permanent Residents are eligible to apply for this federally-funded US Department of Education program.

### 13. Do I need to have an already formulated research question and topic in order to apply?

It is not required that you have a formulated research question and topic prior to applying. However, in your application essay we do request that you discuss a potential research question and topic that you would be interested in exploring for your McNair research project. This is an undergraduate research program and having an idea of what you might like to explore will help you do well in the program.

### 14. I want to go to graduate school but I'm not sure if I want to pursue a PhD, is this the right program for me?

Our program is designed specifically for students who are interested in obtaining a PhD.

### 15. I want to get a MD and become a medical doctor, is this program right for me?

Our program is designed specifically for students who are interested in obtaining a PhD.



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**15. I want to get a MD and become a medical doctor, is this program right for me?**

Our program is designed specifically for students who are interested in obtaining a PhD.

**16. I want to get a law degree (JD), is this program right for me?**

Our program is designed specifically for students who are interested in obtaining a PhD.

**17. My GPA is below a 3.0. Should I still apply?**

We do not recommend applying if your GPA is less than 3.0, which is the minimum to be a competitive applicant to graduate schools.

**18. When should I start preparing to apply to graduate school?**

At least one year in advance. We encourage all students in our program to begin preparing for the graduate school application process during their junior year.

**19. How will I pay for graduate school?**

Many graduate students get comprehensive funding packages, and the McNair staff will prepare you to be competitive for institutional and extramural funding opportunities.

**20. How will the stipend affect my financial aid?**

The stipend does not affect your financial aid.

**21. Do I have to attend graduate school at UCD?**

No. McNair Scholars apply to and are accepted by graduate schools nationwide.

**22. Do I need to take the GRE?**

Yes, Graduate programs in the U.S. require current GRE scores. The McNair Program offers a free GRE preparation course to help you practice for the exam.

**23. What are some of the benefits McNair Scholars receive?**

A GRE prep course, travel to conferences and graduate school fairs, academic and professional workshops, a paid research internship, and course credits, among many other benefits.

**24. Is it worth my time?**

If you are certain you want to earn a PhD, the program is absolutely worth your time. Among other things, the program provides a stipend of \$2800 during summer, ability to present at the UC Berkeley McNair Symposium, a one-year academic research internship, comprehensive graduate school advising, and opportunities to have research published in the UCD McNair journals. GRE preparation course, GRE fee reduction (half price), graduate school application fee waivers and assistance in prepping your graduate school applications; these resources improve your candidacy for securing graduate admission and school financial support.

**25. Does it matter if I have already done research or been a participant in a research mentorship program?**

Research through another program can provide a head start for McNair. It can also provide an opportunity to work with a diverse set of faculty members.

**26. I have even more questions. Who should I contact?**

Please call or email our office at [mcnair@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mcnair@ucdavis.edu) and 530-752-7486



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### Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible for the program you must be:

A first-generation college student

(neither parent graduated from a 4-year college before you turned 18-years-old)

**AND**

Low-income (family taxable income does not exceed 150% of poverty level established by US Census Bureau)

**OR**

If you are not a low-income individual who is a first-generation college student, you must be a member of a group traditionally under-represented in Higher Education (African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander)

Additional qualifications include the following:

- Enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at UCD
- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better
- Junior or Senior status, based on total credit hours at the start of the program
- US citizenship or permanent US residency

Intention to graduate from UCD and immediately enter an academic graduate program with the end goal of attaining a PhD

Definitions: The US Department of Education considers students who are African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander as underrepresented in higher education.

The federal government defines a first-generation college student as a student whose natural or adoptive parent(s) with whom he or she resided before his or her 18th birthday did not receive a baccalaureate degree from college.

The term low-income individual means an individual whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount.

### For Federal TRIO Current-Year Low-Income Levels

Please go to the US Department of Education website:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/trio/incomelevels.html>

