



**Request for Applications:  
2021 Undergraduate Summer Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders**

**RFA Released: January 12, 2021**  
**Applications Due: February 22, 2021 5:00 PM EST**  
**Notification of Awards: late March 2021**

**Introduction**

The Autism Science Foundation invites applications from highly qualified undergraduates interested in pursuing basic and clinical research relevant to autism spectrum disorders during the summer.

The proposed research must be scientifically linked to autism or a closely related field. Autism Science Foundation will consider all areas of related basic and clinical research including but not limited to: human behavior across the lifespan (language, learning, communication, social function, epilepsy, sleep, self-injurious behavior, catatonia), neurobiology (anatomy, development, neuro-imaging), pharmacology, neuropathology, human genetics, genomics, epigenetics, epigenomics, immunology, molecular and cellular mechanisms, studies employing model organisms and systems, and studies of treatment, service delivery, policy and employment. *Priority will be given to students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and/or to studies that focus on understanding and narrowing the diagnosis and services gap across race, ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status.*

**Awards**

Autism Science Foundation will make a number of Awards determined by its available financial resources. Research must be conducted in a university-based laboratory or in the field under the supervision of a highly qualified mentor for a period of no less than 8 weeks.

Awards of \$3000 will be made directly to the university sponsoring the research. Of this, the university must pay \$2500 directly to the student as a stipend; \$500 shall be used for lab expenses and indirect university costs. This award cannot be used to directly cover tuition payments. The sponsoring university is responsible for withholding any taxes required by law.

**Eligibility**

Applicants for summer undergraduate research awards must be currently enrolled undergraduates in good standing in a program leading to a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. The summer research may take place at a university other than the one where the student is enrolled as an undergraduate. The mentor should be faculty at the university where the research will take place. The research itself may take place on or

off campus (i.e. in a school, at a job site employing individuals with autism, at a summer camp, etc.) as long as it is supervised by an experienced mentor and/or advisor.

The proposed mentor must hold a tenured or tenure-track faculty appointment (or equivalent) at an accredited institution of higher education or health/medical/research institution, and must be an established and active investigator in some aspect of autism research. Each mentor may support only one candidate per summer.

Inclusion of an additional advisor other than the mentor is encouraged, but not required. This could include a more senior person in the lab who will be working closely with the student, or someone who provides scientific guidance or advice on research recruitment, or the conduct of research in underserved communities. We recommend that applicants seeking to study underserved communities include someone as an advisor who has previously worked in this area of study if their mentor has limited experience.

### **Proposals Using Post Mortem Tissue**

Proposals using post mortem tissue for research must provide documentation that the necessary tissue is or will be available at the research site at the time of the award.

Proposals without proper documentation will be returned without review.

### **Proposal Preparation**

Proposals should be written in Times New Roman, size 12 font, with regular margins and 1.5 spacing. A proposal must include the following sections:

- **Cover pages (3 pages maximum) which must include:**
  1. Name, current email (school affiliated), and permanent email addresses of applicant
  2. Name and full contact information for the mentor
  3. Race/ethnicity of applicant
  4. Social media handles of the applicant (please include at least one)
  5. Project title
  6. Description of research to be conducted over the summer (approximately three paragraphs, no references are required)
  7. Summary of activities and opportunities that applicant will engage in (for example, weekly lab meetings, home visits, etc.).
- **Applicant personal statement (this may include race and ethnicity of the applicant if the applicant chooses) (2 pages maximum)**
- **Applicant Resume & Transcript** (unofficial transcripts are acceptable)
- **CV of Mentor** (NIH format)
- **CV of Advisor** (if applicable)
- **Letter of Recommendation from Mentor:** A letter of recommendation should be provided by the proposed mentor evaluating the applicant's qualifications. The mentor should describe the lab environment and resources available to the student over the summer, including opportunities for the student to meet and work with other summer student researchers, even if outside the field of autism.
- **Human Subjects and Animal Welfare Certifications:** Before an award is made, we must have a copy of an official letter of approval which identifies the student

and mentor by name, project title and date of project approval, and is signed by the Review Committee Chair or equivalent responsible institutional/government official. Please be aware of this and begin the process ASAP. ***IRB and IACUC certifications are NOT required to submit an application, but are required if necessary before an award will be made. The project should start no later than July 6 2021***

### **Submission of Proposals**

All documents should be submitted as a single PDF document with all materials, except the letter of recommendation, bundled together. Submit this pdf by email to [grants@autismsciencefoundation.org](mailto:grants@autismsciencefoundation.org) with the subject line (Last Name/Sponsoring Institution/Summer Research)

Example: Martin/NYU/Summer Research

Letters of recommendation should be sent by the recommender directly to ASF by email to [grants@autismsciencefoundation.org](mailto:grants@autismsciencefoundation.org). Please ask your recommender to use the subject line (Applicant last name/Summer Research/Letter of Recommendation)

Example: Martin/Summer Research/Letter of Recommendation.

Successful electronic submission will be confirmed by email notification to the sender.

***All materials, except the letter of recommendation, must be included in a single PDF bundle. Please collect all materials and send one PDF!***

**\*Proposals are due on or before Feb 22, 2021\***

Proposals will not be accepted after the due date. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposal complies with the conditions prescribed in this RFA. Autism Science Foundation reserves the right to return any proposal without review.

Autism Science Foundation reserves the right to make changes to this RFA at any time. Changes will be posted at [www.autismsciencefoundation.org/ApplyForaGrant.html](http://www.autismsciencefoundation.org/ApplyForaGrant.html). We advise applicants to check this website frequently.

Award notifications will be made in March of 2021. Awards must start between May 3, 2021 and July 6, 2021. While the work should be completed in the summer, a full year contract will be made to offset costs of academic and training activities outside the 8 week period.

### **Payment of Awards**

Awards will be paid directly to the university sponsoring the research at the start of the award period. Payment will be contingent upon acceptance (by an official authorized to act for the institution receiving the award) of the Autism Science Foundation award terms and conditions without amendment (provided at the time of the award) and receipt by ASF of all required certifications. An award cannot be transferred to another

investigator, laboratory or sponsoring institution without prior written approval from Autism Science Foundation. Similarly, awardees cannot change mentors or advisors without prior written approval from Autism Science Foundation.

Students must submit an outcomes report at the end of the summer research period. A template will be provided by the Autism Science Foundation for this purpose.

**Review Process and Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be reviewed by members of Autism Science Foundation Scientific Advisory Board as well as active and experienced investigators recruited from the scientific community for their expertise in the research areas of the proposals.

Questions about proposal submission, proposal content and review, or applicant eligibility should be addressed to Casey Gold-Casey, Director of Operations, Autism Science Foundation. ([cgold@autismsciencefoundation.org](mailto:cgold@autismsciencefoundation.org))