

# Tips and tricks for undergraduate students doing summer research projects in physics & astronomy

## Work hours and logistics

- Have a conversation with your supervisor about work hours and location expectations (e.g. hours/day, time of day, office or work from home, holidays/days off, illness)
- Is the position paid or volunteer?
- Discuss a meeting schedule with your supervisor or research group

## Organization

- It can be good to keep a notebook for personal notes. This is helpful if you have questions during meetings or while reading so you can bring things up later with your supervisor.
- Make a schedule for yourself that works so you're making it on time to meetings and other important events while also making sure to take breaks at appropriate times.
- Keep a calendar!

## General advice

- Don't be worried if you're lost/confused at first! It's normal when starting a new project and not an indictment of your abilities.
- Ask lots of questions! Remember you're here to learn as much as you're here to contribute to a project.
- If you're just starting out, try to come into the office/lab as much as possible before choosing to work from home. This will allow you to become familiar with your coworkers and the environment, and you'll get a sense of your own productivity.
- Engage with the opportunities available within the department, such as colloquia, seminars and journal clubs.

Attached below is an optional form for you to fill out that will help guide you through the above points.

# UVic Physics and Astronomy Undergraduate Research Position Planner

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Student name (pronouns)

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Supervisor name (pronouns)

Start date:

End date:

**Type of position (circle as appropriate):**

Volunteer (no pay)

Scholarship (VKURA, JCURA, other). Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment (USRA, SURA, SERA, other, supervisor funded)

What is the hourly wage? \_\_\_\_\_

**Time commitment** – How many hours/week are you expected to spend on this research project? If it is an hourly paid position, how many hours a week are you supposed to work? Do you have other academic or research commitments during the research period?

*Students: Consider familiarizing yourself with the [BC Employment Standards Act](#)*

**Vacation/time off during the research period** – What is the expectation regarding vacation and other planned absences? If paid, does the position allow for accumulated paid holiday or are you paid in lieu?

**Work location** – Where are you expected to complete your research?

**Communication and reporting** – Who will you be regularly communicating with, and how will this communication happen (in person, by online meetings, by email)? What are the expectations for your/your supervisor’s response time to electronic communications?

*You should use your official UVic email for all research-related communications and check this email regularly (at least once a day).*

**Meetings** – How often will one-on-one meetings with your supervisor happen? Are there group meetings that you are expected to attend?

**Supervisor expectations** – Are there any expectations your supervisor has that are not otherwise covered? E.g. record keeping/note taking, self-study of a topic, weekly updates in group meetings.

**Student goals** – What do you hope to achieve through carrying out this research?

*Examples: presenting at the annual UVic Physics & Astronomy Undergraduate Summer Student Research Symposium (early September), attending/presenting at a conference, producing a report, learning new techniques or skills*

**Workplace accommodations** – Do you require any disability-related accommodations to carry out your research? E.g. supports similar to those received through CAL.