

What are the advantages, for a student, of participating in TURC?

The primary advantage of participating in TURC is *educational*. TURC provides a unique structure for students to work on challenging research or creative projects – and to engage in meaningful community service – under the guidance of faculty mentors who are committed to working closely with their students, sometimes over a period of two or more years. Typically there is no tuition payment—it’s *free*! TURC projects are built on relationships of trust and one-on-one commitments between students and faculty mentors. Through these relationships, students are challenged intellectually and given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their independence, seriousness of purpose, and organizational abilities. Such experiences help the students to learn and grow in ways that classroom experiences alone cannot provide. These experiences also improve your chances when applying for nationally competitive scholarships, awards, graduate school or employment.

The mention of scholarships and awards brings up another reason to participate in TURC. University of Tulsa students have had great success in winning prestigious national awards and scholarships, and much of this success can be attributed to their participation in TURC. Students who have a record of independent research and leadership in community service have an enormous advantage when applying for awards that can be used to support undergraduate or graduate education. Nona Charleston, our Nationally Competitive Scholarships Advisor and Associate Director of TURC, works tirelessly to help students identify appropriate opportunities for competitions and to assist students during the application process. Again, this valuable service is provided as part of your education at TU – it costs you nothing.

Finally, there are some financial incentives for participating in TURC. TURC students in good standing who have participated in the program for at least one full semester are eligible to apply for the summer program. This program is for students interested in focusing on their independent projects without having to keep up with a full course load. If accepted into the summer program, TURC students may request room, board, and a modest living stipend for a period of about ten weeks.

What does it mean for a student to be in “good standing.”

Admission to TURC entails certain responsibilities. In addition to actually carrying out your proposed research and community service, the most important of these are (1) Submission of approximately 1000-1500 word progress reports at the end of each semester that you are in the program and (2) preparing a presentation on your project for the Student Research Colloquium which is held each year in the spring semester.

If I am an established TURC student in good standing, is my acceptance into the summer program more or less guaranteed?

No, summer program applications are evaluated on a case by case basis. Some are funded, and some are not, depending on the strength of the applications.

What are the advantages, for a faculty member, of participating in TURC?

The primary reason for faculty participation is probably the opportunity to work closely with motivated students in an area of shared interest. Also, by integrating one or more TURC students into aspects of their research, faculty may get some valuable help and collaboration while at the same time furthering the education of the student.

Should students wait until their junior or senior year to apply to TURC?

No. In fact TURC encourages students to apply during their freshman or sophomore years. The latest one may apply is in the first semester of one's junior year.

I really want to participate in the TURC summer program, but my TURC mentor won't be around to help me. Can I do the summer program anyway?

It is indeed possible to participate in the summer program when your mentor is not available, but your proposal should clearly delineate what you will be doing and to whom you will be accountable. For example, if a TURC student plans to focus heavily on community service during the summer, the proposal should describe such plans clearly and perhaps include a letter of support from an official at the organization at which services will be provided.

I'm in Arts & Sciences and have noticed that the TURC program has different guidelines and admissions policies in other colleges. Why can't the University have just one TURC program and one set of rules?

TURC is pursued somewhat differently in the different colleges, for the most part because research traditions and project needs vary between disciplines. For example, TURC students in Chemistry might work as part of a team in a laboratory, but that model would not be appropriate for the English department. TURC has adapted to such differences by being flexible and accommodating differences in how research and creative work are pursued in each of the colleges. While a single set of rules might sound convenient, such "standardization" would diminish TURC's ability to encourage and support the wide variety of pursuits available to students in our colleges.

Does TURC support students in the Arts? For example, what about a project that consists of a series of paintings around a particular theme?

The Arts & TURC program places high priority on supporting students in the performing, studio, and creative arts. In fact, more than a third of the A&S TURC over the past several years have come from the arts, including Music, Theatre, and the School of Art. In many instances these projects combined elements of research with pure creative endeavor, such as combining a painting project with studying the works of an established artist whose technique or approach was relevant to the student's goals.

Why does TURC have a community service requirement? I thought TURC was a research and creative program. Does my community service project have to be related to my research or creative project?

A fundamental precept of the TURC program is that all TURC students have an obligation to give something back to the community. While it is not the only avenue at TU for faculty-mentored undergraduate research, it has attracted national attention due to its unique integration of scholarship, research and service. From its inception in 1994, TURC has sought to encourage the development of students who are socially responsible and civically engaged by requiring all participants to engage in meaningful community service. This requirement grows out of a philosophy that emphasizes not only the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, but also the conviction that research and creativity should be applied in ways that benefit our communities.

As a practical matter, the synergy between research and community service often suggests new avenues of inquiry and potential applications. Your future employers or graduate school program will be impressed by your community service not only because it testifies to your commitment to important causes, but also because it demonstrates the ability to get work done in complex, real-world settings. Students, therefore, are encouraged to find community service projects that mesh with their research or creative endeavors. However, this is not in any sense a requirement. The most important thing is that you establish community service goals that you are committed to and that give you an opportunity to make a real difference.

If I want TURC support over the summer, how much should I request?

Typically summer awards provide ten weeks of room and board in TU housing plus about \$600 for living expenses over a six week period. Note that room and board is usually available only to students who live outside the Tulsa area and therefore cannot stay with their parents during the summer. Award amounts can vary somewhat—for example, it might make sense for some students to request (say) 8 or weeks of support. Such requests will be considered, but they must be accompanied by clear justifications.

I have a busy class schedule, so I don't really have time to do TURC during the school year. Can I pursue TURC only during the summers?

Because the program is designed to encourage well-thought out and sustained projects, TURC cannot fund “summer only” projects. Our record shows that many students have carried out TURC projects during the regular academic year while handling difficult class loads and extra-curricular activities.

Where can I get more information, if I have questions that aren't covered in this list?

You can start with your faculty advisor or with Dr. Peter Stromberg, Director of the Arts & Sciences TURC Program. Dr. Stromberg is in the Department of Anthropology and can be reached by email at peter-stromberg@utulsa.edu or by phone at (918) 631-2801.