# Psychology and Neuroscience Department
# Guide to Research Engagement

(see also: https://www.coloradocollege.edu/academics/dept/psychology/research/index.html)
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## Overview

Consistent with our liberal arts tradition and emphasis on empirical research and scientific understanding, the Department would like to provide students with opportunities to develop and practice their research skills (e.g., PY251) and conduct their own projects in collaboration with faculty (e.g., PY451).

The steps outlined here provide a systematic path to the yearly application for a PY251 or PY451 advisor.

Psychology majors must fulfill a PY251 or PY451 credit.
Neuroscience majors are encouraged to engage in PY251 or PY451 research.

## Step 1 – Explore Ideas

Identify and make notes about ideas that interest you – from classes, textbooks, experiences, or any source.

Timing: Ongoing throughout your CC career and life

Resources:   APA Divisions            https://www.apa.org/about/division (click "View All Divisions")
             APS Research Topics      https://www.psychologicalscience.org/topics
             Society for Neuroscience https://www.sfn.org/

## Step 2 – Foundational Methods

Psychology majors should complete **PY205** Introduction to Methods and Statistics ("Methods I") and neuroscience majors should complete **PY299** Neuroscience.  These courses provide foundations necessary before embarking on **PY251/PY451** mentored research.  Take notice of methods and approaches that might contribute to your future research interests.

Timing:  First or sophomore year (ideally)

## Step 3 – Identify Potential Faculty Mentors

Review faculty research interests and areas of specialization from their profile pages on the website. The website also has pages outlining projects each faculty has supervised with prior students.

Timing:  Between PY205/PY299 and Block 2 junior year

Resources:   Profiles
             https://www.coloradocollege.edu/academics/dept/psychology/people/index.html
             Presentations:
             https://www.coloradocollege.edu/academics/dept/psychology/research/local-presentations/index.html

## Step 4 – Reach Out to Potential Faculty Mentors

Prior to the application process, you are expected to meet with two to three department faculty to discuss options for a PY251 or PY451 project.  It is **not** necessary that you have had a prior class with or met the faculty member.  If you feel uncertain about *how* to inquire of faculty about meeting to discuss research, speak with Ann, Mark, or any department faculty member you are comfortable with to get helpful advice.

Timing:  First semester junior year (ideally).  Before the application process (see below).

**Step 5 – Briefly Outline and Record Research Ideas**

Document research ideas and project possibilities discussed or inspired by your meetings with faculty members. This should included the proposed advisor for the project, whether it is might be a PY251 or PY451, whether it is empirical (data and analysis), a literature review, or a community field study, and the topic and general scope of the project.  This will form the basis for completing the application.

Timing:  As soon as possible after the meeting

**Step 6 – Complete the Research Experience Application**

An online research application form will be distributed from the department to juniors majors in the weeks preceding Preregistration. Complete and submit the form based on your prior explorations and discussions. If you are on an atypical path (e.g., early graduation or IDM), contact Mark ([mark.saviano@coloradocollege.edu)](mailto:mark.saviano@coloradocollege.edu) to make sure you receive the application.

Timing:        Near but before or during Spring Preregistration.


**Match Meeting**

The department faculty will meet privately to review research applications and assign a specific faculty mentor to each student. The match process proceeds from the students' preferences in order but must also balance the number of advisees per faculty member.

Faculty-student advising matches are communicated to students by faculty before the end of registration.