**James O. Freedman Presidential Scholars**

This is a great opportunity to do research but you must take it seriously. It’s a commitment.

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS

**FOR STUDENTS APPLYING TO THE PROGRAM**

**The two terms of your Presidential Scholarship must be completed during your junior year, “Sophomore Summer” through junior spring. The terms do not have to be sequential.**

**Most common questions:**

**How do I find a faculty mentor to work with?**

Faculty are invited to list projects in an on-line database.  Students can search the database for projects of interest to them.  Note that the database contains some projects that are available only to Presidential Scholars and other projects that are available to any student (including Presidential Scholars).  Contact the professor(s) with whom you are interested in working to discuss their project, expectations and interview process.  You may contact as many professors as you like, but **you may only apply to work with ONE faculty mentor on ONE two-term assistantship.**  Note also that students may work with faculty who do not list a project in the on-line database (see https://students.dartmouth.edu/ugar/research/getting-started/finding-faculty-mentor).  No special permission is needed for this, and the application process is the same (although you will need to get a title and project description from your faculty mentor).

**What if I am off campus during winter term?**

If you will be off campus during the winter term, you are *strongly encouraged* to contact faculty about James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar assistantships during winter term rather than waiting until you return to campus in the spring.  Students who are off-campus in the winter may be able to arrange interviews via phone or Skype.  Some faculty wait until spring term to select a Scholar so that all interested students have the opportunity to interview for the assistantship, but some faculty opt to select a Scholar during the winter term.

**Can I get an extension on the application deadline?**

No. You must apply by the deadline so start the process early. Contact your faculty mentor early. Do not wait until the last minute to contact faculty.

**Can I do the Presidential Scholarship while away from campus (e.g. on an FSP)?**

Technically yes but it rarely works out- most of these end up discontinued. If it turns out that this is the only way for you to participate in the Presidential Scholarship program, you and your mentor must set clear expectations for the work and meet via skype or phone every week (meet by email as a last resort).

**Can I receive academic credit for my work as a James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar?**

In the **SECOND** term of the assistantship, students may receive independent study course credit instead of payment ONLY IF it is deemed appropriate by the faculty mentor (subject to departmental criteria).  Assistantships for which independent study credit is to be granted will typically involve a greater time commitment than non-credit assistantships.  The faculty mentor ultimately makes the decision as to whether independent study credit is an option, and the **student is responsible for registering for the independent study through the faculty mentor’s department and the Registrar's Office prior to the start of the term or during Add/Drop period.**   *The Office of Advising and Research is not involved in the course registration process.*  Students should check with their mentor's department to be sure that they are eligible to register for independent study.  Students doing assistantships in Tuck or Geisel would need to register for independent study credit through an undergraduate department or program (typically the student's major department/program).  Note that departments and programs have specific guidelines and policies about independent study, particularly when the mentor is not directly affiliated with the department/program, and independent study credit may not be an option.

**Other less common questions students ask:**

**What does a James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar do?**

Scholars serve two terms during their junior year as research assistants to Dartmouth faculty members ("sophomore summer" can be the first term of the assistantship).  Scholars are expected to work 7-12 hours per week during each of the two terms. The two terms of the assistantship must be conducted during students’ “ON” terms, unless there are extenuating circumstances and approval is given by both the professor and the Office of Undergraduate Advising and Research.  Note that there is no additional funding available for students who are given permission to conduct the assistantship during a leave term.  Those students will receive the same stipend as students conducting their assistantships during "ON" terms.  The two terms of the assistantship must be completed during the junior year.  Students who are unable to complete both terms during the junior year will be discontinued from the program.

**What kind of work is involved in the assistantship?**

It is expected that James O. Freedman Presidential Scholars will assist faculty in their research.  Students participating in this program are not expected to generate their own independent research projects.  The nature of the work and the skills required will vary depending on the project, and faculty mentors should be clear about their expectations prior to the start of the assistantship.  The faculty mentor and student should set up a work schedule at the beginning of the term, and this schedule should include weekly or biweekly meetings between the student and faculty mentor.

**Can I work with any faculty member affiliated with Dartmouth?**

The college policy on who is eligible to supervise undergraduates in research can be found on the UGAR website: https://students.dartmouth.edu/ugar/  This policy applies to faculty affiliated with the Arts & Sciences (undergraduate program), Thayer School of Engineering, Geisel School of Medicine, and Tuck School of Business.  If you have questions about a specific mentor, please blitz "undergraduate research."

**What if the faculty member I want to work with does not have a project listed in the database?**

You may serve as a James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar to a professor who did not list a project in the database, provided they agree to take you on as a research assistant.  A project title and description must be provided to the Undergraduate Research Office on the student’s application form.  No other special permission is needed to work with a professor who did not list a project in the on-line database.

**What is the interview process?**

Interviews are conducted by the faculty at their discretion.  Faculty will not necessarily interview all interested students.  The Office of Undergraduate Advising and Research does not coordinate or facilitate the interviews.  You should contact faculty directly to request interviews.

**What if my mentor is not in my major department?**

You may conduct an assistantship with a faculty member who is not in your major department, provided the project is academically relevant to your course of study.  If you choose a faculty mentor who is not in your major department, however, you will not be able to do a senior honors thesis with that faculty member.  You also may not be able to pursue the independent study credit option for the second term of the assistantship.  If you are interested in this option, you should check with the faculty mentor's department regarding their policy for granting independent study credit to non-majors.

**What do I do after I have been selected by a faculty mentor?**

Once a professor selects you as his/her James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar, you must complete the on-line application form, which is available by following the links on this website (posted in mid-February).  You will need a project title and abstract in order to complete the form.  Once you submit the form, your faculty mentor will receive an email requesting confirmation that you have been selected as his/her Presidential Scholar Research Assistant. Both the student application form and faculty mentor confirmation must be submitted online in order for the application to be complete.

**Once the on-line application form and faculty mentor confirmation are submitted, does this mean I am a James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar?**

Not necessarily.  Selection by a faculty mentor and submission of the required forms do NOT guarantee acceptance into the program.  If there are not enough funds to support all the applications submitted, selection will be based on factors such as academic standing and the relevance of the project to the student’s major.  Applications will be accepted until the program deadline, and notification letters will be sent out about 4 weeks after that deadline.

**Can I switch faculty mentors/projects after I've been accepted to the James O. Freedman Presidential Scholars Program?**

Generally speaking, no. When you apply and are accepted to this program, you are entering into a contract with the faculty mentor to work together on a specific project. Both you and the faculty mentor have made a commitment to each other to do this research. Exceptions are made only for extenuating circumstances (e.g. the faculty mentor leaves the College).

**What happens when I have completed both terms as a James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar?**

Transcripts of students who successfully complete both terms of the assistantship will carry the notation “James O. Freedman Presidential Scholar Research Assistant.”  Students who complete two terms of the assistantship AND graduate with honors in their major will be designated James O. Freedman Presidential Scholars at Commencement and on their transcripts.  Students who complete the assistantship and go on to write an honors thesis are eligible to receive an additional $300 thesis stipend in their senior year.  Applications for the honors thesis stipend are available on the website.  Your thesis topic does NOT have to be related to the Presidential Scholar research, and your major does NOT have to be in the same department as your Presidential Scholar faculty mentor.

**How are James O. Freedman Presidential Scholars compensated?**

Students receive $1,000 for each of the two terms of the assistantship unless you choose independent study for your second term. In which case, you receive credit instead of payment for your second term.  Payments for international students (non-resident aliens) are subject to applicable taxes. Stipends are paid at the end of each term of the assistantship after both the student and the advisor have submitted confirmation that the term was completed.

**Things to be aware of:**

The two terms do not have to be sequential, but it is very important to talk about the terms of the research with your faculty mentor before applying.

Students cannot do both the PS and JRS programs

The purpose of the program is for students to be research assistants for faculty.  There are other programs for students who have their own idea for a project (like leave term grants)

Students receive a stipend but there is no additional funding for things like travel, supplies, etc.

Students cannot receive a stipend and academic credit for the same research in the same term

Students who want to do the second term for independent study credit must do the following in advance of the term:

* Discuss with their faculty mentor and determine whether the project is appropriate for academic credit
* Check with the department to be sure that the student is eligible to enroll in independent study credit in
* or coursework in order to do a PS (e.g. a lot of econ profs want students to know STATA)

Students do not need to do a project in their major (but they may not be eligible for independent study credit)

Some faculty will require a regular “work” schedule and others will not.  Be sure to be clear about this before signing on

**Still have questions?**

Contact

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blitz: “Undergraduate Research”

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