

TO: Undergraduate Economics Majors  
FROM: B. Douglas Bernheim  
DATE: February 16, 2021  
RE: Summer 2021 Undergraduate Research Assistant Program in Economics

The Department of Economics has secured funding from the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education to employ undergraduates as Research Assistants (RAs) for Stanford faculty during the ten-week period from Monday, June 21 through Friday, August 27, 2021.

A primary goal of the Program is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the nature and methods of academic research and to stimulate students' interest in pursuing research projects of their own. Most participants will go on to write an honors thesis in Economics in their senior year. Preference in admissions will be given to students who have declared Economics as their major and are completing their junior year, although sophomores with exceptionally strong academic records are also welcome to apply. Applicants should be on track to meet the Economics Department's GPA threshold requirements for Honors (that is, achieving a GPA of 3.5 or higher for the courses required of an Economics major).

In a parallel announcement, the department asks faculty members if they would like to employ an Undergraduate RA during the summer. Some faculty may be looking for help in locating sources of data. Others will want to undertake data analysis using elementary or sophisticated statistical models. (Such faculty will have a strong preference for students who have already taken econometrics courses such as Econ 102B.) Other faculty may value a critical assessment of the literature on a given topic. In all instances, a faculty member must commit to providing substantive supervision and training for his or her Summer RA, in line with the goal of enriching the student learning experience and preparing students to do their own research.

Professor Mark Tendall will be the Program Coordinator. Questions should be directed to Prof. Tendall at [tendall@stanford.edu](mailto:tendall@stanford.edu). Prof. Tendall will offer students guidance in approaching faculty. It is acceptable for students to approach individual faculty with whom they are already acquainted and to inquire in advance about their availability as research supervisors. However, these students still need to go through the application procedures outlined below.

Each RA's forty-hour workweek will be devoted to research work under the direction of the faculty sponsor, to organized Program activities, and (if the supervisor approves) to the exploration of independent research topics. We anticipate that most interactions will be conducted remotely, although we eagerly await the resumption of on-campus instruction and mentorship. As per VPUE guidelines, each undergraduate RA will be provided with a base remote-work stipend of \$5,000 for the ten-week period from Monday, June 21 through Friday, August 27, 2021, with a need-based supplement of up to \$1,500 depending on the assessment of the Financial Aid Office and a location-based supplement of \$2,500 for students who receive permission to reside on campus. These amounts will be pro-rated for those who work less.

Under the direction of the Program Coordinator, all RAs will be required to attend and participate actively in two organized events – a seminar and a round-table discussion -- every week. Each seminar will be led by a different member of the Public Policy or Economics faculty who will give students insights into his or her ongoing research. Each round-table will feature brief research presentations by students participating in the Program; every RA will be required to give at least one presentation about their own work. All RAs will provide the Program Coordinator with brief weekly reports describing their research progress, as well as a longer written account at the end of their research appointment.

If you are interested in applying for this program, please follow the instructions on the following page. Your completed application materials should be e-mailed to Laura Quirarte ([lauraq@stanford.edu](mailto:lauraq@stanford.edu)). Note that the deadline for applications is **11:59pm Sunday, March 7**; early submissions are especially welcome.

I encourage students to take advantage of this program. Summer Research Programs have been in place for many years now and student evaluations of them have been very positive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Douglas Bernheim". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

B. Douglas Bernheim  
Edward Ames Edmonds Professor of Economics  
Trione Chair, Department of Economics

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**Application for the 2021 Summer Undergraduate Research Assistant Program  
Department of Economics**

Please provide the following information:

1. Your name, Student ID number, and contact information (including campus address, phone, and e-mail).
2. Your expected graduation date.
3. Your particular areas of research interest within Economics.
4. Indicate the geographical location where you expect to reside this summer.
5. Specify the beginning and ending dates of your availability this summer, and summarize any major time conflicts you may have.
6. In a brief statement (no more than one typed page), discuss why you are interested in participating in this program. In this statement, you may expand upon some of the information you have included above, such as your particular interests within Economics, areas of research you would like to explore, and/or a description of the Economics (or related) courses here at Stanford that you have found most interesting. If you have already spoken with a particular faculty member about a potential research topic for the summer, please describe.
7. An **unofficial** (not official) printout of your Stanford transcript, showing courses and GPA.
8. A brief resume.
9. A list of any other on-campus research programs to which you are applying (used for informational/planning purposes only). The Economics and Public Policy summer programs are jointly organized; please do not submit an application to the Economics program if you are submitting one to Public Policy, and vice versa.

Remember that this program is intended for students who will have declared the Economics major, and preference is given to those who are interested in writing a senior honors thesis in the future. All program participants will be expected to work forty hours per week, including attendance at weekly seminars and research round-table discussions. After all applications have been received, you may be contacted with a request for further information, and/or to help you locate a faculty sponsor.

**Return all application materials** via e-mail to Laura Quirarte ([lauraq@stanford.edu](mailto:lauraq@stanford.edu)) by **11:59pm Sunday, March**

**7.** Early submissions are encouraged, and will expedite the student-sponsor matching process. If you have any questions, please contact Prof. Mark Tendall ([tendall@stanford.edu](mailto:tendall@stanford.edu)).