



ViTAL Lab: Violence & Trauma Across the Lifespan

FAQs for Prospective Undergraduate Research Assistants

What will I learn by working in the ViTAL lab?

- Undergraduate research assistants (RAs) will gain training/experience related to several steps of the research process, including:
 - How to read and understand research articles
 - How to conduct a literature search
 - Participant recruitment, including community outreach
 - Data collection methods for clinical-developmental research studies
 - Skills for processing and analyzing quantitative, observational, and qualitative data
 - Managing confidential information
 - Professional communication
 - Assisting with or authoring research products (e.g., posters and manuscripts)

How can I receive credit for my work?

- Sign up for research assistantship credit (Psych 398B)
 - ADRAP students enroll in Psych 398B along with the Psych 591 ADRAP seminar
- It is also possible to enroll for an independent study course (Psych 396A or 496A), although this must be arranged with Dr. Galano in advance
- For more information about how to get credit for working in a research lab, visit this website: <https://www.umass.edu/pbs/undergraduate/ras-tas-independent-studies>
- If you still have questions, talk to someone in the Psychology advising office!

I'm interested in writing an honor thesis, how do I arrange that?

- Typically honors students will have worked in the lab for at least two semesters before starting on an honors project in order to have enough familiarity with the research process as well as to develop an idea
- If for some reason you are unable to meet this requirement but still want to complete an honors thesis in the ViTAL lab, please reach out to Dr. Galano directly. Decisions about waiving the above requirement are made on a case-by-case basis

Why work in research?

- Gain skills that will serve you across a variety of careers (e.g., organizational skills, information processing and synthesis, outreach)
- Delve more deeply into a specific topic within psychology
- Learn the ins and outs of the research process
- Network with other UMass undergraduate students
- Enhance your resume when applying for jobs or graduate school

What are the minimum requirements to apply?

- We prefer students who are able to commit to enrolling in the lab for 2-3 credits for at least two semesters, but are flexible if your schedule limits the number of credits you can take
- We seek students who are excited about gaining research experience and have a desire to work in the community

How do I apply to work in the lab?

- Fill out our online application (linked on our website)
- The lab director or a graduate student will follow-up with you about the status of your application. Based on your application responses, we may invite you to interview for an RA position with us. Interviews will be used to select new RAs based on the number of openings we have available.
- We generally recruit students twice per year, for a Fall semester start and a Spring semester start. Interviews for the Fall semester start are generally in April/May of the prior semester; interviews for the Spring semester start are generally in December/January. We do not accept new RAs in the middle of the semester.
- We occasionally take on new RAs for summer start or summer-only positions. Students interested in this should contact Dr. Galano directly.