



Notre Dame Institute for  
**ADVANCED STUDY**

## **Application for 2019–2020 Coordinator for Undergraduate Research Assistants at the NDIAS - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What sort of applicant is the NDIAS looking for?**

The Institute is looking for an energetic and advanced graduate student with an interdisciplinary background and the skills and experience to serve as a coordinator of research assistants supporting the work of scholars in residence (Fellows) at the NDIAS. The Coordinator plays a vital role in the development and cultivation of a vibrant community of talented undergraduate researchers. Applications are open to advanced University of Notre Dame Ph.D. candidates in all disciplines and fields.

### **What is the Undergraduate Research Assistantship (UGRA) Program at the NDIAS?**

The Undergraduate Research Assistantship (UGRA) Program at the NDIAS provides talented undergraduates the opportunity to assist with the research projects of scholars in residence at the NDIAS during the 2019–2020 academic year. Student assistants work up to 10 hours per week for fifteen weeks per semester and typical research tasks include: identifying and retrieving research materials, conducting initial readings of primary and secondary sources, developing bibliographies and literature reviews, drafting notes and annotations, proofreading, copying, and editing. Research assistants meet as a group on Friday afternoons with the Coordinator for unique programming that includes small-group sessions with University researchers and research workshops. Students are aided during their assistantships by the Coordinator for Undergraduate Research and the NDIAS Associate Director.

### **What does the Coordinator for Undergraduate Research Assistants expected to do?**

The Coordinator is expected to work up to 18 hours per week coordinating various programmatic and operational activities of undergraduates serving as research assistants. In this role, the Coordinator is expected to assist with the administration of the program, be available to the undergraduate assistants during office hours, and mentor undergraduates. Duties and responsibilities include:

- to mentor UGRAs regarding the development and application of research skills;
- to lead weekly research seminars for the undergraduate research community on Friday afternoons from 3:15 to 4:45 p.m., except during vacation and holiday periods;
- to foster communication between researchers and assistants regarding schedules, assigned tasks, methods, and overall goals;
- to facilitate engagement between undergraduate researchers and scholars in residence;
- to assist with the identification, development, and tracking of assistants' research skills, as they relate to the projects and the academic purposes of the respective Fellows;
- to encourage research assistants' contributions to the projects of Fellows whom they assist;
- to monitor the progress of undergraduate research assistants and to collect and compile information on their progress for reporting purposes;
- to provide logistical and programmatic support for academic events (including colloquia and seminars) involving undergraduate research assistants;

- to meet with research assistants during regular weekly office hours; and
- to assist with other programmatic duties and responsibilities related to this program, as additional opportunities may present themselves.

**When does the Coordinator position begin?**

While the undergraduate researchers begin their work with their respective Fellows during the first week of instruction in August, 2019. Coordinators begin preparing for the weekly seminars 1-2 weeks prior to the start of the fall 2019 semester.

**What are the benefits of this position?**

This is classified by the University as a teaching fellowship and the Coordinator will have the opportunity to gain experience teaching and mentoring undergraduates, working with an interdisciplinary community of scholars, and developing greater insight into higher education administration. The Coordinator will receive a stipend of up to \$28,000 (gross amount, for nine months and based on a typical schedule of 18 hours per week), a shared office at the NDIAS, which includes a standard PC computer and printer, and participate in the academic life of the Institute. In some cases, additional opportunities during the summer may be possible.

**What are the requirements for the Coordinator application?**

The Coordinator for Undergraduate Research Assistants application materials must be completed in full and submitted via the online application site (at <https://fs16.formsite.com/NDIAS/utef290puh/index.html> in English using Times New Roman 12-point font (or its equivalent).

All applications must include the following: (a) a completed Coordinator for Undergraduate Research Assistants online application form; (b) a cover letter that addresses the reasons for the applicant's interest in this position, and whether the applicant is scheduled to receive any University support during the 2019–2020 academic year (if so, please also indicate how much and from which department or program. This is important due to current University guidelines on maximum amounts for graduate student support and the need to coordinate with programs and departments that may be providing support); (c) a current curriculum vitae, including your full contact information (e-mail address, telephone number, and mailing address), non-academic experiences, a chronological list of research and other assistantships, the faculty with whom you've worked, academic scholarships, awards, and prizes; (d) a statement of qualifications for this position that addresses the following questions, with each answer no more than 500-650 words per response:

1. What, in your opinion, are the most essential skills to be developed in undergraduate researchers, especially those aspiring to enter graduate school?
2. Explain your current research/dissertation and why it is significant.
3. Explain your experience working with undergraduates and what you have learned from these experiences.
4. Explain your most instructive experiences working as a researcher, both independently and as a research assistant (if applicable), and how these experiences have influenced your understanding of the academic life, your research, and how you teach.
5. Which books or articles have been the most influential on your own research and your understanding of the academic life?

and (e) contact information (full name, title, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number) for two faculty references who are familiar with your academic work, teaching (if applicable), and your skills

and capabilities for mentoring and instructing undergraduate students in an interdisciplinary environment and as part of a collaborative team (no letters of recommendation are required).

**How do I apply for the Coordinator for Undergraduate Research Assistants position?**

Complete an online application, including the submission of all materials and information listed above, **no later than 11:59 p.m. on Monday, July 29, 2019** via the NDIAS website (<https://ndias.nd.edu/>).

**To whom does this position report?**

The person in this position will work closely with and report to the NDIAS Associate Director, Dr. Donald Stelluto.

**How soon will I know the result of my application?**

Applicants will be notified by email when their applications have been received. A small number of finalists may be asked to participate in an interview with members of the NDIAS Selection Committee. All applicants will be notified of decisions by Friday, May 31, 2019.

**Whom do I contact if I have additional questions?**

Questions about the 2019–2020 Coordinator position may be directed to Dr. Donald Stelluto at [dstellut@nd.edu](mailto:dstellut@nd.edu).

**How are undergraduate research assistants selected?**

Applications are received between April and July 17, 2019. Applications are screened by a committee at the NDIAS, including the UGRA Coordinator. Fellows electing to participate in the program receive subsequent to the UGRA application deadline and via e-mail, a list of recommended students along with their applications to the program. Each student's application includes a brief resume and responses to required questions about their research experiences and skills. Fellows will be able to select their assistants and, at the beginning of August, a virtual introduction will be facilitated between Fellows and their research assistants. Students selected will receive copies of their Fellow's c.v., research proposal, abstract, and bibliography. Student research assistants will begin working with their respective Fellows during the first week of the University's academic calendar in mid-August (for academic year and fall 2019 Fellows) or mid-January (for spring 2020 Fellows).

**What have Notre Dame students serving as research assistants had to say about the program?**

*As my work with my Fellow progresses, I have become increasingly excited to begin my own research. Learning how to better ask important research questions and frame research in context has made me more aware of possible topics I would like to pursue in my own research. In fact, it has inspired me to reach out to a professor in the field and discuss a broader topic of interest with him.*

– Catherine Etchart, Economics and Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics, 2019

*I am learning an incredible amount about time management, what it means to contribute to research, the academic process, and the environment of higher learning and study. It is exciting, stimulating, and it appeals greatly to me! It is convincing me more and more that this is the type of work I would like to engage in on a professional level. It is assuring me of my choice to apply to graduate school and engage in my own research!*

– Nick Munsen, PLS, 2017

*The research that I have been doing on this idea of causation...has affected my scientific lab work here at Notre Dame. ...I work with a specific type of bacteria that produces a complex metabolite. Thinking*

*about causation and the philosophy of biology, I began to analyze my own research to see how it relates to these concepts...[and] how scientific research in laboratories are able to describe the real world. The concept of causation is one that causes me to rethink everything that I was able to take for granted prior to this experience. Now, I am forced to think beyond the scientific perspective. [My Fellow's] research of the theory of causation from a philosophical perspective of science has caused me to think about its purpose throughout my courses and lab work every day.*

**– Emily Zion, Biochemistry, 2017**

*Working as a Templeton Undergraduate Research Assistant made me a better, more critical thinker, a more inquisitive student, and more confident in my abilities as a researcher. It has also given me an opportunity to explore, in depth, an issue (consciousness) that I have always been very interested in. Further, it has solidified my interest in pursuing a career in the academy, and humanized professors and researchers, making me think that these positions are tenable and desirable for me to one day take up.*

**– Sean Costello, Philosophy, 2016**

### **What have former NDIAS Fellows had to say about the program and their research assistants?**

Former Fellows have been very pleased with the results of the program and have offered the following feedback about their experiences working with undergraduate research assistants at the NDIAS:

*One of the highlights of my time at the Institute was the opportunity to work with an Undergraduate Research Assistant. Among other things, she tracked down secondary literature on my topic and even annotated primary sources in English, Spanish, and French. In the lead-up to my second and final presentation she provided crucial editorial assistance and advice in framing the argument. Had we worked together a second semester, I'm certain that our discussions of key concepts would have evolved in even more productive ways. As a result of her diligent work, my productivity during the semester probably doubled.*

**–Paul Ramirez (Northwestern University), Fall 2016 NDIAS Fellow**

*I have to confess that, mine being a project for which I required no additional research to be compiled by others, I used my two research assistants mostly as sounding boards (of a particularly resonant kind, as it turned out). Both had training in philosophy and theology, and so it was useful for me to assign them to read through works directly opposite to my project and to respond to them, simply to help me see what questions it would occur to them to ask, and what answers it would be incumbent on me to provide. I also had each of them focus on certain areas of the project with which he had no prior acquaintance, again in order to help me see what I might need to explain for readers of the finished book. To one of them, for instance, who had considerable training in ancient and mediaeval philosophy, I assigned texts by modern philosophers who address certain classical understandings of mind or spirit, but who do so from the far end of modern intellectual history. To the other, who was deeply and broadly grounded in Christian thought, I assigned a number of Indian sources. Strange as it may seem, it was all quite illuminating and useful to me (and, so they assure me, quite enjoyable and informative for them).*

**– David Hart (St. Louis University), 2015-2016 Templeton Fellow at the NDIAS**

*My undergraduate research assistants were phenomenal...from an analytical perspective, [they] provided yet another NDIAS space for discussion and brainstorming. I experimented by presenting new ideas to them to see if they understood my points. I could also test if the "payoff" resonated with them. They helped me to explore broader points brought up in seminar discussions by reading material on comparative cases on gender, markets, and citizenship. I also asked them to read deeper into post-[French] Revolution tax strategies. This chronology will further frame the long-term ramifications of my*

*given historical moment. In our discussions, my research assistants brought their own insights to the table. In their independent assignments, they impressively read my own interests back upon the secondary sources that I asked them to summarize or take notes on.*

**– Katie Jarvis (University of Notre Dame), Fall 2016 NDIAS Fellow**

*My UGRAs were helpful in a number of respects. One was able to double check, in one of my journal submissions, all of the page numbers in references to two authors, whose texts, published online, had unclearly marked the original pagination. Both were able to review secondary sources for information relevant to my project. One UGRA, the poor fellow, kept coming up with negative results, and perhaps felt this was not useful, but it was of course very useful in helping me determine the roads I did not need to go down, and I did my best to convey that to him. I was fully satisfied with my UGRAs and the program.*

**– David Ciepley (University of Denver), Fall 2016 NDIAS Fellow**