

A Brief Description of the McNair Program

The McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program is a federally funded TRIO program designed to prepare high-achieving first-generation, income-eligible, and underrepresented minority college students for graduate study. Our goal is to provide participants with the experience and support necessary to complete graduate – particularly doctoral – degrees in their chosen disciplines. Currently, about 200 McNair programs are funded at institutions of higher education throughout the United States and Puerto Rico based on a competitive grant process.

Housed within the Division of Undergraduate Academic Engagement, the UNC McNair Scholars program is one of only three McNair programs in Colorado and has been serving students since 1995. Our program now serves ~30 UNC students annually. Our program is open to students who have completed at least 60 credit hours, have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 or greater, who are first generation and low income and/or from minority populations underrepresented at the graduate level, and demonstrate the desire and commitment to complete a graduate degree.

McNair Experience Timeline – TWO YEARS

YEAR 1			YEAR 2		
Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring
UNIV 431 <i>McNair Research I</i> (2)	UNIV 432 <i>McNair Research II</i> (2)	HON 451 <i>Honors Capstone</i> (2)	Summer PREP Workshop	UNIV 433 <i>Post-Bac Prep</i> (1)	Spring Workshop Series
LIB 251 <i>Research as Inquiry</i> (1)	Get approval & begin data collection	Complete data analysis & manuscript	External research experience (if possible)	APPLY to grad schools	Grad school decision

During their first year in the program, McNair Scholars will begin in the summer with an 8-week Summer Academy (LIB251 & UNIV431) in which they will practice systematically searching and reviewing the literature within the context of exploring a research question and designing a research project to address knowledge gaps. Students will begin working with their faculty mentors as early and frequently as possible throughout the summer to ensure they are on appropriate research trajectories. By the end of the Summer Academy, students will produce a literature review and a short research proposal to facilitate thoughtful and productive discussions about achievable research projects with faculty mentors in the fall.

Scholars then conduct a 9-month research project (~September through May) under the guidance of their faculty mentor and program staff. Students will finalize their research questions and methods with their mentors in August and continue working to get approval, collect and analyze data/information sources, write a manuscript, and present their research by the end of the spring semester of their first year as McNair Scholars. To help scholars achieve these goals, they will enroll in UNIV432 in their first fall semester as McNair Scholars and HON451 in the following Spring semester to finish and refine their manuscripts. If appropriate, scholars will submit for publication in the UNC *Undergraduate Research Journal* or a discipline-specific journal, as determined by the scholar and faculty mentor. Continuing students (i.e., going into their final year) will decide whether they want to be nominated for the annual UNC McNair Research Awards. The top research projects are announced at the fall banquet; 3rd place earns a \$400 scholarship, 2nd place earns a \$600 scholarship, and 1st place earns a \$1,000 scholarship.

During their second year as McNair Scholars, students turn their focus towards applying to graduate school. A week-long Summer PREP workshop will take place in May, shortly after spring semester classes end. Students will be introduced to the graduate school admissions process and begin planning their applications. Students will also have the opportunity to complete their research projects if they have not done so already and may present at conferences that second summer. In addition to focusing on graduate school applications, students are encouraged to seek additional academic and professional development opportunities in the second summer, if possible. Scholars who are on track to complete their research projects by the end of the spring semester will be encouraged to apply to external second-summer research opportunities early in the spring semester.

The second fall semester Postbaccalaureate Preparation Seminar (UNIV433) will help students navigate the graduate admissions process completely. Scholars in their second year will have the opportunity to attend professional development workshops in their final spring semester to prepare them for life in graduate school. These workshops may include, but are not limited to, financial literacy and budgeting, interviewing tips and practice, conflict management, advisor management and communication, and workshops on topics that the scholars identify as important.

McNair Experience Timeline – ONE YEAR

YEAR 1		
Summer	Fall	Spring
UNIV 431 <i>McNair Research I (2)</i>	UNIV 432 <i>McNair Research II (2)</i>	HON 451 <i>Honors Capstone (2)</i>
LIB 251 <i>Research as Inquiry (1)</i>	UNIV 433 <i>Post-Bac Prep (1)</i>	Grad school decision
Summer PREP Workshop	APPLY to grad schools	Spring Workshop Series

McNair Scholars who intend to participate for only one year will begin earlier in the summer. A week-long Summer PREP workshop will take place in May, shortly after spring semester classes end. Students will be introduced to the graduate school admissions process and begin planning their applications.

These scholars will then enroll in the 8-week Summer Academy (LIB251 & UNIV431) with the rest of their cohort, in which they will practice systematically searching and reviewing the literature within the context of exploring a research question and designing a research project to address knowledge gaps. By the end of the Summer Academy, all students will produce a literature review and a short research proposal to facilitate thoughtful and productive discussions about achievable research projects with faculty mentors in the fall.

It is important for the students on the expedited McNair timeline to begin working with their faculty mentors as early and frequently as possible throughout the summer to ensure they are on appropriate research trajectories. If appropriate, scholars should try to complete as much of their research projects as possible during the summer. Completing as much of their research projects as possible before applying to graduate programs may help increase knowledge of field-specific methodologies, paradigms, and jargon ahead of interviews.

These students are encouraged to design research projects that will not require IRB approval, or they should attempt to get this approval as early in the summer as possible with the help of their faculty mentors. If those two options are not appropriate, students may rest assured that they will have the fall and spring semesters of their final year at UNC to complete their projects and apply to graduate schools. By the time scholars on the

expedited timeline arrive for their first day of classes in graduate school, they will have gained the skills and research confidence to succeed in achieving their ambitious!

Scholars will continue their research in the fall and spring under the guidance of their faculty mentors and program staff. Students will continue working to collect and analyze data/information sources, write a manuscript, and present their research by the end of the spring semester of their final year at UNC. To help scholars achieve these goals, they will enroll in UNIV432 in the fall semester. They will also enroll in the Postbaccalaureate Preparation Seminar (UNIV433) in the fall to navigate the graduate admissions process completely, and they will enroll in HON451 in the following Spring semester to finish and refine their manuscripts. If appropriate, scholars will submit for publication in the UNC *Undergraduate Research Journal* or a discipline-specific journal, as determined by the scholar and faculty mentor.

Scholars in their final year will also have the opportunity to attend professional development workshops in their final spring semester to prepare them for life in graduate school. These workshops may include, but are not limited to, financial literacy and budgeting, interviewing tips and practice, conflict management, advisor management and communication, and workshops on topics that the scholars identify as important.

Division of Responsibilities

Scholar's commitment	Mentor's commitment	Program's commitment
Select a faculty mentor	Commit to the progression and success of the scholar	Support the mentor/scholar relationship
Conduct ongoing research under the guidance of a faculty mentor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete independent research project within an academic year • Develop skills as researcher and professional in the field • Communicate with faculty mentor and McNair staff 	Guide the scholar through the research process, helping the scholar progress in research skill development (refer to <i>Research Skill Development Framework</i>)	Provide resources and guidance for scholars to conduct strong research, develop research skills, and grow as professionals in their respective disciplines
Present research at professional conferences	Assist the scholar with the dissemination of the research	Provide travel assistance to professional conferences
Present research at Research Day and the annual conference	Assist the scholar with developing presentations, both oral and poster	Provide forums for scholars to present research
Prepare a final manuscript	Assist the scholar with selection of journal (if other than UNC's <i>Undergraduate Research Journal</i>) and preparation of journal article	Provide assistance in preparing and submitting article for publication in UNC's <i>URJ</i>
Seek academic, personal, financial, and career counseling when needed	Encourage the scholar to seek academic, personal, and career counseling when appropriate	Provide resources for academic, personal, financial, and career counseling
Prepare for the GRE (or other required entrance exams)	Encourage preparation for graduate school entrance exams	Offer GRE preparation support (instruction, materials, financial assistance)
Research potential graduate programs	Assist the scholar with exploring and selecting appropriate graduate programs	Provide logistical support and advice for exploring and selecting graduate programs
Apply to graduate school	Support the scholar through the graduate application process	Provide assistance in the graduate school application process
Undergo reviews and check-ins with throughout the year; Respond to McNair annual survey for 10 years following undergraduate degree completion	Evaluate scholar's progress through the year; contact McNair staff with concerns (or triumphs!)	Monitor scholars' progress through duration in the program and 10 years following undergraduate degree completion; stay in contact with faculty mentors
Adhere to mentor and McNair staff directions and guidance	Work with McNair staff to facilitate scholar's professional growth and development	Provide direction for scholars' professional development and work with scholars and mentors to facilitate growth

McNair Mentoring Benefits and Responsibilities

Thank you for agreeing to be a mentor and for investing your time, energy, expertise, and support into our promising young scholars!

Benefits of McNair Mentoring

- Support equitable undergraduate research at the University of Northern Colorado
- Positively influence the life of a student & help them realize their full potential
- Co-authorship on presentations and publications of research (or be acknowledged as faculty mentor according to your preference)
- Mentor stipends: \$250 paid in summer #1 and \$250 paid in summer #2

Responsibilities of McNair Mentors

- In collaboration with the McNair staff, please guide students during *all stages* of planning, designing, and implementing the research project. We ask that you foster the development of their skills and autonomy as researchers and scholars. Depending on the student and the discipline, this can include any combination of the following activities:
 - ✓ Defining and narrowing a research question
 - ✓ Locating or suggesting and evaluating relevant literature
 - ✓ Helping the student develop an appropriate method and/or theoretical framework
 - ✓ Assisting with the IRB process and/or grant applications
 - ✓ Assisting with development and evaluation of a research proposal
 - ✓ Guiding data collection and analysis, suggesting resources as appropriate
 - ✓ Assisting with preparation, evaluation, and dissemination of the completed project
- Meet *regularly* with your scholar:
 - If you are mentoring a scholar on the ***two-year McNair timeline***, please be available (at least by email) to assist with research question brainstorming, methodology development, and early project design considerations during the 1st summer. *~30 minutes/week, at least.*
 - If you are mentoring a scholar on the ***one-year McNair timeline***, please be available (at least by email and Zoom) to assist throughout the early stages of research development in the summer. *~1 hour/week, at least.*
 - **Scholars and mentors are expected to meet at least 2 hours (virtual or in-person) each month during the academic year**
- Assist your scholar in identifying appropriate graduate programs
- Write recommendations for graduate programs (provided you feel comfortable writing a strong, positive recommendation).
- Consider inviting your scholar to attend a local or regional professional conference (a limited number of travel grants are available through the UNC McNair program to support student travel).
- Help your scholar identify appropriate professional organizations and other activities that will prepare him/her for graduate school.
- Notify the McNair staff of concerns you may have regarding your McNair Scholar.
- Expect the best from your scholar!

McNair Mentoring Agreement

We, (Mentor) _____ and (Scholar) _____, are teaming up for a mentoring partnership. We've discussed and agree with the following:

Goals: _____

Mentor's Expectations: _____

Scholar's Expectations: _____

Frequency and Type of Meetings: _____

Additional Points: _____

We have discussed and agreed to a mentoring partnership with the understanding that 1) our interactions will be professional and respectful; 2) we will strive for positive communication; and 3) this agreement can be dissolved at any time upon request from either partner.

Mentor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Scholar's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please make two copies of this form, one for faculty and one for the McNair office.