Undergraduate Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program

The McNair Scholars Program is a Federal TRiO program designed to prepare students from low income, first generation and traditionally underrepresented groups for doctoral studies. McNair Scholars participate in courses, seminars and workshops on topics related to graduate school preparation, complete a paid research experience under the guidance of a faculty mentor, and have the opportunity to present their research at local, regional or national conferences. The McNair program staff works closely with students as they complete their undergraduate requirements and graduate school applications.

The McNair Scholars Program Application can be found and submitted at: https://fiu.academicworks.com/opportunities/2963.

For any questions regarding the application and your eligibility, please contact the FIU McNair Scholars Program at mcnair@fiu.edu

Eligibility Criteria

Before beginning the application process, please ensure that you meet all the eligibility criteria. The McNair Scholars Program is a federally funded program and selected students must meet the required criteria. You qualify to apply for the McNair Scholars Program if you:

- Intend to pursue a Ph.D. (professional degrees such as an MD, JD, MBA, PharmD, etc. are not eligible)
- Are US citizen or US permanent resident
- Are a rising junior or a rising senior by Summer 2019 term and have completed minimum 60 credits of undergraduate courses by the time of the start of their Summer Research Project/Internship.
- Major in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) degree program
- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.00 scale)
- Are either low income* (based on family size and taxable income) and first generation college students (neither parent nor legal guardian has a Bachelor’s degree) and /or a member of a group traditionally under-represented in higher education (e.g., African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, or student with disability).
- Have identified a research mentor at the time of application (for rising seniors)

*To find out the low income guidelines established by the department of education go to: http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html
Application Requirements:

ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED AS PDFs

- **Brief essay (1000 words max)**. The essay should describe your interest in becoming a McNair Fellow and how it will assist you with the goal of obtaining a PhD. What are some of the experiences that significantly contributed to your desire to get involved in research and what makes you a compelling candidate?
- **Research abstract (150 word max)** describing the objectives and the hypothesized outcomes of the proposed study. Please include the title and the name of the name of your faculty advisor/mentor (if available)
- **A copy of unofficial transcripts** from Florida International University and other schools attended
- **A copy of your Free Application for Student Aid (FASFA)**
- **A copy of your parent's income tax return**, if applicable
- **A copy of your income tax return**, if applicable
- **Complete response to supplemental questions** in AcademicWorks
- **Two Letters of Recommendations from faculty** submitted in the AcademicWorks system. Recommendation Request for the McNair Program will only go out to your recommender once you fully submit your application.

*Priority will be given to early applicants*

### McNair Scholars Selection Process

1. **Program Application Opens - August**
2. **Initial Applications Submitted - November**
3. **Short Listed Applicants Invited to Present to the Panel of Judges - January**
4. **Final Selection and Notification - February**
5. **McNair Scholars Inducted - March**
6. **Program Commences - May**

### Putting Together a Successful Application

- Start preparing your application early and carefully study the eligibility criteria
- If you currently do not have a research mentor, start the search process as soon as possible. Give faculty enough advance notice that you are putting together a McNair application and would like them to serve as your mentor.
- Immediately reach out to the recommenders asking for reference letters. Your references should be able to speak to the experiences and the skills you highlight in your application. Give recommenders enough time to submit a good letter. Share with them the McNair application requirements and the program expectations.
Strategies for Identifying a Research Mentor

Here are some useful tips for identifying research mentors:

- Make a list of faculty members with whom you have taken courses and whose work has influenced your interest.
- Look at the faculty webpages to identify the lab that fits best with your research interests. Most faculty have CVs and research interests listed on their website.
- Talk to fellow undergraduate students who may already be doing research.
- Talk to TA’s and graduate students. If you are interested in a particular faculty mentor, her/his websites often list graduate students.
- Visit the department and talk to the departmental graduate assistant regarding faculty availability and research positions.
- Reach out to McNair staff to guide you through the process. In some exceptional circumstances, the staff can facilitate introductions to the faculty for rising junior applicants but please note that the primary responsibility of finding a faculty mentor whose work aligns with your own research interests rests on you.