

Research Experience

Many graduate programs require a good background in research methods and statistics. Besides taking classes in these areas, the best way to make yourself a more desirable applicant is to gain research experience working in a faculty member's lab. There are several ways to do this at Illinois State and many can earn you course credit. PSY 287, 290, and 390 are available as courses you can take that involve research experiences. The [Research webpage](#) provides information about faculty with lab opportunities for students. Some faculty have more detailed descriptions of their research projects on their personal websites. It is a good idea to identify a few faculty that do research you are interested in and contact those people either by e-mail or during their office hours.

Taking both PSY 290 and PSY 390 with the same faculty member can provide you with valuable research experience needed for graduate school. PSY 287 gives you course credit for completing an independent study (where you work as the primary researcher on a project with a faculty mentor) and will give you research experience with more responsibility. If you are an honors student, you can complete IDS 285, 286, and 395.03 for research experience and honors course credit.

Depending on your goals, you may want to spend a year or more working in one faculty member's lab or spend time working in labs with a few different faculty. It is best to start on your research experiences as early as possible (e.g., during your sophomore year) to allow yourself more opportunities to gain the kind of experiences you want and more time for faculty to get to know you.