ACS Cancer Research Summer Undergraduate Internship Program
Application Guidelines 2026

About the Program

The ACS Cancer Research Summer Undergraduate Internship Program provides undergraduate students with hands-on research experience and career development activities that will help them prepare for a career in cancer research. The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center (USC NCCC) has received funding from the ACS to offer eight (8) $5,000 stipends for undergraduate students to participate in this 10-week summer internship. Please note that funding for living expenses, such as housing, food, and transportation, is not provided.

The application review process will be conducted by the USC NCCC Review Committee and may take up to 4 weeks. The program will run from June to early August 2026.

All interested students must submit their Eligibility Form by **on Friday, March 20, 2026**.
Students selected to move forward will be instructed to contact a mentor and collaborate on a Preliminary Research Proposal due on **Friday, May 1, 2026**.
Students who advance to the final stage will need to submit your Full Research Proposal by **Friday, May 22, 2026**

Eligibility Requirements

1. *Backgrounds Underrepresented in Biomedical Research*: The program is open to students from backgrounds that are historically underrepresented in biomedical research per NIH definition.
2. *Academic Standing*: Applicants must be rising sophomores, juniors, or seniors with an interest in any Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) field.
3. *GPA:* A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.
4. *Full-time Enrollment:* Applicants must be enrolled full-time (at least 12 units per semester).
5. *No Concurrent Summer Classes:* Students cannot enroll in summer courses while participating in the internship program.
6. *Degree Requirements:* Applicants must not be graduating before the program ends.

How to Apply

Step 1: Submit the Eligibility Form by **Friday, March 20, 2026.**
Step 2: If eligible, you will be invited to contact a USC Cancer Center faculty mentor.
Step 3: After confirming a mentor, work together to develop a Preliminary Research Proposal, due **Friday, May 1, 2026.**
Step 4: Applicants whose preliminary proposals are approved will submit a Full Research Proposal by **Friday, May 22, 2026.**

After Acceptance:

1. Once accepted, you will work with your mentor to complete any required compliance steps, such as HIPAA certification or lab safety training.
2. Funding will be disbursed only once your mentor has obtained necessary institutional approvals (e.g., IRB or IACUC).
3. Both the awardee and their mentor will sign an agreement outlining the program's milestones and deliverables.

ACS Cancer Research Summer Undergraduate Internship Program
FAQ

Q: How do I find a faculty mentor?

Step 1: *Review the Mentor List*
Begin by reviewing the list of faculty mentors available for the 2026 cohort. If you have already identified a mentor who is not listed, note this in your Eligibility Form or email **acs-dicr@usc.edu**

Step 2: Contact Potential Mentors
If your Eligibility Form is accepted, you will be instructed to reach out to potential mentors via email. In your message, briefly introduce yourself and explain your interest in cancer research.

Your email may include questions such as:

- What skills will I learn in your lab?
- What type of training will be provided?
- What are your current research projects?
- What would my role be in the laboratory?
- I read about your work in [topic] and am very interested; could you recommend a few papers to learn more?

Step 3: Follow up and Stay Engaged
Check your email regularly and respond promptly. Be proactive and professional in all communications with potential mentors.

Q: When is the application deadline?

Eligibility Form: due on Friday, March 20, 2026.
Preliminary Research Proposal: due on Friday, May 1, 2026**.**
Full Research Proposal: due on Friday, May 22 2026.

Q: How long is the internship?

The program is a 10-week summer internship that runs from June to early August 2026. Students must not be enrolled in other summer classes during this time.

Q: How much is the stipend?

Interns will receive a $5,000 stipend for the summer. Additional funding for living expenses (housing, transportation, etc.) is not available.

For more information regarding the program, please contact **acs-dicr@usc.edu**.