

UC Santa Barbara is pleased to offer two dynamic and rigorous [pre-college research programs](#), the [Summer Research Academies](#) (SRA) and the [Research Mentorship Program](#) (RMP). Open to current 9th-11th graders, these programs offer students the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary research on campus this summer. Applications open December 15th, and admissions are made on a rolling basis. Interested students are encouraged to register for an [informational webinar](#) and begin their application today! For more information, please visit [our website](#) or reach out to precollege@summer.ucsb.edu.

Summer Research Academies

4 university credits
Intensive collaborative research in trending
cross-disciplinary fields
June 26 - July 24, 2026

Research Mentorship Program

8 university credits
One-on-one guided research with a mentor in
an interdisciplinary field
June 15 - July 31, 2026

What are the differences between RMP and SRA?

RMP is a 7-week, 8-unit rigorous research experience in which students conduct interdisciplinary and ongoing research under the guidance of a mentor. Before arriving on campus for 6 weeks, students complete a mandatory Virtual Component that introduces resources and concepts to guide their success, and provides them with the opportunity to hear mentors pitch research projects from which they will select. SRA is a 4-week, 4-unit fully in-person intensive research academy in which students conduct collaborative cross-disciplinary research in their admitted track within small groups. Students participate in these programs in both laboratory and classroom-based learning environments.

Are students able to apply to both RMP and SRA?

Yes, students can apply to both programs. Please note that the applications are separate with differing requirements, and the admissions committee for each program is independent of one another.

Will students earn college credit for these programs? Are the courses letter-graded?

Yes, upon successful completion of RMP, students earn 8 letter-graded units of interdisciplinary college credit. Upon successful completion of SRA, students earn 4 letter-graded units of interdisciplinary college credit.

Is financial assistance available for these programs?

The admission processes for both RMP and SRA are need-blind, and financial assistance is available. Upon application submission, students may request an application fee waiver. Requests for application fee waivers are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and determinations are made based on demonstrated financial need. Within their request for an application fee waiver, students should be as specific as possible about why the application fee poses a significant financial hardship.

Students are also able to indicate their interest in applying for a scholarship within their online application. If they are admitted and interested in a scholarship, their guardian will be required to submit financial documentation to complete the scholarship application on their student's behalf. A limited number of full and partial scholarships are available and are awarded based on need and availability. Please note that these scholarships are not merit-based, and priority is given to California residents.

Are there any significant changes to the application process or requirements for 2026?

The RMP application will no longer include a recommendation. Additionally, students who wish to apply as a commuter must attend a local area high school and have a permanent address between Lompoc and Ventura.

What are the transcript requirements to apply to these programs?

For an application to be reviewed, students must upload an unofficial transcript that shows their entire high school academic history, including the first trimester or semester grades for the 2025-2026 academic year. Official transcripts are not required, but please note that neither report cards nor progress reports will be accepted. If their school utilizes a non-traditional grading system, we encourage applicants to upload a document explaining the system alongside their complete transcript.

After submitting their application, what is the expected timeframe for an applicant to receive an admissions decision?

RMP applicants must submit their application and pay the application fee by March 9, 2026 at 11:59pm PDT. SRA applicants must submit their application and pay the application fee by March 23, 2026 at 11:59pm PDT. Upon successful submission and payment, students will receive email confirmation that their application has been submitted.

After submission, applicants should monitor their email and application portal checklist for requests from the admissions committee. Once checklist items are complete, including transcript verification by the admissions committee, students will receive an email notification that their application is under review. At this point, applicants can expect to receive a final decision in their application portal within approximately 3-6 weeks for RMP and 3-5 weeks for SRA. This review period may be extended if a student submits their application later in the cycle, due to the volume of applications received near the deadline. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and spots remain open in each program until the end of the application cycle.

Can an applicant arrive late or participate in another program concurrently?

Due to the rigorous nature of our programs, students must fully participate in the entire program. Students are not permitted to participate in any other courses, programs, or activities such as sports, competitions, testing, recitals, vacations, work, or time off. If an applicant cannot attend the full program or if they have other summer commitments, UCSB Pre-College programs are not the right fit for them.

What makes a strong applicant to SRA?

SRA applicants are reviewed holistically, with no criteria weighed more heavily than others. Strong SRA applicants will meet all academic requirements and demonstratively understand the program. We seek students who are motivated, curious, and responsible. They should enjoy challenges and have a growth mindset. We also look for applicants who collaborate well in both leading and supporting roles. No prior research experience is required.

What makes a strong applicant to RMP?

RMP applicants are also reviewed holistically, without special weight being placed on any specific criteria. A strong RMP applicant is curious, motivated, responsible, and able to demonstrate their initiative, open-mindedness, and growth mindset. We also look for applicants who can work well both independently and collaboratively. Prior research experience is not required.

How can I best support students applying to a UC Santa Barbara Pre-College Program?

Counselors can help students gauge whether these programs would be a good fit, and encourage students to attend a [Pre-College Webinar](#) to gain a better understanding of our programs, gather additional application process insight, and to ask questions in a live Q&A. Additionally, counselors can help applicants understand that each part of the application is an opportunity to share something new with the admissions committee.