



Ronald E. McNair
Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program

"Before you can make a dream come true, you must first have one."
Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.



McNair Scholar Guidebook



McNair Program History and Purpose



History of the Federal TRIO Programs

The history of TRIO is progressive. It began with Upward Bound, which emerged out of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 in response to the administration's War on Poverty. In 1965, Talent Search, the second outreach program, was created as part of the Higher Education Act. In 1968, Student Support Services, which was originally known as Special Services for Disadvantaged Students, was authorized by the Higher Education Amendments and became the third in a series of educational opportunity programs. By the late 1960's, the term "TRIO" was coined to describe these federal programs.

Over the years, the TRIO Programs have been expanded and improved to provide a wider range of services and to reach more students who need assistance. The Higher Education Amendments of 1972 added the fourth program to the TRIO group by authorizing the Educational Opportunity Centers. The 1976 Education Amendments authorized the Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs, initially known as the Training Program for Special Programs Staff and Leadership Personnel. Amendments in 1986 added the sixth program, the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. Additionally, in 1990, the Department created the Upward Bound Math/Science program to address the need for specific instruction in the fields of math and science. The Upward Bound Math/Science program is administered under the same regulations as the regular Upward Bound program, but it must be applied for separately. The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 authorized the TRIO Dissemination Partnership program to encourage the replication of successful practices of TRIO programs. Finally, the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2001 amended the Student Support Services (SSS) program to permit the use of program funds for direct financial assistance (Grant Aid) for current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants.

The legislative requirements for all Federal TRIO Programs can be found in the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2. The requirements for the SSS Grant Aid can be found in Public Law 106-554.

Currently the TRIO programs include eight outreach and support programs targeted to help students progress from middle school to post baccalaureate programs.

TRIO Programs

- Educational Opportunity Centers
- Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement
- Student Support Services
- Talent Search
- TRIO Dissemination Partnership Program
- Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs Staff
- Upward Bound
- Upward Bound Math/Science

* Adapted from "History of the Federal TRIO Programs", <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/HEP/trio/triohistory.html>

Brief Biography of Ronald McNair



Ronald Erwin McNair was born on October 21, 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina, where he graduated as valedictorian from Carver High School in 1967. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from North Carolina A&T State University with a B.S. in physics. At 26, he earned his Ph.D. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.). Dr. McNair became a recognized expert in laser physics while on the staff of Hughes Research Laboratory. In 1978, he was selected for participation in NASA's space shuttle program and became the second African American astronaut in U.S. history. He served as a mission specialist aboard the space shuttle Challenger and died along with the rest of the Challenger crew when the space shuttle exploded nine miles above the Atlantic on January 28, 1986.

After his death, the U.S. Congress endowed the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program to encourage low-income, first generation, and underrepresented college students to expand their educational opportunities and pursue graduate studies.

You can find more information on Dr. McNair at NASA's Astronaut Biographies page: <http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/mcnair.html>.

Purpose

The Ronald E. McNair Post baccalaureate Achievement Program at the University of Washington prepares undergraduates for doctoral study through involvement in research and scholarly activities. Our goal is to successfully support low-income, first generation students, and students from groups underrepresented in graduate education, in their efforts to become researchers and teachers at the university level. By fostering mentoring relationships, promoting undergraduate research, assisting with GRE preparation, and encouraging students to attend and present at conferences, we aim to produce highly competitive graduate school applicants who have the skills and experiences necessary to succeed in their programs.

Benefits for McNair Scholars

The McNair Program offers a challenging and supportive environment that is conducive to learning and personal/professional development.

As a McNair Scholar, you will receive the following benefits:

- The academic and personal support of the McNair Graduate Advisors
- A research stipend to complete an original research project
- Publication in the UW McNair Scholars Journal
- Faculty, graduate student, and peer mentoring
- Opportunities to participate in research conferences
- Funding to travel to research conferences and visit graduate schools
- Workshops on the graduate school application process, financial aid, scholarships and fellowships, the culture of graduate school, and summer research internships
- Personal assistance in locating graduate schools, applying, and gaining admission to graduate school
- A month-long GRE preparation course
- Access to GRE preparation software
- Access to tutoring and the OMA Instructional Center

Staff Responsibilities

We are committed to sponsoring and supporting academic enrichment activities and events that will prepare you to attend graduate school and earn a doctoral degree.

Our responsibilities include:

- Regularly facilitating and improving on workshops designed to strengthen your academic skills and graduate school applications
- Disseminating up-to-date information about new research opportunities, internships, scholarships, programs, and conferences
- Providing individual advising and counseling for McNair Scholars
- Facilitating and supporting the faculty mentor/student relationship
- Assisting McNair Scholars in finding sources of financial aid
- Consistently providing valuable educational, cultural, and social experiences for McNair Scholars

Program Requirements & Timelines

Annual Calendar of Events

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><i>September</i></p> <p>GRE preparation course</p> | <p><i>October</i></p> <p>Grad school application workshop Statement of purpose workshop Recommendation letters workshop Curriculum vita/resume workshop</p> | <p><i>November</i></p> <p>Grad school application workshop Statement of purpose workshop Recommendation letters workshop Curriculum vita/resume workshop</p> | <p><i>December</i></p> <p>McNair Fall Social Financial aid workshop</p> |
| <p><i>January</i></p> <p>McNair Journal publication Summer internship workshop</p> | <p><i>February</i></p> <p>Graduate school visits</p> | <p><i>March</i></p> <p>Grad program selection workshop</p> | <p><i>April</i></p> <p>Poster presentation workshop Oral presentation workshop Cultural event</p> |
| <p><i>May</i></p> <p>EIP/McNair Research Conference UW Research Symposium</p> | <p><i>June</i></p> <p>Summer research workshop New student orientation Summer research internship</p> | <p><i>July</i></p> <p>Summer research internship</p> | <p><i>August</i></p> <p>Summer research internship</p> |

Ongoing services and resources:

Sophomore Seminar
Academic Advising
Career Counseling
Cultural Events

Graduate School Application Assistance
GRE Preparation Software
Internship Information and Database
McNair Program Newsletter

Mentoring
Resource Room & Library
Scholarship Information
Tutoring

Graduate School Preparation Timeline

While it's perhaps never too early to start thinking about grad school, during your sophomore year, you can begin to take concrete steps that will prepare you to be a strong applicant. These activities will also familiarize you with what to expect when you enter your graduate program.

Broadly, graduate school admittance is based on:

1. GPA
2. GRE scores
3. Statement of purpose
4. Letters of recommendation
5. Research projects and internships

Sophomore Year

Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters

ENROLL IN THE SOPHOMORE SEMINAR

In this year-long class, you find out what graduate school is all about, gain a fundamental understanding of the research process, carry out your own research project, and give a poster presentation of this research at the annual McNair Research Conference.

NETWORK

Get to know each of your professors. Visit them during office hours and let them know that you are preparing for graduate school. Ask for recommendations regarding graduate programs, research projects, classes, and lectures in your area of interest.

MAINTAIN YOUR GPA

If you are having difficulty in any of your courses, get help from tutors. Talk to your TAs for assistance. Visit the Instructional Center and ask for assistance there. The Instructional Center offers tutoring in all subjects. Make sure to do this as soon into the quarter as possible.

APPLY TO SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

You should begin looking into summer internship opportunities in the fall. Deadlines for summer internship applications generally fall between January and March, so you should begin your application process in December. McNair staff will assist you with this process.

Summer Quarter

PARTICIPATE IN A SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM

Participating in a summer research project will increase your chances of being accepted into graduate school. Summer research programs typically pay your expenses. You may also receive academic credit.

PARTICIPATE IN AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT.

Even if you do not enroll in a formal summer internship or research program, consider working on an independent research project with a faculty member. The summer is an excellent time to immerse yourself in research, especially if you are not taking other courses.

McNair Scholar Guidebook Junior Year

Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters

CONTINUE NETWORKING

Make more connections with faculty, and maintain the relationships you already have.

LOOK INTO GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Become familiar with the ranking and academic reputation of universities and departments. Talk to faculty and graduate students in the disciplines you are considering. Make note of the specific research interests of faculty at prospective schools. Write for graduate school catalogs. Ask about department contacts so that you can talk directly with graduate students and faculty. Look at the web pages of departments you are considering. Make sure to pay attention not solely to academics, but also to lifestyle characteristics like campus climate, diversity in the area, and other considerations important to you. McNair staff will assist you in your search for the right graduate program.

TRAVEL TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS

You should try to visit as many of the graduate schools that you plan to apply to as possible. The McNair Program provides some funding for visiting graduate schools.

PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH CONFERENCES

The McNair Program provides travel funds for you to attend a research conference, either here or elsewhere in the country. Conferences give you the opportunity to find out about the types of research others are doing, to be a part of a community of scholars, and to meet others in your discipline and research area. This opportunity will be especially useful to you if you present your research at the conference.

Summer Quarter

BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT SOURCES OF FUNDING

Visit the Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP) of the Graduate School. Investigate private foundations and scholarships and public resources.

TAKE THE GRE PREPARATION COURSE

You must take the GRE general test **no later than** November of your senior year (or the year before you intend to enter grad school). Besides taking the GRE prep course, make use of opportunities to study on your own.

DETERMINE DEADLINES

Most graduate school application deadlines are in January/February. However, some are as early as November. Also, keep in mind that there are different deadlines for financial aid, housing, and admission. Deadlines for funding or financial assistance are earlier than general admissions deadlines.

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Fall Quarter

MAINTAIN YOUR GPA

Fall quarter grades are the final grades that most graduate schools will see. Make sure that your GPA is strong (no lower than 3.2). If your cumulative GPA is lower than 3.2, you will need to do exceptionally well on the other parts of your application to balance out the effects of your GPA. Graduate schools do take into consideration improvement in your GPA within the last year and your cumulative GPA in your major. However, your overall GPA will be the most obvious reflection of your abilities and commitment as a scholar.

PARTICIPATE IN WORKSHOPS

During the fall, the McNair Program presents workshops designed to assist you with the graduate school application process. You will find this information useful as you begin to apply for grad schools.

REQUEST LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Give your professors adequate time to meet the application deadlines. In order to help them write the best possible letter for you, give them a draft of your statement of purpose and a resume. Also, provide them with a memo that includes the following information: the programs you are applying to; your intended research topic; your work in their classes and your grades; and deadlines. Be sure to give them addressed envelopes with the proper postage.

WRITE YOUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Work with McNair staff on the statement. Also, solicit feedback from as many people as possible, such as TAs and professors in the discipline you are considering.

TAKE THE GRE

The latest you should take your GRE, if you plan to attend graduate school the next fall, is November.

APPLY FOR ADMISSION

Complete and send your applications for admission. The McNair Program provides you with graduate school application fee waivers.

Winter Quarter

CONFIRM THE RECEIPT OF YOUR APPLICATIONS

Confirm that your applications have been received and that they are complete. Most institutions will give notice of your acceptance in late March/early April. However, depending on the application deadlines and if you have been placed on a waiting list, you may not hear until as late as May.

Spring Quarter

SEND THANK YOU NOTES

Write thank you notes to faculty who wrote you letters of recommendation.

INFORM THE McNAIR OFFICE OF YOUR ACCEPTANCES AND FINANCIAL PACKAGES

Research Requirements
&
Presentation Procedures

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Research Internship

Doing original research and discussing that research with a community of scholars is one of the most invigorating, creative, and exciting experiences for students, undergraduate and graduate alike. As part of the McNair Program, you will have the opportunity to have active guidance and financial assistance during your research process.

Research expectations

As a McNair Scholar, research will be a regular part of your undergraduate experience. Each student is expected to engage in at least one research project during your academic career. Depending on when you join the McNair Program, this research can take place either during the school year or over the summer.

Sophomores and juniors should participate in summer research internships. If you enter the McNair Program as a senior, you should participate in a yearlong research project.

Structure of the research program

Most of you will participate in the summer internship. This will involve formulating a research question, finding a faculty mentor, and carrying out the research. The research should last for a period of 8 to 10 weeks. At the beginning of the summer, you will submit a research proposal, reviewed and signed by your faculty mentor, to the McNair office. You should meet with your faculty mentor at least once a week while you are doing your research. At the end of the summer, you will submit your final project, signed by your faculty mentor, to the McNair office.

Support for the research program

McNair staff will work with you during Winter and Spring quarters in setting up a research plan for the summer. We will also guide you in finding a faculty mentor, either from the list of faculty who wrote your letters of reference or from the McNair faculty mentor pool. We will assist you in selecting a faculty member according to your areas of interest and compatibility, and facilitate a mentor relationship between you and the faculty member.

The McNair Program offers up to \$2,800 per student per year to use toward research costs. The payments will be disbursed to you over the course of summer quarter. If your research is done over the academic year, the stipend will be divided over the 3 quarters. As a senior engaged in a yearlong research project, you may qualify for additional support through the Presidential McNair Scholarship. Presidential Scholars are awarded full tuition for the year and a small stipend to conduct research with a faculty member. The Scholarship is awarded based on the merit of your research proposal, faculty recommendations, GPA, and strength of your resume. While your faculty mentor will provide you with the bulk of research guidance throughout this project, McNair advisors are also here to provide you with personal guidance and support.

Alternatives

You have the option of enrolling in a summer research internship at another university. In this case, you are eligible for the host institution's stipend as well as the McNair stipend. Interested students should discuss these opportunities with McNair staff.

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Research Project Guidelines

Steps in the Research Process

Your research project will consist of the following components:

- Formulate a research question.
- Discuss your research question with your faculty mentor.
The McNair staff will assist in matching you with a faculty mentor.
- Write a research proposal, and submit it to the McNair office after your mentor has approved it.
- Carry out the research, usually over an 8-10-week period over the summer. Some of you will participate in a yearlong research project during your senior year, instead of or in addition to the summer.
- Submit updates of your research to the McNair office:
 - Literature background
 - First draft of research
 - Final project, reviewed and signed by your faculty mentor
 - Evaluation report on your research experience.

Research Proposal

Your research proposal is due in the McNair office within two weeks of summer quarter (or the quarter in which you begin your research). The proposal should be approved and signed by your mentor before submission.

Your proposal should include the following elements:

- Title page
- Introduction
In the introduction, you will clearly and concisely state your research question, the theoretical and/or empirical foundations on which you build your research, and the purpose of your project.
- Methodology
Describe the methods you will use to carry out your research.
- Conclusion
Sum up what you plan to achieve with your research, and how it contributes to the body of knowledge in the field.
- Supporting documents (optional)
Attach any forms, questionnaires, interview questions, and so forth that you will use in your research. If you are still in the process of developing such documents, note that in your methodology section.

The proposal should be 3-5 pages long.

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Your research paper is due in the McNair office the last day of the spring quarter. The project should be approved and signed by your mentor before submission.

Your paper should follow the standard format of those in professional journals in your field. Before writing your paper, look at published articles to get an idea of the length, section headings, and amount of detail common to papers in your area. In general, your paper should include the following elements:

Abstract (1-2 paragraphs):

Generally, the abstract will be the last section you write. The abstract gives the reader a **brief**, succinct overview of your paper: the question you examined; your findings; and your overall conclusions.

Introduction:

The introduction tells the reader what you are studying, why you are studying it, and the significance of studying it.

The reader should be able to answer the following questions after reading your introduction:

- What is the issue or problem you are interested in?
- Why are you interested in this issue or problem?
- Specifically, what is the research question you are asking with respect to this issue?
- Generally, how will you go about answering this research question?

The introduction should be detailed enough to provide the reader with your assumptions, thoughts, and proposed direction, but concise enough to do all of the above in only a few pages.

Literature Background/Review:

The literature background outlines the theoretical foundation for your approach, or the conflicting or ambiguous theoretical assumptions you will be testing. This is where you introduce what is known about the issue and, in particular, what others have done (if anything) to answer the major question(s) you are asking. In reviewing the work of others, you may find inconsistencies that you will want to address, or theoretical explanations for the issue you are interested in and the approaches you are taking. You might use these theoretical explanations as a guide for answering your question, or you might feel that these theoretical explanations are incomplete—leading you to elaborate, refine (or replace) them. Most importantly, this section tells the reader what you expect to find (that is, your hypotheses) based on the evidence provided.

The reader should be able to answer the following questions after reading your background section:

- What have others said about the issue you are studying?
- How has the work of others led you to ask the question(s) you are asking?
- Does the work of others provide any direction or theoretical foundation for the issue you are interested in? If so, how?
- Are there any voids or inconsistencies in others' explanations that your study will address?

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- What are your predictions or hypotheses, and on what grounds (based on your discussion of the literature in this section) do you make each?

Method/Approach/Design:

This section explains how you designed your study and collected data, why you chose that method over others, who your participants were (if you had participants), and what your participants did. It describes your interview protocols, instruments or experimental stimuli, and provides important definitions. You should also attach an example of your instrument, protocol or experimental stimuli, and describe any considerations you made regarding the design, controls, and individual items.

The reader should be able to answer the following questions after reading your method section:

- What specific study design did you use (e.g., survey methods, interviews, experiment)?
- What did the materials you created for your study look like?
- How did you actually use the materials? If you had participants, what did they do?
- What issues did you address with respect to controls, sampling, and the like?
- Who participated in your study (number of people, ages, and so on)?
- How did you get people to participate?
- What did people do (step by step) after they agreed to participate?

Results:

This section is simple—what did you find out. If you used a survey questionnaire, this is where you provide the mean responses to all of your questions, break down the responses by various sorter questions, and provide the results of other sorts of analyses (such as percentage calculations, correlations, and so on).

If you performed an experiment, this is where you provide the means for each of your conditions, and present other information regarding the statistical significance of your findings. This section is often full of tables and/or graphs of your results. If you did an interview-based study, this is where you present the major findings, what people said, how you went about categorizing or compiling what they said, introduce any themes that emerged or inconsistencies that revealed themselves.

Discussion:

This is the section where you talk about what the results from the previous section mean.

The reader should be able to answer the following questions after reading your discussion section:

- How do you interpret your findings?
- Did your findings meet or contradict your expectations (hypotheses)?
- Based on your findings, what do you conclude about your hypotheses: do you continue to have faith in them; would you modify them, and how; would you reject them, and what might you hypothesize instead?

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Conclusion:

This section wraps it all up. You have already presented your results and the interpretation of those findings. Here is where you tie up the loose ends. You tell the reader what you have learned and what, in sum, all of your findings say about the original question you asked. Furthermore, you present any unanswered questions and discuss your study's limitations. Lastly, in light of these limitations and unanswered questions, you suggest avenues for further inquiry.

References:

This is simply a list of your references (generally in alphabetical order by first author's name). You should use whatever convention for presenting references is most common in your field.

Appendix:

This is where you provide the reader with a copy of any questionnaires, protocols, or other materials you use in your study.

Paper Guidelines

All students who received research funding this summer must provide the McNair office with their paper, either by e-mail or on a disk, by **June 11th, 2010**. Those students who do not have a finished paper of their summer research must submit an abstract and research discussion paper of at least 2 pages. The only students who will be excused from publishing a paper in the journal are those whose paper is in submission to an academic journal. If your paper is in submission, you must provide an extended abstract for publication in the McNair Journal. In addition, you must discuss the status of your paper with the McNair staff in person and provide us with a copy of the paper and with documents supporting the paper's submission for publication, including contact information for the editor of the journal.

Use the following guidelines to format your paper:

Mechanics/Formatting

- Single-space your manuscript using the type Times New Roman, size 11. Make sure that any embedded texts (texts you create in figures, charts, and equations) are also Times New Roman. Labels and titles must not be part of objects such as figures, charts, and equations.
- Make all margins $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, with a paper size of 9-inch high by 6-inch wide.
- Center and bold the **Title** of your paper at the top of the first page. Put your name, in plain text, underneath the title after one line of space. After one more line of space, put the word **Abstract** in bold, aligned left.
- Include an abstract of about 250 words at the beginning of the paper, in italics. It must be in the form of a narrative and written in plain English.
- Tab (1/2 inch) the first sentence of each paragraph.
- Separate main segments of the paper with subtitles, all aligned on the left. For main subtitles, use bold text format, and separate them from the previous paragraph by a blank line. Italicize secondary subtitles, but do not add any extra space between lines.
- Manuscripts should be between five to ten single-spaced pages, excluding tables, charts, and figures.

Tables and Figures

- Place tables and figures **exactly** where they should appear in your paper. Be sure that the tables and figures are sized and labeled exactly how you want them to appear in the article.
- Make tables and figures as simple as possible. Colored and 3-D graphs may not print as you had intended.
- Tables and figures should be labeled on the bottom and italicized in the following way

Figure 1. Title. (Include a period at the end).

The tables and figures you include should be discussed in the text, but their meanings should be clear without reading the text.

- Equations must be numbered on the same line they appear in the following format:

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Eq. [1]

References

- Format your References section using the standard established in your field. Bring a copy of a major journal in your field to your McNair Graduate Advisor as an example.

Footnotes/Endnotes

- Depending on your discipline, you may use either endnotes or footnotes. Make sure to put a period at the end of each reference, footnote, or citation.
- "Endnotes" is the proper subtitle for citations listed in the order of their appearance in the text. "References" is the proper subtitle for citations listed in alphabetical order. If you use Endnotes instead of footnotes to annotate the main texts *and* you have a References section, place the References section after the Endnotes section.

Acknowledgments

- Include a section titled "Acknowledgments" using the format of a major subheading. Be sure to acknowledge the McNair Program and anyone else giving you funding or resources. Also mention your faculty mentor and others who have helped you with your research.
- After the Acknowledgments, place an empty line followed by three lines: the first with your name; the second with your department; and the third with an appropriate email address. Follow this with an empty line and then with one sentence about your research interests and another sentence about your intended Ph.D. program.
- This section should be the last section of your paper.

Feel free to look at past McNair Scholar's Journals for reference (available in the resource room or at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwmcnair/2009%20Journal.pdf>).

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Travel Opportunities and Procedures

As a McNair Scholar, you are eligible for approximately \$824.00 in travel funds each year. These funds may be used toward two opportunities: traveling to professional conferences; or visiting graduate programs to facilitate your graduate school selection process.

Professional conferences

Each year, hundreds of professional conferences occur throughout the United States. The main purpose of these conferences is to provide a forum for researchers (including undergraduates) to present their papers to other scholars in their field for feedback, criticism, and to generate ideas for future research paths. Participants also have a chance to learn about the latest research developments in their fields.

Besides serving as a venue for presenting and discussing research, professional conferences also serve a variety of other purposes:

- Faculty, students, and others serve on various committees associated with professional organizations. Conferences provide an opportunity for committee members to meet.
- Academic publishing companies use conferences to advertise their books. Participants can therefore browse through the newest collections and receive discounted prices on purchases.
- Graduate school recruitment fairs are common at student-focused research conferences.
- Participants network and meet others in their field. Attending a conference will give you an opportunity to introduce yourself or be introduced to some of the leading scholars in your discipline.
- At the larger conferences, university departments will interview job candidates for faculty positions.
- Last but definitely not least, attending conferences allows you to visit places you've never been. Generally, conference organizers make a point of publicizing the unique or interesting aspects of the area where the conference is being held. They also schedule local sightseeing excursions at discount rates for participants.

You do not need to present a paper at a conference in order to attend—although if you are interested, it would be a wonderful opportunity for you to do so. **Discuss with your faculty mentor or a McNair Program advisor the procedure for submitting a paper proposal for presentation at a conference.**

Your faculty and graduate mentors will be the best sources of information for locating professional conferences in your research area. You should also check your department office, which will likely post announcements of major conferences. In addition to conferences in your field, McNair advisors will keep you informed about regional and national McNair conferences. At these conferences, you can present your research and meet other McNair Scholars from around the country.

Once you have located a conference that you want to attend, McNair advisors will work with you to register, make travel and lodging arrangements, and arrange for per diem payments for meals. This procedure is described in greater detail below.

Graduate School Visits

During the fall and winter quarters of your senior year, you will be deeply involved in deciding which graduate schools to apply to. By late winter and early spring quarter, you will have applied to and been accepted at a number of institutions. You will now have to decide which program to select. Graduate school catalogs and web pages are informative and useful to a point, but visiting schools will provide you with a deeper understanding of what your graduate experience there will be like.

When you visit a graduate school, you have the chance to explore the university's facilities (labs, libraries, computer centers, and other resources), meet with department chairs and faculty members, talk with other graduate students, attend a class meeting, and equally importantly, get a feel for the local community. These factors will be vital to your decision-making process. Not only do a program's reputation, standards, course offerings, and faculty matter, but also its culture, treatment of graduate students, commitment to diversity, and a myriad of other characteristics that are important to you specifically.

Bear in mind that \$824 only goes so far in covering travel expenses. We encourage you to research programs thoroughly beforehand and be very selective about which programs you will visit. Your faculty mentor and the McNair staff will help you determine how to choose graduate programs and which programs to visit.

The next section describes the procedures for making travel and lodging arrangements and paying for meals.

McNair travel funds can be used **only for travel within the United States.**

McNair travel funds cover:

- Registration fees for conferences
- Transportation costs, including flights, taxi or shuttle rides to and from the airport, or mileage if you plan to drive (as long as mileage is less expensive than a flight)
- Hotel accommodations
- Meals, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner (excluding alcoholic beverages and tips).

Unless explicitly listed above, you can assume that McNair travel funds do not cover any other costs. At the end of this document are examples of expenses that travel funds ***do not*** cover.

If you plan to **ATTEND A CONFERENCE:**

- Notify the McNair staff of the topic/field of the conference and (if not intuitive) its relevance to your research or professional development.
- Complete any registration forms associated with the conference. **Note the deadlines for registration and, if you intend to present a paper, proposal submission.**
- Determine the exact dates and times that you wish to attend. Be sure to consider when you want to *arrive* at the location, which will influence when you want to *leave* Seattle. For example, if a conference in Miami, Florida, begins at 1:00pm on a Thursday, do you want to leave early Thursday morning (which may be inconvenient), or Wednesday night (which will involve another overnight stay and therefore cost more)?
- Meet with the McNair Director or Academic Advisor to make travel arrangements. We will schedule flights and make reservations at the hotel for you. It is easiest to do this while you wait, so that you can advise us on any issues that arise. For example, there may not be a flight available when you want to leave, so you will need to inform us of your second choice. In most cases, your tickets and confirmations will be sent to the McNair Program office, where you will need to pick them up.
- Make arrangements as soon as possible, preferably at least a month in advance. Flights will be less expensive, early registration and hotel reservations are priced lower, and so forth. This will benefit you, because the less money you spend per conference, the more conferences you can attend, and the further that \$824 will get you.
- Determine how you want to arrange for meal payments: whether you want to receive payment in advance, or cover the costs yourself and receive reimbursement when you return.
 - ◆ If you want to receive payment before you leave, make sure to let us know in advance, so that we can set aside funds for you. When you leave for the conference, we will provide you with your per diem, which will cover dining costs for breakfast, lunch, and dinner (excluding alcoholic beverages and tips). Please remember to let us know well in advance that you are choosing this option.
 - ◆ Alternatively, you can pay for these and save your receipts, and we will reimburse you up to the maximum allowable per day. Per diem rates (how much money you get to spend on eating out) vary based on your destination. If you go to New York City, you'll get more than if you go to Des Moines, Iowa.

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If you plan to VISIT GRADUATE SCHOOLS:

- Thoroughly investigate and select the programs you would like to visit. Seek advice from your faculty and graduate mentors and from the McNair staff.
- Determine dates and times of travel. While weekends might interrupt your schedule the least, consider staying for at least one weekday, so that you can attend a class meeting (assuming the faculty allow visitors into their classrooms).
- Contact the departments and arrange visits with faculty and graduate students there.
- Meet with the McNair Director or Academic Advisor to make travel arrangements. We will schedule flights and make reservations at a hotel for you. It is easiest to do this while you wait, so that you can advise us on any issues that arise. You might also find out if you can stay with graduate students during your visit. Departments often encourage strong candidates to visit, and will help you make accommodations.
- Arrange for your per diem as described in the section above on attending a conference.

Reimbursements

If you would rather make your own arrangements, you are free to register for conferences and reserve flights and hotel rooms using a credit card. The McNair Program will reimburse you for these costs once you submit your receipts. **Generally, you will receive reimbursements about a month after you turn in your receipts.**

The only restriction is that if you pay for a flight yourself, **you must purchase your ticket using a state-contract fare** in order for the program to reimburse you. The Director or Academic Advisor will explain to you how to do that.

A word of caution: before you choose this option, be sure to check with the Director or Academic Advisor to make sure we will cover what you arrange.

Points to remember

- McNair Program travel funds can only be used for travel within the United States.
- Once registrations, flights, and hotel accommodations have been confirmed, **YOU** are responsible for any charges for changes or cancellations. Please do remember this and plan accordingly.
- If you choose to pay for arrangements yourself, the McNair Program cannot reimburse you without your receipts. Save your receipts.
- If possible, try to take extra money and/or a cash card along for contingencies: getting snowed in at the airport and needing to buy food, missing the shuttle and having to catch a cab. If this will be a hardship for you, discuss alternatives with the McNair staff. You may, for example, be able to acquire a short term student loan from the financial aid office.
- The McNair Program will not pay for or reimburse:
 - ◆ Alcoholic beverages
 - ◆ Personal purchases (books, souvenirs, etc.)
 - ◆ Cost of meals beyond per diem limits
 - ◆ Tours, excursions, and non-conference-related events and entertainment
 - ◆ Car insurance if you rent a car
 - ◆ Tips you give to service providers
 - ◆ Family or friends accompanying you
 - ◆ Personal phone calls or room service at your hotel room
 - ◆ Membership in professional organizations.
- Please don't hesitate to call the McNair office if an emergency arises or if you encounter difficulties while traveling that we may be able to help you resolve.

Contact numbers:

McNair Program Office: 206-543-6460

McNair Director: 206-221-2834

McNair Associate Director: 206-685-3643

Keep these numbers with you in case of emergency.

Graduate School Application Process

Investigating and Selecting a Graduate Program

Selecting and applying to graduate school is a time-consuming process, which requires a serious commitment of your time and energy. You should begin exploring possibilities the first two years of college. During your junior year, you should gather specific information and begin the application process. Waiting until your senior year may limit your opportunities. You need to give some thought to your personal goals (i.e., research vs. teaching), but at the same time, be open to new opportunities.

How to investigate graduate programs

- Become familiar with the ranking and academic reputation of the institution and the department/program of interest to you. Read the published materials on graduate programs. Additionally, talk with professors, advisors, and teaching assistants about the curriculum, structure, and culture of departments.
- Identify programs with strength in your area of specialization.
- Identify faculty working in your intended area of research.
- Investigate funding opportunities for graduate students at specific programs.

Key issues to keep in mind

- Almost all programs have resources available to support graduate students by paying their tuition and providing them with a monthly stipend. However, not all students can be funded – assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis. Ask about funding. How many students receive funding, and how are the funds allocated? Investigate outside sources of funding, such as foundation grants and scholarships.
- Be aware that the structures of programs vary significantly. Programs vary in the amount of required course work, the timing of courses, and outside work allowed or required.
- Most programs seek diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, geography, and life experiences. You will have a greater chance of standing out if you target schools where your racial/ethnic group is underrepresented. The trade-off is that there may not be a large support system at those institutions.

Where to go for information

- Talk with professors, undergraduate and graduate advisors, and teaching assistants at UW.
- Examine the published literature on graduate schools, such as the Peterson's Guide <http://www.petersons.com/> , The Gourman Report on Graduate Programs, U.S. News and World Report – Best Graduate Schools rankings <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/grad> , and the Consus Group <http://consusrankings.com/> . The McNair resource center and the reference section of the Suzzallo library are good places to start.
- Write for catalogs from specific schools (if still available).
- Examine web pages of programs. Contact graduate students, program coordinators, and faculty at specific schools.

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Application Strategies

- We recommend narrowing to five or six your final list of schools to apply to. A popular strategy is to target one or two of the most competitive programs. Additionally, send applications to two or three schools to which you feel you are a strong candidate. Finally, target a less competitive program that you feel absolutely confident that you will be accepted to.

Some Common Barriers to graduate school admission

- Missing Deadlines.
- Unrealistic assessment of admission criteria and unreasonable expectations of admissibility.
- Inadequate personal statement.
- Weak or ineffective letters of recommendation.
- Incomplete application.
- Low GPA or GRE scores.
- Lack of extra-curricular activities.

Guidelines for Writing A Statement of Purpose

A statement of purpose is personal, so the ultimate decision on how it appears is in the hands of the student. However, keep in mind that member of selection committees will be reading hundreds of statements. They will be looking for specific elements. We suggest that you start with the following format in order to present the necessary information in an effective manner.

Paragraph 1:

State precisely your purpose in obtaining a graduate education.
Include:

- Your interest in a specific topic/sub-field of the discipline
- Reasons for choosing the sub-field
- Why you think your area of focus/topic is important

Paragraph 2:

Describe how your background has prepared you for graduate school.
Be sure to mention:

- Relevant courses
- Volunteer work
- Academic honors
- Faculty contacts

Paragraph 3:

Explain what you hope to accomplish as a graduate student:
Include:

- Intended coursework
- A specific research topic
- How the courses and instructors will benefit you

Paragraph 4:

Explain why you have picked a particular program.
Mention:

- Faculty in your specialty ``

Paragraph 5:

Your concluding remarks should:

- Emphasize your strong points (GPA, internship, etc.)
- Explain weak points (if necessary)
- Have a **STRONG POSITIVE ENDING!**

Networking and Mentoring Strategies

Contacts, friendships, and peoples' perceptions of your dedication to graduate study will help determine your success. In order to gain contacts, you must network with people in your field. This handout provides some tips for developing networking strategies.

- Get to know your professors and teaching assistants personally. At a minimum, start by making sure that you meet with them regularly to discuss your work.
- When you bring yourself to a professor's notice, make sure it is the right kind of notice! Cultivate a professional image, so that the professors in your field see you as a dedicated student. Be punctual, get your work done on time, and appear serious about your work.
- Attend university functions, and make a point of greeting and meeting your professors and teaching assistants (don't be shy).
- Go to as many departmental receptions as possible, and spend time talking with professors – even if you have to force yourself to do it.
- Visit the undergraduate advising office of your department on a quarterly basis.
- Attend conferences in your field. This will give you the opportunity to learn first-hand about the current research in your discipline. The more conferences you go to, the more people you will know and the more comfortable you will become.
- When conversing with professors at conferences, you might ask questions such as:
 - What is the nature of their research?
 - Where did they receive their graduate degrees?
 - What graduate programs do they recommend in your focus of study?
 - What journals and conferences do they recommend?
 - Are there particular internships or research possibilities in their department that might interest you?
 - What types of funding are available at their program?
- You should mention about yourself:
 - Your goals and aspirations
 - Your connection to the McNair Program
 - Classes you have enjoyed taking and authors you have enjoyed reading

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

It will **be necessary for you to ask three or four professors to write letters of recommendation**. Get to know your professors personally. At a minimum, make sure that you meet with them regularly to discuss your course work. Ideally, you should target the most well-known and respected faculty members in your department.

Professors are busy people, so make it easy for them to write you a good letter of recommendation by **making your request in writing**. To ensure an effective letter, provide your teacher with as much pertinent information as you can. Also, organize the information you provide in an effective manner.

Be sure to include the following information in a folder that you give to your professors:

- A memo requesting the letter, with the following:
 - Your name
 - The courses you took from them, when you took them, and the grades you received
 - The titles and abstracts of papers you wrote for them (or if possible, the actual papers)
 - Research projects, awards, and a list of related classes
 - Important: the due dates of the letters, highlighted, and the procedure for sending them or returning them to you. If the professors must send the letters directly to the programs, include addressed, stamped envelopes.
- A draft of your personal statement. The statement will give your professor a good sense of your goals and plans. It does not need to be the final version.
- Your resume. Be sure to include all of your important extracurricular activities, such as internships and volunteer work.

Give your instructors plenty of time. Don't wait until the last minute to ask for a letter. Two weeks is the absolute minimum amount of time necessary. Two months is best.

Appendix

Participation Agreement

The purpose of the McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program is to increase access to graduate school for low-income, first-generation college students and students from groups underrepresented in graduate study. The Program provides opportunity to compete for research stipends, activities, and events to prepare McNair Scholars to attend graduate school and earn doctoral degrees. In return, we ask that you participate fully in these activities, and adhere to the guidelines and requirements described below. Please understand that if you do not follow these requirements, it will be difficult to secure funding through the McNair Program for future students. Please read this information carefully. Once you have read and understood these requirements, please sign and date the bottom section and return the entire contract to the McNair Program office.

Program activities:

While you are a McNair Scholar, you will be expected to fully participate in all program activities, which are designed to enrich your academic experience and prepare you for doctoral study.

You will be required to:

- Attend all scheduled workshops and activities, unless you receive prior permission from McNair staff to be absent. Please refer to the attached calendar for schedule of events.
- Attend all required orientations and meetings.
- Maintain a GPA of at least 3.0.
- Obtain tutorial assistance at the Instructional Center in every course in which you have a grade of 2.5 or lower.
- Meet with McNair Program staff (either Graduate Advisor, Program Academic Advisor, or Program Director) at least **twice** every month.
- Allow McNair staff to have access to current transcripts every quarter.
- Promptly respond to all McNair Program communications.
- Attend at least one Graduate School Fair. Dates for these events will be circulated in advance.
- Take the Summer GRE Preparation course if you are available.
- Take the GRE.
- Seek advice about your graduate school selection from McNair staff.
- Work with McNair staff on graduate school applications.
- Apply to at least three graduate schools, and preferably six or seven.
- Notify McNair staff of any letters of admission or rejection from graduate schools.
- Notify McNair staff of the graduate program you select to attend.
- Notify McNair staff of any address and/or phone number changes.
- Cooperate with follow-up surveys after leaving UW.
- Maintain contact with McNair staff after leaving UW and report on your progress in your graduate program.
- Agree to allow McNair staff to contact your graduate program to get updates on your status.
- For new incoming McNair Scholars, you **MUST** stay at least one full academic year (register for courses in UW) to be eligible to stay/participate in the UW McNair Scholars Program.
- When competing for research funding: You must meet the deadline for research proposal set by McNair Staff.
- If you are selected research funding: You must meet deadline for research paper (The quality of research paper must be publishable) set by McNair Staff.
- Be aware your maximum stay at the UW McNair Program is 3 academic years.

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The research experience:

The most significant part of this program is to assist you in actively immersing yourself in the research process and successfully completing a publishable research project.

During this process, you will be required to:

- Attend all scheduled individual and group sessions.
- Attend departmental colloquia, where you will be exposed to research produced by faculty and students in your major and learn about the research presentation process.
- Meet with your faculty mentor two to three times a quarter. While actively engaging in your research project, usually summer quarter, meet with your faculty mentor at least once a week.
- Submit a copy of your research abstract to the McNair Program office.
- Submit a research experience report to the McNair Program office. In this report, you have the chance to evaluate your research process and your experiences.
- Submit a journal-quality research paper to the McNair Program office by **June 11, 2010** to the McNair staff.
- Present your research findings at the McNair Annual Spring conference and/or at another research conference.

*Please note, all students in McNair Scholars Program are eligible to **compete** for a research stipend by submitting a research proposal. In addition, all graduating senior McNair Scholars are required to conduct undergraduate research. However, please take note that no McNair Scholars are entitled/guaranteed a research stipend.*

McNair Contract 2009-2010

I have read and understand all of the above requirements. I agree to comply fully with the requirements outlined in this contract. In addition, I understand and agree that the McNair Program reserves the right to obtain any pertinent information regarding my enrollment status, and to contact my faculty advisor and/or me in order to get updates on the progress of my project. Furthermore, I agree to allow McNair Program staff to closely monitor my progress throughout my academic career.

I understand and agree that any failure to fulfill the requirements outlined above will result in the following disciplinary measures:

- 1. I will be sent a letter or e-mail detailing the problem and steps to be taken.*
- 2. A meeting will be held between the McNair committee or one of the McNair officers and me.*
- 3. If I fail to be present for the disciplinary meeting I will be dismissed from the Program.*
- 4. If I fail to communicate/reply back to the message related to the disciplinary measures I will be dismissed from the Program.*
- 5. If I am found not to adhere to this contract, I will be dismissed from the Program. This will result in the immediate termination of my stipend, and will require me to repay to the McNair Program or the Department of Education (according to its guidelines) any amount previously awarded to me under the auspices of this Program.*

Signature _____

Name _____

Date _____

THE NATIONAL MCNAIR SCHOLAR PLEDGE

I, _____ will strive to honor and respect the legacy set forth by Dr. Ronald E. McNair and former McNair scholars. I will work earnestly toward the realization of my educational goals. I will embrace the challenge of attaining baccalaureate and post baccalaureate education through hard work, perseverance, and persistence. I will strive to overcome any obstacles, barriers and limitations that might hinder, derail, or prevent my educational attainment.

I will endeavor to achieve excellence by conceiving of and believing in excellence in my personal, professional and academic endeavors. I will observe high ethical, moral and academic standards.

I understand that I must be trustworthy, honorable and noble, respect myself, my peers, and the people who contribute to my personal and academic success. I will graciously extend myself and service to the uplifting of future TriO students and promising scholars. I will be a part of the solution and not the problem.

I am a McNair Scholar and I believe in the words of Dr. McNair: "Whether or not [I] reach [my] goals in life depends entirely on how well [I] prepare for them and how badly [I] want them."

With this pledge, I hereby accept the responsibilities and privileges of induction into the Ronald E. McNair Post baccalaureate Achievement Program.

Signature _____

Name _____

Date _____

McNair Participation Checklist

Name: _____

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| Activities | Date |
|---|-------|
| ↑ Instructional Center Tutoring | _____ |
| Summer research internship at another university: | |
| ↑ University/Department:_____ | |
| Paper title:_____ | _____ |
| Faculty mentor:_____ | |
| ↑ UW summer research program | |
| Paper title:_____ | _____ |
| Faculty mentor:_____ | |
| ↑ Conference presentation (where:_____) | _____ |
| ↑ Journal publication (which:_____) | _____ |
| ↑ Graduate school visits | _____ |
| ↑ GRE preparation course | _____ |
| ↑ Recognition reception | _____ |
| ↑ Fall cultural activity: _____ | _____ |
| ↑ Spring cultural activity:_____ | _____ |

| Workshops | Date |
|---|-------|
| ↑ Graduation school application process | _____ |
| ↑ Writing a statement of purpose | _____ |
| ↑ Requesting letters of recommendation | _____ |
| ↑ Resumes, vitas, and cover letters | _____ |
| ↑ Summer internships | _____ |
| ↑ Culture of graduate school | _____ |
| ↑ Financial aid | _____ |
| ↑ Poster & oral presentations | _____ |