MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

McNair Scholar Policies and Procedures Manual
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McNair Scholar Responsibilities Agreement
MISSION STATEMENT
MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

The McNair Scholars Program is a multi-semester, experiential graduate school preparation program designed to inform, support and motivate eligible students wishing to pursue a doctoral-level degree. McNair provides an academically challenging and socially supportive environment to assist students in building their repertoire of knowledge and skills needed to interpret and access the professional graduate education culture.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Named after Dr. Ronald E. McNair, one of the astronauts lost in NASA’s space shuttle Challenger disaster, the program is committed to increasing the number of students in doctoral degree programs who come from low-income and first generation backgrounds, or who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented in graduate education and the academy.

The UNI McNair Scholars Program began providing services in the fall of 1999. Today, there are about 150 programs across the country serving thousands of students. The UNI McNair Scholars Program provides a unique opportunity for 26 qualified undergraduate students interested in pursuing a career in academics and research. Program participation will prepare them for fulfilling graduate and professional careers. To participate, students must be considering study beyond the bachelor’s level. McNair Scholars are chosen each year to participate in academic year activities, with the opportunity to further participate in summer research programs.

The primary focus of McNair is to prepare students for graduate studies. Students have the opportunity to work closely with advisors and faculty mentors, who will help them achieve their academic goals, as well as to acquire skills requisite to conducting high quality scholarly research. Students will also acquire knowledge about graduate education, develop a better understanding of the accessibility of graduate education, and increase their chances of acceptance into a graduate program. During this process, McNair Scholars will become familiar with the research environment, and establish a supportive network of academic professionals and peers across the nation.

The McNair Scholars Program is funded primarily from a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education, with additional support from the UNI Graduate College and the Office of the Provost. For more information on activities, seminars, workshops, meetings and newsletters, please visit http://www.uni.edu/web/mcnair.
Academic Year Program Activities

Counseling
All participants will meet twice a month with the Program Advisor during the academic year. During the summer program, meetings will be more frequent. The purpose of these sessions is to monitor academic progress, to provide direction toward long-term goals, to develop better study habits, and to begin the process of applying to graduate school programs and to explore financial aid requirements. Many scholars also use these sessions for personal support and counseling.

Workshops and Seminars
During the academic year, the McNair Scholars Program offers a series of seminars that aim to provide Scholars with a comprehensive overview of and information about the graduate school application process and to provide insight into the graduate education culture. The series can strengthen relationships among McNair Scholars and with faculty and/or research mentors. The goal is to assist and motivate Scholars to formulate academic goals and to enhance the climate of support necessary for success in graduate school.

Speakers such as current graduate students, academic staff, and faculty discuss their own path to graduate school, describing the learning environment and social/academic community they experienced while pursuing a graduate degree. The seminars provide information on graduate financial aid opportunities, personal finance, undergraduate research programs, career opportunities, and other related topics. The overall emphasis is on developing research skills, including proposal writing, abstract preparation, and research methodology. Scholars are expected to attend and to participate in all seminars. Topics vary by semester and year, but the topics in the following list occur relatively frequently:

- Research methods
- Funding for graduate school
- Networking, interviewing, and presentation skills
- Navigating the graduate school admissions process
- Writing workshops (proposals, abstracts, literature reviews, graduate school statements)
- Personal finance

The Writing Center
UNI’s Academic Learning Center houses the Writing Center which provides a range of services to train and to impress upon students the value and importance of writing, especially in the graduate and postgraduate world. As with the GRE, workshops are free, but require advance registration. Participants can work on improving their ability to clarify and organize their ideas during the writing process and in their final drafts.

Mentoring
Each McNair Scholar must select a faculty mentor. Program staff will assist scholars with this process, consulting on the progress of the selection process. Scholars must secure the Director’s approval before making a final decision about a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor should be carefully selected so that his/her own research interests and expertise coincide with the student’s interests and career goals. Sometimes, a team of mentors is accepted. Similarly, if circumstances provide, more than one scholar can work with the same mentor, and/or on the same research project. A thorough investigation of the scholar’s options is critical to ensuring a mutually beneficial and satisfying relationship.

Students will want to consider working with someone who is willing and able to dedicate adequate time to guide the project, and someone whose personality is compatible. It is advantageous for scholars if the mentor is willing to offer recommendations and insights related to being successful in graduate school.
The role of the faculty mentor is to assist in selecting and designing an appropriate research program and to supervise all research-related activities. The mentor should direct the scholar to the appropriate background literature and provide training and assistance in acquiring required techniques or procedures. In addition, the mentor will be asked to review and critique drafts of your proposal, abstract, and final paper. The mentor should be available to offer support and advice for graduate school opportunities. We encourage our faculty mentors and scholars to co-author and publish the final research paper.

Cultural Events
In order to give students contact with the broader constructs that frame our societal environment, and to enhance their worldview, and facilitate their acquisition of a global perspective, the McNair Program will provide for participants’ attendance at certain cultural events. These events will include the fine arts, activities of ethnic diversity, and community/geographical events which may be unfamiliar to McNair participants.

- All students must attend 4 cultural events, 4 academic events and 2 technology workshops before graduation.
- Cultural events include, but are not limited to: a dance, music or art presentation; a visit or tour of an area museum; cultural awareness events on campus, etc.
- Academic events include, but are not limited to: guest lecturers, brown bag presentations, on-campus symposia or scholarly presentations.
- Technology Events include, but are not limited to any technology class provided by UNI ITS.

Conferences
The program’s goal in funding students’ attendance at regional, state, and national conferences is to provide each participant with the opportunity for professional development. Scholars should experience original scholarship and interact with academicians in a different type of educational setting. Priority considerations will be made on the justification offered as to how conference attendance relates to the student’s academic goals and professional development. When funds are limited, preference for conference attendance will be given to those students who will present their research.

Graduate School Visits
From time to time, when possible, the program will lead groups of scholars on a graduate school tour. The experience of an institutional atmosphere is an important part of the decision to pursue graduate education. Priority consideration for graduate school visits will be given to seniors actively engaged in the application process.
Responsibilities and Expectations during the Academic Year

- Meet individually with your advisor twice every month during the academic year.
- Confirm all appointments with your advisor to reduce miscommunication about dates and times.
- Be punctual at all meetings and other activities.
- If you are going to be late, or cannot participate in a seminar or other event, you must inform program staff as soon as possible.
- You are responsible for all make-up assignments regarding missed seminars and other activities.
- Come prepared to actively participate in a discussion of the assigned reading at all seminar events (including possible Saturday workshop events.)
- Bring interesting research, internship and graduate school information to meetings and share it with other scholars also ask questions and share your concerns about these topics.
- Be respectful and attentive at meetings and expect to learn from the experiences of other participants.
- Schedule individual meetings with your advisor if you need to discuss sensitive matters you don’t feel comfortable communicating in a group setting.
- Come with an open mind and positive attitude to learn!
- Behave in a professional manner. Professional behavior is a way of conducting oneself that includes:

  **Respect for others:** Courtesy and respect for others are fundamental elements of professional behavior. A professional strives to understand the differences among classmates and colleagues, provides fair constructive feedback when asked to evaluate others, contributes equitably in group work, and is punctual and avoids disrupting the work environment. Professionals respect others’ expectations of confidentiality and privacy.

  **Commitment to quality:** A professional aims for the highest possible standard of performance and endeavors to produce work in which he or she can take pride.

  **Responsibility:** A professional takes responsibility for his/ her own progress by completing work and being prepared for meetings and other activities. A professional also takes responsibility for his/her actions with care for consequences that might evolve and for how his/her actions will affect others.

  **Personal integrity:** Professionalism is reflected by the extent to which others can rely upon you. A professional can be counted on to follow through on commitments, avoid conflicts of interest and bias, and adhere to the rules of organizations with which he/she is involved, such as the McNair Office and Graduate School.

The McNair Scholar Responsibilities Agreement

Scholars newly admitted to the program, and prior year scholars who have not yet done so, will read and sign the McNair Scholar Responsibilities Agreement. The original document will be retained in the McNair Office in each scholar’s file. This requirement has been adopted as a tangible expression of commitment to the Program, understanding of the Program requirements, and as a means of ensuring that the Program’s resources are going to the best possible use. A copy of the agreement appears as an appendix to this document.
Responsibilities and Expectations during the Summer Research Internship

Research Commitment

• Engage in research activities under the direction of a faculty/mentor, completing all assignments in a timely manner (40 hours per week minimum).
• Attend all designated program workshops, classes, events and meetings, arriving on time and prepared. Any and all assignments must be completed by the deadlines set by the instructor(s).
• Complete and turn in weekly research logs.
• Schedule and attend weekly meetings with McNair advisor.
• Present research results at a conference or symposium.
• Participate in Summer Exit Debriefings.
• Draft and submit a research article of publishable quality.

General Expectations

• Contact the McNair office and the instructor or event coordinator immediately if unable to attend any class/seminar or function.
• Check e-mail, voicemail, and mailbox daily for McNair correspondence.
• Notify McNair program staff of any and all potential schedule conflicts, including, but not limited to, class time conflicts, other travel, or personal emergency.
• Submit all logs and other writing assignments to the McNair office by the schedule deadlines with appropriate signatures and approvals.
• Complete any and all forms, evaluations, and other necessary program materials neatly and in entirety, submitting these items on or before the specified deadlines.

Consequential Issues

It is understood that the following behaviors will result in deductions from stipend and/or dismissal from the program:
• Failure to meet deadlines.
• Habitual tardiness.
• Unexcused absences from, or lack of full participation in seminars, workshops, classes, meetings or other scheduled events.
• Failure to meet program commitments and expectations as specified above.
• Intentional and/or repetitive disrespect or disregard for the physical and/or emotional safety and well-being of others.

*In the event of dismissal, it is understood that an obligation to repay the stipend awards exists.

SRI Agreement with the Graduate College

The Graduate College requires each scholar to sign an agreement specifying additional rules, expectations, and understandings. The agreement must be signed and returned to the Graduate College before any payments or reimbursements can be made. A copy of the Agreement will be on the McNair website when it becomes available.
Other General Expectations

Seniors
- Complete the GRE by November 1.
- Apply to at least 10 graduate programs (at least five must be Ph.D. programs).
- Submit applications to at least three viable graduate fellowship opportunities.

General Responsibilities
- Keep the McNair staff informed and up to date on progress.
- Always maintain a “professional relationship” with McNair staff and faculty.
- Treat the McNair staff and fellow program participants with respect.
- Complete and submit all program evaluation forms/documents.
- Notify the program staff if unable to attend a scheduled appointment or event. Make every effort to do this at least 24 hours in advance.
- Notify the program staff if you withdraw from school, transfer to another college or university, or graduate.
- Meet with program advisor before withdrawing from any class.

Disciplinary Actions
Stipend Reduction
- Unexcused tardiness or absences from academic events may result in a reduction of stipend. Excessive violations may result in probation or dismissal from the program.
- Stipend reduction will also be employed to deal with “non-academic” disciplinary issues.
- Stipends will be reduced by $25 dollars for the first offense and double for each offense thereafter ($50 for second offense, $100 for third offense). If a problem persists after a third offense, the offender will be required to meet with the administrative team.

Probation
- A probationary period may be put in place to deal with academic or behavioral issues.
- The academic probationary period may consist of daily meetings with the program advisor to ensure that the student is following through on academic responsibilities. The content of these meetings will be shared with the director, instructors, and mentors as necessary.
- The length of the probationary period will vary depending on the severity of the problem. Probationary length will be determined by the program director.
- Behavioral probationary period might consist of daily meetings with a peer advisor and/or the program advisor.

Dismissal
- Expulsion from the program is warranted when there is a consistent lack of effort to improve academic or behavioral issues despite previous measures.
- Expulsion from the program may also occur due to illegal substance use/possession, violent or threatening behavior, lack of academic integrity (plagiarism, etc.) and any other persistent and/or serious disciplinary issue(s).
PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

The UNI McNair Scholar’s Program is governed by Federal law, the U.S. Department of Education general regulations (EDGAR), and by the U.S. Department of Education’s specific regulations for the McNair program.

Federal Law and Regulations

Listed below are links to the documents governing the McNair Scholars Program. The Higher Education Act is the law which (among many other things) created the original TRIO programs, and has been amended repeatedly over the years. The link below is to the Act, in its entirety, in its current state.

Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, as amended – http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/statute-trio-gu.pdf

The United States Department of Education (DoEd) creates its own regulations which implement the HEA. These regulations appear in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). The link below is to the current version of EDGAR - EDGAR - http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html

Periodically, the DoEd makes changes to the specific regulations governing individual granting programs, such as the McNair Scholars Program. These regulations are collected in the U.S. Code of Regulations, the McNair portion being Title 34, Part 647. Regulations and changes to them are published in the Federal Register. The link below is to the current version of the McNair regulations.

Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 647 - http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr;sid=eb2ba5e59e9f200e7d55293b2f2f0771;rgn=div5;view=text;node=34%3A3.1.3.1.20;idno=34;cc=ecfr

State Law and University Policy

The program is also regulated by Iowa state law, and by University of Northern Iowa Policy. The following link is to the UNI webpage containing its Policies and Procedures. http://www.uni.edu/policies/
ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

For the McNair Scholars Program

Eligibility
Students are eligible to apply if they have/are:
- Completed the sophomore year of college.
- A U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- The first generation in the family to graduate from college and a low-income student, as regulated by the U.S. Department of Education OR from a group underrepresented in Graduate Education: Black (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiians, and Native American Pacific Islanders.
- Intending to pursue a doctoral–level degree after graduation.
- Enrolled in a degree-granting program at an eligible institution.

Application Procedure
The following documents must be submitted to complete an application. The hyperlinks include PDF and/or Word versions depending on the type of form. Forms are also available in the McNair Office.
1. McNair Scholars Application (PDF)
2. Two Letters of Recommendation, (PDF or Word) preferably from current professors
3. Personal Statement – attesting as to why you want to obtain a doctorate degree
4. Resume
5. Tax Return* or 1040 Substitute (PDF)
6. College/University Transcripts (from institutions other than UNI)
7. Authorization for Release of Information (PDF or Word)
8. Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification), or a copy of Green Card or INS Case Number
9. Certification of Eligibility for Federal Assistance in Certain Programs (PDF)

- Click the link to download our Application Checklist
- Application documents do not need to be submitted simultaneously, each may be submitted separately.
- Parent’s most recent tax return – applicant’s tax return ONLY if applicant is independent.

Please submit your application to:
McNair Scholars Program
University of Northern Iowa
007 Innovative Teaching and Technology Center (ITTC)
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0388

- Acceptable applicants will be interviewed by the Director and the Academic Advisor (and one other person, if available). Applicants will be notified within 24 hours of the status of their application.

Upon Acceptance
After being accepted into the program, you will need to complete and/or sign the following forms available at the office:
1. Received a Letter of Acceptance
2. Acceptance of Appointment
3. McNair Student Responsibilities Agreement
4. Basic Skills Self-Assessment
5. Biography Form
6. Like us and follow us on Facebook and Twitter
7. Meet with the McNair Academic Advisor
FOR THE SUMMER RESEARCH INTERNSHIP

Eligibility
Current McNair Scholars are eligible to apply for a position in the Summer Research Internship program. Interested Scholars must meet the following requirements:

- Must have completed sophomore year.
- Has secured a working agreement with an approved mentor.
- Has maintained a GPA of 2.7 or higher at the end of either of the previous long semesters.
- Has developed a research proposal with the mentor’s assistance and approval.
- Completed the Summer Research Proposal Form (PDF or Word).

Application Procedure
1. Complete the SRI Application Form (PDF or Word).
2. Attach the Summer Research Proposal Form to your application.
3. Submit your application and research proposal to:

   Please submit your application to:
   McNair Scholars Program
   University of Northern Iowa
   007 Innovative Teaching and Technology Center (ITTC)
   Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0388

Upon Acceptance
The following forms are to be completed and signed:

- SRI Mentor/McNair Scholar Agreement (PDF or Word)
- SRI Stipend Disbursement Agreement (PDF or Word)
- UNI Supplier Information Form or have a vendor number on file, please check with the administrative assistant to verify
  - Please review and fill out the highlighted sections on the form, for an example, click here.

Forms due throughout the summer:

- SRI Time and Effort Log (PDF or Word)
- SRI Receipts Worksheet (PDF or Word)
- SRI Milestone Completion Form (PDF or Word)
- SRI Faculty Research Final Paper Approval Form (PDF or Word)

- Click the link to download our SRI Checklist
SUMMER RESEARCH INTERNSHIP PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Stipend (Summer Only)

Eligible scholars who meet specific criteria may be eligible to receive a summer research stipend of $2,400. The purpose of the research stipend is to help defray a portion of the scholar’s educational expenses, enabling the scholar to concentrate on the research experience.

Research stipends for SRI will be paid as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Sheets Due</th>
<th>Pay Day</th>
<th>Stipend Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Friday in June</td>
<td>Third Friday in June</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Friday in June</td>
<td>First Friday in July</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Friday in July</td>
<td>Third Friday in July</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Friday in July</td>
<td>First Friday in August</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disbursements will be paid by check mailed to the address of your choice, or deposited into a checking account via direct deposit. Either way, you must complete a Supplier Information Form (available on the McNair website) in order for any payments to be made. Plan on completing this form in April or May. No other methods of disbursement will be used. No exceptions are allowed. Be aware that your stipend may affect any summer financial aid you receive if you take a summer session class. Please note that failure to submit documents in a timely manner or to participate fully in program activities will result in fines and penalties which will be subtracted directly from your stipend. You will not be eligible to make up any fines at a later pay date. All milestones must be completed in the order agreed upon in the Stipend Disbursement Agreement.

- No stipend payments will be made on any milestone not completed by September 30 of that calendar year.

Because your stipend and other support goes through the Financial Aid Office, any balance on your U-Bill will be paid first and you will receive the remainder. This is UNI policy and cannot be waived. Ensure that your U-Bill is clear and understand that if it is not, your stipend will pay the balance.

Housing

For the duration of the SRI, you are eligible to be housed at program expense in University housing. Usually, housing is available in either ROTH or Panther Village. If you are currently housed in the University Apartments, the program will support you, as well. McNair will submit payment through the Financial Aid Office to apply toward housing expenses (rent only) during the 10-week period from June 9 through August 1 at the lowest available rate (room type) in your assigned housing unit. You may arrange to upgrade your housing, but you will be responsible for the difference in room rate. You must make your own housing arrangements. **You must complete a Summer Housing Contract online at the DOR website. These should be completed by April 15.** You may, of course, choose to live off-campus. Those choosing to live off-campus will do so at their own expense.
Meals

The UNI McNair Scholars Program will assist you with meal costs for the duration of the SRI. Due to conference fluctuation, there will be days and meals that University Dining Centers will be closed or will have reduced venue options.

Please go to this webpage for summer hours: http://www.uni.edu/dor/dining/hours/summerhours.htm. Refer to the menus in the Quick Links section at http://www.uni.edu/dor/ for menu availability.

The McNair program will cover appropriate meals costs for you, not to exceed $70.00 per week during the program dates during the 10-week period agreed upon in your research application (for a maximum of $700.00).

A cash advance of $80.00 will be issued every two weeks (a possible total of $400.00) for the purpose of purchasing groceries and/or off-campus meals.

- You must submit original itemized receipts for grocery/food items purchased with the cash advance.
- Each receipts must be a printed, original, itemized receipt showing the name of the vendor, not handwritten, and the date of purchase.
- You should write your name and UID at the top of each receipt and submit to the McNair program within 1 week after each 2-week cash advance cycle.
  (Note: You should make a copy of the receipts for your records before turning them in.)
- Unused/un-receipted cash must be returned to the McNair program within 1 week after each 2-week cash advance cycle. If cash is not returned within this timeframe the amount will be deducted from the milestone payment or charged to your ubill.

You may charge meals purchased at University Dining Centers and at food outlets in Maucker Union to your ubill. The McNair Scholars Program will review these charges and submit payment through the financial aid system for allowed meal expenses.
TRAVEL

Selection Criteria for Any Trip Sponsored By UNI McNair

*Includes campus visits and/or conferences (national, regional, student, OR professional).*

Sponsored travel by McNair is a benefit and privilege for scholars who have met the standards of the McNair program. Sponsored travel to a conference is NEITHER guaranteed nor required, and selection is based on the following: availability of program funding, final approval of the Program Director, and the travel selection criteria/policy specified below.

Preference will be given to scholars who meet the following criteria. Note: The more criteria that are met, the more likely it will be to have travel approved. You will be more likely have travel approved if you:

- Are applying to graduate school in the fall.
- Are scheduled or have already taken the GRE and or MCAT/LSAT, etc. whichever is applicable (verification required).
- Are presenting at a conference.
- Maintain satisfactory progress toward the completion of your degree.
- Have participated with outstanding attendance in the McNair Summer Research Internship and have met all requirements of the summer research project in a timely manner.
- Have satisfactorily attended all advising sessions and seminars.
- Have taken part in all pertinent activities sponsored by McNair.
- Have consistently demonstrated professional behavior throughout your participation in the program.
- Have been accepted to or are applying for admission in a graduate program at the university you are requesting to travel to (if campus visits are required).

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Because of institutional requirements and the financial commitments involved in planning trips, scholars who have requested and been selected to travel on a sponsored trip must be 100% certain they are able to travel. If a scholar cancels without a justified reason after committing to the trip and travel expenses have been paid by the program on behalf of the scholar, the scholar may have to reimburse the program and/or forfeit their opportunity to participate in future trips or events sponsored by the program. If unforeseen circumstances arise, a scholar must immediately notify the McNair Director or Academic Advisor.
Travel to McNair Conferences

One of the benefits of being a McNair scholar is the chance to attend and present at any number of research and professional conferences. Although most conferences are held in culturally diverse and exciting cities, the first expectation of a scholar is to learn. UNI’s McNair Program encourages scholars to have a great time at conferences-- while keeping the following points in mind:

- Each scholar is expected to be present at every meal provided by the conference, unless you request and are given permission to miss it.
- Each scholar must make every effort to attend each Fellow cohort member’s presentation—oral or poster. Your presence shows support, respect and interest in your fellow scholars.
- Each scholar should make every effort to attend all plenary sessions, keynote speakers, etc. In addition to picking up valuable information, it will provide you with excellent networking opportunities.
- Outside of agreed-upon meeting times and all conference scheduled events, you are free to manage your own time as a responsible student professional. If you want to play hard at night, that’s fine-- but we expect you to work hard during the day, as well.
- Itineraries and travel plans can and often do change. Please be understanding and pleasant while traveling with a group. One moody scholar can ruin everyone’s day. At all times remember that you are a UNI student and McNair scholar. Your image should be one of professionalism and intelligence.
- You are expected to stay the length of the conference unless other arrangements have been made with program staff.

Travel to Prospective Graduate Programs (Campus Visits)

The UNI McNair Scholars Program sponsors one or more campus visit to a research university. Program-sponsored visits are fully funded by the program, i.e. there are no funds required from the scholar. Scholars who wish to attend additional campuses on their own are urged to use a portion of their McNair Scholar summer research stipend or to contact the school directly to inquire about the possibility of getting funds for an individual campus visits. The UNI McNair Scholars Program may provide partial transportation funding, only if funds are available and the visit is required by that program. Thus, you provide their own food, lodging, and other expenses (i.e., sharing a dorm room, staying with friends, relatives, or faculty; or staying in facilities provided by community agencies).

When traveling to visit prospective graduate programs, (either sponsored or unsponsored) you must:

- Inquire about various events scheduled and dress accordingly.
- Seek the guidance of mentors, staff, and senior scholars.
- Coordinate your plans with the Director.
- Seek your mentors’ advice, names of contact persons, and opinions about the prospective graduate programs.
- Read about the institutions you plan to visit.
- Read articles published by prospective major professors and other faculty.
- Contact the Office of Graduate Admissions and the department of your choice to schedule meetings with the chair, faculty, administrators, financial aid officials, and graduate students.
- Prepare interview questions.
- Prepare a portfolio, including statement of purpose, transcripts, vitae, publication or writing samples, and GRE scores.
- Send thank you and follow-up letters to persons who helped you during the visit.
GRADUATE SCHOOL PLANNING

Timeline for Applying to Graduate School
(Courtesy of Cal State-Fullerton)

Fall Semester (sophomore and junior year)
- Identify if graduate school is an option for you.
- Do you need to obtain a graduate degree to further advance in your career or to obtain the job you want?
- Speak with a faculty member and a career counselor at the Career Center about graduate school plans and alternatives.
- Begin identifying graduate programs in which you are interested.
- Request Admissions information and Financial Aid applications from graduate programs.
- Look carefully at Admissions requirements and pre-requisites.
- Begin to select at least 9 graduate schools of interest. Choose three top-tier schools, three mid-range schools and three “safety schools.”
- Identify how you can further prepare for graduate school. "How can you make yourself more marketable and a well-rounded candidate?"

September, Fall Semester (senior year)
- Seek advice from a faculty member, a career counselor, and professionals in the field regarding graduate school admissions, etc.
- Conduct informational interviews with professionals in your field of interest about graduate programs and graduate degrees most appropriate for the field.
- Continue writing to schools you have selected and request admissions and financial aid applications.
- Register for required entrance examinations.
- Study for the required entrance examinations.
- Attend a Graduate School Fair.

October, Fall Semester (senior year)
- Take required examinations-GRE, GMAT, PCAT, etc.
- Contact administrators, students, faculty, and/or alumni at each institution for helpful information.
- Take on-campus tours and attend open house events to gather more information about where you are applying to graduate school.
- Draft a statement of purpose/essay get assistance from faculty mentor, other faculty, the Career Center, advisors, or mentors.
- Send letter of recommendation requests, to provide sufficient time for recommenders to complete letter of recommendation.
- Request copies of official transcripts.

November, Fall Semester (senior year)
- Secure letters of recommendation from faculty mentors, professors, and staff.
- Secure copies of official transcripts.
- Finalize statement of purpose and have it reviewed one more time by a career counselor, faculty member, advisor, or mentor before submission with graduate school application.
- Begin preparing any required financial statements for FAFSA.
December, Fall Semester (senior year)
- Complete all required examinations this month, especially if your first performance on any of the graduate assessments was not encouraging.
- Sent graduate school admissions applications and stay on course for deadlines (early admissions especially).
- Follow up on transcripts and letters of recommendation to assure they were sent and received at the graduate admissions office.
- Scholars are strongly encouraged to visit those graduate schools of interests to them, if they have not already done so.

January, Spring Semester (senior year)
- Scholars should note that this is their last opportunity to take the required tests for fall admissions. (Please note that it may be too late for some schools.)
- Check with each school to verify that all materials have been received, including test scores and financial statements. If some application materials are missing, Scholars note that you may be eliminated from consideration.
- If an interview is required as part of the admissions/selection process, please check with the McNair Scholars Staff or with Career Services for assistance and sample interview questions.

February, Spring Semester (senior year)
- Wait to hear about being selected as a potential candidate.
- Continue to make contact with representatives of the schools they applied to check upon the progress of their applications.
- Practice for the entrance interview.
- Finish outlining a contingency plan in the event that they are not accepted into graduate school.

*If Scholars Do Not Get Accepted into Graduate School
- Speak with an academic advisor or counselor to determine reasons for denial and to determine additional options for graduate school or employment.
- Scholars are sometimes accepted on their second or third try into graduate school.

UNI Transcript Requests
UNI does not charge McNair Scholars for official transcripts if they are requested through the McNair Office. Contact the Program Director for information and instructions.

Application Fees (for participating graduate schools)
Almost all research universities waive the application fee for McNair Scholars. This is one of the most attractive of all the tangible benefits of the McNair program. Each university has its own policies and procedures for obtaining the waiver. Usually, you will need a letter or a certificate to document your participation and to attest to your eligibility for a waiver of the application fee. The McNair Program can accommodate almost any request, as long as such requests are made with ample lead time. Consult the McNair Director for more information.
Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

GRE Preparation
Scholars will find that most graduate school programs require a Graduate Record Examination (GRE). In order to effectively prepare for graduate study, scholars must be prepared for the GRE examination. Because standardized testing has long been the gatekeeper of the academy, and because students from low-income and first generation backgrounds, or who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented in graduate education are often deprived of the cultural accoutrements necessary for success on such tests, UNI’s Academic Learning Center makes available a series of workshops and seminars to prepare students for the GRE. The workshops are free, but require advance registration. The McNair Scholars Program provides workbooks and practice tests to all its Scholars free of charge.

GRE Fee Reduction Program
The Financial Aid Office may be able to provide you with a voucher which will pay for half of the GRE fee. Financial Aid will provide you with the necessary forms and some of the information needed for the form. The rest you must complete and mail to the address listed on the form. Please keep in mind that you must allow 4 weeks or more for ETS to process your request. Upon receipt of your waiver, take it to the Testing Office (ITTC 007) to schedule a test date.

GRE Fee Reduction Program (McNair Scholars Only)
If you do not qualify for a voucher from Financial Aid, a similar voucher can be secured at the McNair Office. As with the other voucher, it will reduce the GRE fee by half. You may not receive more than one voucher – either one from Financial Aid OR one from McNair.

ONGOING CONTACT
It is extremely important that scholars stay in touch with the program beyond the scope of undergraduate participation. Thus, the program needs to have the most up-to-date contact information. Each year, surveys are used as a tool to discover updates on academic and professional status as well as to find out if there is any assistance the program staff can provide in helping former scholars to achieve their goals. Some of the information received will be used by the program to submit federal reports to the US Department of Education in our Annual Performance Report (APR) Obtaining information from McNair alumni and reporting progress toward goals is critical to future funding of the program.

Participants are strongly encouraged to stay in contact with the McNair program staff through office visits, postal mail, email and telephone, as well as by routinely visiting the McNair. Remember, past scholars helped to make the program available through the achievement of their goals and updates to the program. Future participants will depend equally on current scholars to do the same!
**EVALUATIONS**

For the purpose of continuous improvement of services to our Scholars, we require that all scholars provide an evaluation of McNair events, of the program in general, and of the McNair experience. All evaluations available at:  [http://www.uni.edu/web/mcnair/resources](http://www.uni.edu/web/mcnair/resources).

**Seminars and Workshops**

At the completion of each seminar and workshop sponsored by the McNair program, attendees will complete the “WORKSHOP EVALUATION” to assess the quality and relevance of the presentation, and the impact it made on each attendee. Results will guide future workshop topics and presentation methods.

**Travel**

Upon returning from a conference or from a Graduate School Visit, scholars will complete either the “CONFERENCE EVALUATION” or the “GRADUATE SCHOOL VISIT EVALUATION” in order to guide future travel plans and the selection of future visits and presentation venues.

**Cultural Events**

Scholars who attend a McNair-sponsored cultural event will complete a “CULTURAL EVENT EVALUATION FORM” that will be used by program staff to evaluate the quality of the event, the value of the event to the attendees, and the likelihood of sponsoring that or a similar event in the future.

**Annual Evaluation**

At the end of each academic year, all current scholars will complete the “MCNAIR ANNUAL PROGRAM EVALUATION”. These results will significantly influence the programming and the methodologies employed in operating the McNair Scholars Program in the future.

**Exit Interview and Tracking Information**

Just before graduating, senior scholars will be asked to complete the “EXIT EVALUATION”. This survey helps to evaluate the individual’s overall success with the McNair Program, and serves as the foundation for establishing an ongoing relationship vital to process of the Annual Performance Report.

**Ongoing Contact with Graduates**

Annually, the program is required to contact all its past scholars who have not yet attained a terminal graduate degree, to ask them for information concerning their graduate status, and to update their contact information. In past years, this was done by telephone, then by email. We now have an “ALUMNI SURVEY” which can be completed online by our former scholars.
This is an agreement between the McNair Scholars Program at the University of Northern Iowa, and the individual named below, a qualified McNair Scholar.

I, _______________________________, understand and agree to the following terms and conditions governing all participants in the McNair Program:

I. Program Activities

I will attend all activities sponsored by the UNI McNair Program, including but not limited to:

- McNair workshops and seminars
- Research presentations by McNair scholars
- Visits to academic and professional institutions (if eligible)
- Planned cultural events
- Designated speakers, workshops, or other academic events

II. Academic Counseling and Monitoring

- Meet with the Academic Advisor at least twice a month to monitor your academic progress and to update your short- and long-term objectives.
- Meet with the Director at least once each semester.
- Contact program staff immediately to arrange tutorial services when experiencing academic difficulties.
- Complete a needs survey, assessment tests, and (with the Academic Advisor) a review of your academic plan.

III. Graduate School Preparation

- Prepare for and take requisite graduate school entrance examinations and submit the scores to the Academic Advisor.
- Write and submit a Personal Statement.
- Prepare a resume.
- Apply to at least nine graduate programs during your senior year.
- Notify McNair program staff of all graduate schools to which you apply.
- Notify McNair program staff of all graduate schools to which you are accepted.
- Notify McNair program staff of the school which you will attend, along with any financial aid information from that institution (this is required by federal regulations).
IV. Ongoing Commitments

- Maintain a GPA of 2.70 or above in each semester you participate in the UNI McNair Program and remain in good academic standing according to UNI academic standards.
- Return forms to McNair Program within one week of receipt.
- Check your email for McNair correspondence daily.
- Notify program staff at least 24 hours in advance of any appointment cancellation, or no less than 24 hours after a missed appointment due to personal emergency.
- Notify program staff of any and all potential schedule conflicts, including but not limited to, class time conflicts, vacation or other travel or personal emergency.
- Inform the McNair program of any change in your address or telephone number.
- Participate in program evaluation and follow-up surveys as required by federal regulation.
- Notify McNair program staff of any special recognition, awards or publications.
- Share program experiences to assist new McNair scholars.
- Update your graduate enrollment status and some limited personal information including but not restricted to your address over the next 10 years.

V. Academic Year Research and Summer Research Internship

- I will participate fully in research as a McNair Scholar by accomplishing the following tasks:
  - Assist a faculty member with an ongoing research program, maintaining records of your work.
  - Apply for a Summer Research Internship (SRI) either at UNI or at another institution.
  - If selected for participation in a McNair summer research program or a non-McNair summer research program, I agree to complete that program and to comply with the requirements of that program.

*Please note that additional, more detailed contracts/agreements will be required before beginning any Summer Research Internship (SRI).

I understand that the purpose of this program is to prepare you for graduate study leading to the doctoral degree. I also understand that the program is intended to provide the guidance and educational opportunities to enhance my study and research skills, assist myself with the graduate school admission process, and provide myself with information on financial opportunities for graduate studies. I agree to participate in the UNI Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, having read and understood all of the program requirements and responsibilities. Failure to comply with the rules governing this program and failure to meet your responsibilities as required may affect stipend payments and can result in suspension or termination from the program. Termination may require repayment of some or all of any stipends received. I understand and accept these terms.

Signature: __________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________

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