

2026 SURF Applicant FAQs

Website link: <https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/education/research/surf>

Application link: [Cincinnati Children's Summer Research Programs - OAACD](#)

Q: How many hours of work is it per week?

A: *SURF is a full-time summer research program and students are expected to work 40 hours per week, primarily in person at Cincinnati Children's.*

Q: What is the application deadline?

A: *February 1 at 5:00pm. Students must log in and return to their applications to hit the final submit button. There is no automatic submission.*

Q: When are the start dates and end dates?

A: *In 2027, the SURF program start dates are May 25 or 27 and the end date is July 30. Students may continue to work with their mentor after the end of the SURF program if funds are available and with the approval of your mentor and department's business team.*

Q: Do students work directly with one lead researcher?

A: *Students usually work with one researcher, but may also work with graduate students or postdoctoral fellows in their laboratory.*

Q: Where can one find a list of the research currently being studied at Cincinnati Children's?

A: *Please look at the following website which you can find investigators by research division. <http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/research/divisions/default/>. To create a fair and equitable process for all applicants, **students will be instructed not to contact faculty before or during the application and initial selection process.** Students will continue to be encouraged to review faculty [research interests online](#) and identify up to three faculty they would like to work with on the SURF application.*

All students must submit an online application by 5:00 pm on February 1.

Following the application deadline, the SURF team will review all applications and identify candidates to move forward. These candidates will then be matched with potential mentors who share similar interests for their review. After that point, mentors are welcome to contact students directly for discussions and interviews before final decisions are made.

Once a mentor notifies us of their student selection, we will send an offer letter and initiate the hiring process. Official position offers will come only from the SURF team.

Q: Can students in SURF travel during the summer?

A: *The program is only 10 weeks long so we strongly encourage applicants to complete extended travel before or after the program ends at the end of July. Shorter travel or time away during the program may be allowed if approved by your mentor.*

Q: Are international students accepted?

A: *International students who live in the greater Cincinnati area (within an hour) and attend a Cincinnati area based university/college may be eligible to apply. These students must hold an F-1 visa and be eligible to obtain their own CPT work authorization through their university/college. Please email surf-cchmc@cchmc.org for more information about applying.*

Q: Do official transcripts need to be sent?

A: *We accept official and unofficial transcripts. Ensure your first and last names are visible on the document.*

Q: Can high school students apply to SURF?

A: *Graduating high school seniors can apply to SURF; however, very few high school students are placed in SURF. We encourage high school students to apply to the high school programs as listed on the website: <https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/education/research/high-school/summer-internship>*

Q: When are admission decisions made?

A: *Admission decisions are made on a rolling basis. We encourage applicants to submit their applications as soon as possible, before January is recommended.*

Q: When will applicants be notified of acceptance?

A: *Acceptance decisions will begin in late January and continue on a rolling basis. Because applications are reviewed in the order received, we encourage applicants to apply early.*

Q: Are all applicants notified of status?

A: *All applicants will be notified regarding acceptance by March 31st.*

Q: Are early applicants considered first?

A: *Yes. Applicants are reviewed on a rolling basis and applicants who apply early are considered earlier in the process. The first application decisions typically begin by late January*

Q: How many students are admitted each summer

A: *The number of students admitted each year varies based on available mentors and funding. Typically, there are about 100 students accepted to the SURF program each summer.*

Q: Do you match students with mentors?

A: *Yes, we match students with mentors who have a similar area of research interest*

Q: Information about dorm housing?

A: *All students are required to find and secure their own housing. Housing is typically available at the [University of Cincinnati near Children's main campus](#). If you are interested in being included on a housing list serve to coordinate with other SURF students, please email SURF-CCHMC@cchmc.org and indicate your interest.*

Q: My GPA is not finalized yet, what should I use?

A: *Applicants can use the previous year's GPA, even if it is from high school. Please make sure the information for your GPA is clear in your resume.*

Q: How important is having prior research experience?

A: *Prior research experience is not required to apply to the SURF program, but may be considered the admission process. Other relevant experience, including volunteering, shadowing experience, leadership and school involvement are also great things to include on your application. .*

Q: Am I allowed to commute from home?

A: Yes

Q: Do participants decide which days they will be working?

A: SURF is a full-time program, and students are expected to work 40 hours per week, usually *Monday thru Friday. Specific work schedules and hours will be determined by your research mentor*

Q: Is the salary paid to students all at once?

A: No. *SURF students are hired as CCHMC employees and are paid biweekly throughout the program duration.*

Q: How can I best prepare my application?

- We encourage applicants to apply early, preferably *before the last week of January.*
- *Clearly describe your research interests to help us identify potential mentors.*
- *Describe work, leadership, and volunteering experience of any type that highlight your interests and skills*
- *References should be individuals who can attest to your qualifications and potential. References should not be family members.*
- *Be sure to highlight in your essays how you anticipate the SURF program will you achieve your career goals or provide a research opportunity that you would not have otherwise had.*

Q: *If I currently or have in the past worked or volunteered at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, can I continue working with the same team?*

A: Yes, *please indicate this on your application.*