The McNair Scholars Program is a Federal TRiO program designed to prepare students from low-income, first-generation and traditionally underrepresented groups for doctoral studies. McNair Scholars participate in courses, seminars and workshops on topics related to graduate school preparation, complete a paid research experience under the guidance of a faculty mentor, and have the opportunity to present their research at local, regional or national conferences.

This guide will provide you with important information regarding eligibility criteria and the application process. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact the AAP office at aap@ucf.edu or 407-823-1815

Eligibility Criteria

Before you begin with the application process, please ensure that you meet all the eligibility criteria. The McNair Scholars Program is a federally funded program and selected students must meet the required criteria.

You qualify to apply for the McNair Scholars Program if you:

- Intend to pursue a Ph.D. or Ed.D. (professional degrees such as an MD, JD, MBA, PharmD, etc. are not eligible)
- Are low income* AND first-generation in college (neither part or legal guardian has a Bachelor’s degree)
  OR
  - Are a member of a group underrepresented in graduate education (African-American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, or Hispanic/Latino)
- Are a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Are enrolled full-time as an undergraduate student at UCF
- Have a minimum of 60 credit hours
- Have at least four semesters left before graduation (excluding summers)

*To find out the low income guidelines established by the department of education go to: http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html

Application Phase I

The first phase of the application will provide us information as to whether you qualify for the McNair Scholars Program. All of the information you provide to us must be correct to the best of your knowledge. There is no 'save' button—we encourage you to read the entire application and attain required information before beginning to fill out the form. Please note: while you can add information about previous research, no prior research experience is required.

Phase I of the application will require you to:

- Fill out academic, financial, and demographic information
- Upload a resume or CV (we encourage you to have this critiqued by career services: www.career.ucf.edu/resumes)
- Know your parents highest educational attainment level
- Know whether you were awarded a Pell Grant or Work-Study in your most recent financial aid award letter
- Know the top three graduate programs you plan to apply to
Application Phase II: Must be completed by September 11 at 5 PM.

If you meet all the eligibility requirements, you will be provided with information to access Phase II of the application. There is no ‘save’ feature in the application. We encourage you to look through the application, find out information you do not know, and complete all of your essays before starting the application.

Phase II of the application will require you to:

- **Complete a personal statement**: In a statement of at least 1000 words, please describe your academic and career goals. Please explain why you are interested in obtaining a doctorate, the area you are interested in studying, and why you think that participating in the McNair Program can help you reach those goals. Candidates are urged to ensure that this statement is well written and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

- **Complete a statement of research experiences and interests**: Your statement should explain in as much detail as possible the academic discipline and area of your research interests, possible research project(s), how this research can contribute to academia, and why this research appeals to you. Your statement of research interest should be no longer than 250 words.

- **Provide contact information for two recommenders and one personal supporter**: Along with your link/code for the second phase of the application, you will be provided a link/code to enter the contact information of two recommenders and one personal supporter. Once you submit the form, your recommenders and supporter will receive an on-line form for them to complete. Recommendation forms and support letter must be completed by the application deadline of September 11 at 5 pm.

Recommendations:

- Recommendation forms should be completed by faculty members who can best assess your ability for academic research and your motivation to attend graduate school. (Transfer students may have recommenders from their previous institutions)
- You will need the name, title/position, department, phone number, and e-mail address for each of your recommenders. Double check that the e-mail you are inputting is correct, otherwise the recommender will not have access to the form.

Recommendation Tips:

- Contact your possible recommenders promptly and ask them if they would be willing to recommend you for the McNair Scholars Program
- Provide them information about the program, why you feel this is a good fit for you, and resume or CV
- Let them know that the on-line form they will receive will only take them a few minutes to complete. They do not have to write you a letter. Only on-line forms will be accepted
- Provide them with the application deadline. Let them know your target date for completing the application. Send them a reminder of the application due date a couple of days before it is due
- After they complete your application, write them a thank you card

Letter of Support:

- Support letters should be completed by a personal supporter (such as a family member, close friend, or mentor) who is committed to your goal of completing Ph.D.
- You will need their telephone number and e-mail address. If your personal supporter does not have an e-mail address, please contact the AAP office.

Application Phase III

Interviews will be scheduled with students who complete all components of Phase II and qualify for the program. Students will be selected for the program based on their application, interview, and number of available slots.