



Northern Illinois
University



CRA
Computing Research
Association

UR2PhD
Undergraduate Research to PhD Mentoring



Get Started with Research Through UR2PhD at NIU

UR2PhD is your gateway to a career in computing. Be a part of a program that provides you with hands-on research experience building the skills, confidence, and network that can give you a competitive edge for what comes next, whether that is graduate study or the job market. The best part? You don't need any research experience.



Find your future in computing research

Here's what you'll gain by joining the program.

- **Build real research skills:** Get hands-on training that prepares you to take on bigger, more complex projects with confidence. You don't need to have done previous research to participate.
- **Get support or earn credit:** Learn about research while earning course credit. Plus, access funding to keep going and share your work. *depends on your project's options.
- **Expand your professional network:** Tap into a nationwide network of computing researchers who share breakthrough ideas, unlock job opportunities and fast-track your computing career.
- **Strengthen connections:** Work closely with faculty who support your project and become go-to references for grad school and jobs.
- **Find your future path:** Learn what computing careers look like and explore graduate programs that match your goals.

The UR2PhD Program Structure

- Meet with a research mentor and develop a team of 2-4 undergraduate students.
[Optional: Our program coordinator can help you with this step.]
- In collaboration with your mentor, identify a research project that you can contribute to.
- Apply to the UR2PhD NIU program with this information.
- **Once accepted,** you and your team will take part in a structured research training course with live, online sessions to learn the ins and outs of research over an academic term.
- Your team will meet regularly to apply what you learn directly to your research project.
- Alongside the course, you'll attend optional workshops on topics like applying to grad school, presenting your work, and exploring research careers.

How can UR2PhD advance my career goals?

There's no single path into computing research. Participating in UR2PhD can help you figure out what's next in your career. For example, you may want to pursue one of these paths:

Academic Researcher

Become a research-first academic ready for PhD programs, university labs or faculty roles. You'll publish papers, speak at conferences, and shape the future of computing.

Research training



Publishing and conference presentations



Graduate school

Industry Researcher

Become a tech pro who can lead research-informed teams at places like Google, Microsoft, or NVIDIA.

Research training



Industry internships



Graduate school or full time employment

Research-Based Startup Founder

Become a grant-winning researcher ready for government labs, think tanks, or competitive fellowships. You'll have a network of researchers to get funding and experience in leading research projects that matter.

Research training



REUs and other experiences



Publication opportunities and fundraising

To kickstart your involvement with UR2PhD, please reach out to Northern Illinois University local coordinator **71 North Partnership Studio** at **71North@niu.edu**

Your NIU local coordinator will guide you through the process of finding or creating an undergraduate research team made up of passionate students just like you.



Learn more about it
71north.github.io/ur2phd

About UR2PhD: UR2PhD is for students looking for first-time research experience by building technical skills and applying them to real-world projects. The program engages undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty alike.

About CRA: The Computing Research Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association of North American academic departments of computer science, computer engineering, and related fields; laboratories and centers in industry, government, and academia engaging in basic computing research; and affiliated professional societies.