Are you an upper division UCSD undergrad wanting to engage in general research on aging, Alzheimer's disease, or other neuroscience topics related to aging?



We have a Paid Training Opportunity to consider!

ASCEND (Aging focused Student Career Experiences in Neuroscience Disciplines) (formerly the MADURA program) **is an educational mentorship program funded by the National Institutes on Aging, open to all UC San Diego upper division students with a genuine interest in pursuing careers in aging research.**

Program goal:

Provide paid hands-on research experiences and mentorship to support academic success and entry into related graduate programs and/or research careers. ASCEND is both a valuable training program and a job.

ASCEND offers:

- 8 hours of weekly paid training on faculty-led research projects (excluding summers)
- 2 hours of weekly paid group supervision, seminars, lab tours and research skills workshops (excluding summers)
- Academic year employment as a UCSD Student Assistant for 10 hours/week, currently at rate of $18.00/hour
- Annual research poster development training and presentation event
- Competitive opportunities for additional conference attendance and other educational development support
- Quarterly performance evaluations and Individual Development Planning guidance from faculty mentors

ASCEND requires:

- Meeting eligibility criteria (next page) and submitting a timely, complete application
- *Pending results of a competitive interview process and relevant current openings*, acceptance at lab of an ASCEND Research Faculty Mentor
- Successfully completing the UCSD Health Human Resources employee onboarding process and NIH appointment process
- Reliable and satisfactory completion of assigned research lab duties and meetings
- In person participation in cohort meetings Fridays from 2:00-4:00 PM on the School of Medicine campus (excluding University holidays and breaks)
- Intention to continue participating each Fall/Winter/Spring quarter until graduation

More details…

Research placements are on the main or east campus. All relate to aging, but specific student activities vary widely based upon student majors and the nature of projects with current openings. Potential research activities may include assisting with wet lab experiments, working with mouse models, clinical trials participant recruitment, screening, materials development, data collection and entry, intervention implementation, literature reviews, health promotion or educational outreach, assisting with data analyses, and more. Work Study program enrollment is not required and does not impact the selection process, but is helpful if you are accepted to the program. Let us know if you are eligible for Work Study support.

TO APPLY

The application portal for Winter + Spring 2027 quarters opens October 9, 2026. Screening will commence October 13, 2026 and invited interviews will occur in November. Screening will only continue until all positions are filled. Status updates will go out to all applicants by November 9, 2026.

Eligibility Criteria and application link are on page 2 of this document.

***Questions:* Contact Director Dr. Sheri Thompson at *skt007@health.ucsd.edu*.**

ASCEND Eligibility criteria

We are only able to consider applications from students who meet the following criteria:

- U.S. citizens
- Upper division (junior or senior) UCSD undergraduates
- GPA of 3.5 or greater
- Availability to complete 8 hours/week of regularly scheduled work in lab plus 2 additional hours at Friday cohort meetings (10 paid hours per week)
- Eligible for hire as a UCSD Student Assistant (anticipated hourly rate of $18.55/hour). Note: This is not a grant. It a paid job that also provides substantial research training and support. Students report hours worked in the UCSD employee time keeping system.
- Planning to pursue a research or clinical career and/or graduate studies in fields related to Aging, Alzheimer's disease and/or aging-related neurosciences
- Committed to whole cohort training activities, including mandatory, whole-cohort in person meetings from 2-4:00 PM on the School of Medicine campus on Fridays
- Committed to continuing participation in labs and cohort activities throughout the full academic year (regular quarters; excludes university breaks, holidays and summer break). Students are encouraged to participate until graduation.
- Committed to participating in ASCEND research poster development and presentation activities.

If you meet eligibility requirements, the link to apply is: https://ucsd.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1NtUtJBRxjKG0vQ

Note: You will need to upload a current resume or CV. Also, be prepared to upload or paste a 250 word interest statement into the portal. The Interest statement asks:

"Please describe 1) your interest in research on aging, Alzheimer's disease/ADRD and/or aging-related neuroscience, 2) what you expect to gain from the program, and 3) how this fits your future educational and career goals." (550 characters; approximately 250 words)

Thank you for your interest in the ASCEND Aging Research Mentorship Program!