

Recommendations For Undergraduates Wishing To Pursue Neuroscience

The most straightforward curriculum for a student interested in pursuing a career in neuroscience would be the completion of the neuroscience minor. This includes courses in Biology and Psychology that will better prepare the student for any domain of neuroscience. Listed below are some courses and recommendations for students interested in preparing for graduate study in neuroscience without the minor and/or without courses in Biology.

Please note that the following information does not pertain specifically to all of the course requirements for the neuroscience minor. See the UNLV undergraduate catalog for all of the course requirements for the neuroscience minor.

Course Work:

Students should take either BIOL 189 or BIOL 196 as a starting point.

PSY303 – Foundations of Physiological Psychology serves as foundational course for all other neuroscience related courses.

PSY305 – Foundations of Perception

PSY422 – Psychopharmacology of Abused Drugs

PSY424 – Neurobiology of Learning and Memory

PSY425 – Cognitive Neuroscience

For advanced students that have completed some of the above courses they may register for graduate neuroscience courses PSY 719 and PSY 720 with consent of the instructor.

Research Activity:

It is strongly suggested that any student interested in pursuing graduate work in neuroscience work at least 1 semester (2 or more is ideal) in a neuroscience research laboratory as a research assistant. There are several investigators in the Department of Psychology conducting neuroscience research (see Department of Psychology website). We recommend that interested students email the faculty member doing research of interest to inquire about open research assistant positions. The earlier a student gets involved in research the more extensive the training will be.

UNLV Affiliated Groups:

In addition to the work in the laboratory students may want to join the Neuroscience Journal Club student organization. The group meets once per month to discuss an original research article in neuroscience. The group is composed of both undergraduate and graduate students interested/working in neuroscience. The NJC is also a means to learn about specific scientific meetings (such as the Society for neuroscience) and can provide some support for some students to attend the annual meeting.

Participation in other programs designed to facilitate entry into graduate programs and preparation for the GRE is also recommended. This includes specific honors societies as well as programs to support undergraduate research at UNLV.