

**McNair Scholars Program**

**2019 SCHOLAR HANDBOOK**

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General Information

***Program History***

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program was named in honor of Space Shuttle *Challenger* astronaut Dr. Ronald Erwin McNair. McNair was born October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina. He attended North Carolina A & T State University and graduated Magna Cum Laude. He earned his Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and soon became recognized as an expert in laser physics.

In 1986, the U.S. Congress provided funding for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program in recognition of Dr. McNair, who lost his life in the Space Shuttle *Challenger* accident in January of that year. The Program is funded through the U.S. Department of Education, Higher Education Programs, and is designed to increase the number of low-income, first-generation and underrepresented minority college students who pursue and complete the doctoral degree.

Over 200 universities offer McNair Programs across the country. Each program honors McNair’s memory and his dedication to the pursuit of science, knowledge, and personal excellence.

***Purpose***

The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program is one of eight federally funded TRIO programs offered within universities and colleges throughout the nation. TRIO programs offer both outreach and academic support services to students from disadvantaged backgrounds that need assistance navigating the academic pipeline from high school to post-secondary education.

The McNair Scholars Program at Northeastern Illinois University is designed to provide underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation students with mentoring from staff and faculty, academic counseling, tutoring, and opportunities to conduct and present research. Through seminars, lectures, and three seminar courses geared to providing information on applying to graduate school, teaching assistantships, and developing a research based thesis, NEIU’s McNair Scholars are supported through acceptance and the complete admission process. Scholars are encouraged to continue through the attainment of the Ph.D., which will increase the quantity and quality of faculty of color in institutions of higher learning.

Student Eligibility

***Eligibility Requirements***

Students who intend to pursue a career that requires a Ph.D., and who meet the following criteria

may apply to the program:

* Completion of at least 60 hours
* Senior standing students must have one year remaining at NEIU
* US citizenship or residency
* A minimum 2.8 Grade Point Average or above
* Status as a first-generation college student with income eligibility and/or a member of a group underrepresented in graduate education

***To maintain eligibility, a participant must:***

* Fully participate in all program events and complete all assignments
* Maintain a cumulative 2.8 Grade Point Average (minimum)
* Establish and maintain an appropriate meeting schedule with the faculty mentor
* Comply with all federal, state and local laws and all NEIU regulations and procedures when participating in program activities
* Comply with all McNair Scholars Program requirements, as detailed in the Participation Agreement

NEIU McNair Scholars Program Objectives

The following objectives were formed to meet the overall project goal of increasing the participation of McNair Scholars in graduate and doctoral studies:

* 28 McNair Program participants will be served each year.
* At least 80% McNair participants will complete research and scholarly activities that will directly impact their educational progression each academic year.
* At least 66% of McNair Scholars will enroll in a post-baccalaureate program by the fall term of the academic year immediately following completion of their bachelor’s degree.
* At least 40% of graduated McNair Scholars will continue graduate programs after the first year.
* At least 6% of McNair Program participants will attain a doctoral degree within ten years of the attainment of the bachelor’s degree.

Program Services Information

***Program activities focus on:***

* Graduate school advising
* Faculty mentorship
* Summer research
* Academic advising
* GRE preparation
* Seminars
* Workshops
* Cultural activities

***Program Services***

* Academic, career, and personal guidance
* Faculty mentoring
* Library mentoring
* Annual $2,800 summer research stipend
* Participation in a summer research project
* Opportunities to present and publish research
* Funded conference travel (pending funding availability)
* Assistance in applying to graduate school
* GRE preparation workshops and fee waivers
* Application fee waivers for many graduate programs
* Assistance in applying for fellowships, grants, and other financial support
* Graduate school visits
* Workshops to support academic and personal development

***Seminar courses (one credit hour) for McNair Scholars***

***Developing a Research-Based Thesis*** (Spring semester)

This course provides an integrative, research-based introduction to the process of thesis writing, and culminates in the production of a research proposal.

***Preparing for Graduate School*** (Summer semester)

This course supports the planning and implementation of applying to graduate programs in various disciplines of the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. The course focuses on core competencies of creating personal statements, identifying graduate schools and programs, and maximizing standardized test scores.

***College Teaching for TA’s*** (Fall semester)

This seminar prepares McNair Scholars for teaching assistantships. The course introduces students to the theory and practice surrounding college teaching. Scholars will draw on their own college learning experiences to evaluate instructional techniques and materials for effectiveness and meaning.

Workshops for McNair Scholars

* *Personality and Learning Styles*

This workshop is designed to provide Scholars with an assessment of their personality types and learning style (using the Keirsey Temperament). Scholars are able to translate their personality types into learning styles. As a result they will have a better awareness of how they relate to others and insight into their learning preference.

* *Financial Aid, Fellowships, and Assistantships*

This workshop is designed to provide Scholars with information on how to apply for federal aid thru FAFSA. Scholars learn what monies are available for them in undergraduate and graduate programs. They are provided with information on fee waivers for standardized exams (GRE). Scholars receive information on how to become a fellow, speak with former fellows, and how to complete an application.

* + *Resume Writing*

This workshop is designed to provide Scholars with information on how to write resumes for employment opportunities or graduate school. Scholars are given tips on different types of resumes and their purpose. Internet and book resources are provided to Scholars for additional assistance with writing resumes.

* + *Interviewing Skills*

This workshop is designed to provide Scholars with tips on how to interview for graduate school, internships, and employment opportunities. Information is given on how to conduct phone and in-person interviews. Examples of common interviewing questions are reviewed. Resources such as books and internet services are provided for Scholars on how to prepare for an interview, researching companies, researching yourself, and succeeding on your interview to name a few.

* + *Time Management Skills*

This workshop will be interactive as students are given information on creating the habits of success as they relate to the semester, the week and the day. Additionally, material will be presented that will benefit the student going on to graduate school.

* + *PowerPoint Skills*

This workshop is designed to provide Scholars with the necessary tools needed to create a PowerPoint presentation. Scholars become familiar with the various styles and designs in PowerPoint. As a result, they are able to present their research using PowerPoint.

* + *Library Skills*

This workshop is designed to prepare Scholars on how to use and find materials needed to conduct research. Scholars are assigned a library mentor to provide them with assistance in utilizing library resources. They become familiar with library research database engines to retrieve information for research.

* + *Writing Skills*

This workshop is designed to develop Scholars’ writing skills for scholarly writing of the research report and at the graduate level.

* + *Critical Thinking Skills*

This workshop provides Scholars with tips on how to think critically. Definitions of critical thinking are given along with elements of thought, intellectual standards, developing a perspective on critical thinking, and pulling it all together. As a result, Scholars will develop intellectual habits of reading and thinking critically in their discipline.

Summer Research Project

***Research Activities***

*Create a Research Proposal*

* Spring Seminar
* Mentor guidance

*Conduct Research*

* 8 week session (June and July)
* Weekly Meeting with mentor
* Summer Seminar
* Apply for IRB approval
* Weekly meeting with peers and McNair Staff

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| **Semester/year** | **Month** | **McNair activity/service** |
| **Fall/ sophomore junior** | August-November | Recruiting Period |
| October - December | Academic Advising |
| November | McNair National Conference  (Delevan)  Mentor identification |
| December | Application Deadline  SROP presentation  Applicant notification |
| **Spring/junior** | January-April | Mentorship |
| Late January | McNair Research seminar  GRE preparation  Scholar/Mentor Meeting |
| February | Library workshop  UNT National McNair Conference |
| March | PowerPoint workshop  McNair writing workshop |
| April | Graduation Application for Fall |
| Early or Mid-May | McNair Annual Dinner  Applicant Notification |
| **Summer** | June and July | Research project with stipend  Mentorship  GRE preparation McNair Grad school prep seminar Local grad school visits |
| Early August | Graduation Application for Spring |
| **Fall/senior** | September - December | Mentorship  GRE Tutoring  Grad School application process  Conference travel |
| Mid-September - December | McNair teaching seminar |
| Early November | GRE testing  Graduation Application for Summer |
| December | Graduate School applications |
| January | Graduate school applications |
| **Spring/senior** | January - May | Mentorship  Conference travel |
| Early April | Graduation Application for Fall |
| January - April | Graduate school visits |

Plan Your Mentor Meetings

Mentoring is a vital aspect of the McNair Scholars Program, because it offers an opportunity for scholars to develop close professional relationships with faculty members (mentors). These relationships are mutually beneficial and have the potential to last throughout your career. Mentors teach what textbooks and journals cannot, and they can guide you through difficulties of academia, serve as role models, and become advocates and interpreters of the “rules of the game.”

Your mentor is a key resource, and it is your responsibility to use that resource conscientiously. You should establish a schedule of regular meetings with your mentor and prepare accordingly…their time is valuable and you do not want to waste it.

Below is a summary of what the McNair Program expects from Faculty Mentors. This list will help you determine the agenda for your regular meetings.

* + The mentor is responsible for providing the student with ongoing support and evaluation of his or her undergraduate experience, especially the research project.
  + The mentor explores areas of academia with students beyond the research project.
  + The mentor shares an interest in the student’s professional development and makes suggestions for attendance at conferences and potential sources for publication.
  + The mentor sets realistic goals for the student and schedules regular meetings to follow-up on the student’s progress.
  + The mentor provides thorough, timely and helpful feedback on the student’s academic and research progress at each meeting.
  + The mentor may express interest in collaboration with the student on a publication.
  + The mentor assists the student in the development of professional writing skills.
  + The mentor assists the student in the development of critical thinking skills.
  + The mentor assists the student in networking and professional socialization and their quest for post-baccalaureate degree attainme