



Wayne State University

Ronald E. McNair

Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program

2023 – 2024

Scholar Handbook

Wayne State University
Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program
Handbook 2023 – 2024

Guidelines and Program Procedure

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I. The McNair Scholars Program Purpose and History

Goals and Objectives of the WSU McNair Scholars Program

The purpose of the McNair Program is to assist students in completing their bachelor’s degree, and to gain admission to master’s / doctoral programs. McNair Scholars receive many forms of assistance as they progress toward these goals. The following pages will provide you with detailed information about the program, the responsibilities of the McNair Scholars, and the services and resources available to you.

Purpose of the McNair Scholars Program

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program began in 1989 to offer support services to high-achieving students on their quest to attain the doctoral degree. Wayne State University is a part of a highly elite group of institutions, selected by the Department of Education, to host a McNair Program. As such, WSU McNair Scholars figure among the students in our nation with the greatest potential to become leaders in their academic disciplines. It is a great honor to become a McNair Scholar. The ideal McNair Scholar is goal-oriented, disciplined, creative and inquisitive. McNair Scholars enjoy learning and are willing to listen and grow through their interaction with their mentors, advisors and peers. McNair Scholars take personal pride in completing assignments to the best of their ability, meeting deadlines and balancing their work and academic commitments. They have a vision of themselves as successful professionals and are willing to do the work to achieve their dreams. Membership in the McNair Scholars Program is challenging, but the rewards are great. You will develop new skills, gain confidence in yourself, make great friends, build an impressive resume, have the opportunity to travel, present your research and interact with caring faculty and staff who are dedicated to your success.

History of the McNair Scholars Program

Ronald E. McNair, PhD

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program was created to honor Dr. McNair, an astronaut who died in the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion in January 1986.

Dr. McNair was born October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina. In 1971, he graduated from North Carolina A & T State University Magna Cum Laude with a B.S. degree in Physics. Dr. McNair then enrolled in the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he earned his PhD in Physics in 1976 at the age of 26.

Dr. McNair soon became a recognized expert in laser physics while working as a staff physicist with Hughes Research Laboratory. He was selected by NASA for the space shuttle program in 1978, and served as a mission specialist aboard the 1984 flight of the Space Shuttle Challenger. In addition to his academic achievements, McNair received three honorary doctorate degrees and many fellowships and commendations. These distinctions include his having been named a Presidential Scholar, 1967-71; Ford Foundation Fellow, 1971-74; National Fellowship Fund Fellow, 1974-75. Dr. McNair also received many prestigious awards, including the Omega Psi Phi Scholar of the Year, 1975; Distinguished National Scientist and National Society of Black Professional Engineers, 1979; and the Friend of Freedom Award, 1981. He was married and had a son and a daughter.

After his death, Congress provided funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program to encourage low income and first generation, and/or underrepresented students to explore educational opportunities and pursue graduate studies.

Legislation

The McNair Program is authorized under a 1986 amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The first projects were funded in 1989.

II. WSU McNair Scholars Benefits

Participate in a Mentored Research Experience

Participants conduct research under the guidance of a Faculty Mentor. Quality research projects provide a realistic picture of graduate school scholarship, while also preparing students for the doctoral school climate. Students participate in academic year or a summer-based faculty mentored research experience. The annual summer program empowers students to develop or continue individual research projects, attend a graduate school application seminar, and travel to present their research in development at a National McNair Research Conference. Students may alternatively hold an internship in their field of study or attend an external summer research program at a different institution.

Study Research Theories, Research Methods, and/or Research Ethics

Students participate in a research methodology course or attend a research methodology/research ethics workshop. The course/workshop enables students to augment their research experience from a practical, a theoretical, and an ethical perspective.

McNair Research Stipend

Students who conduct research and actively participate in all McNair sponsored programs will be eligible to receive a research stipend once per year. The stipend maximum is \$2,800 and the stipend offer is determined only after scholars have received academic research approval by the

McNair Director. Students holding internships or attending a training program at another institution are not eligible to receive the stipend.

In order to receive the stipend, a McNair Scholar must successfully meet the following requirements:

- Sign a contract acknowledging the requirements and expectations of the program;
- Provide a signed Mentor Contract after selecting a Faculty Mentor;
- Attend the McNair research and graduate admission preparation workshops;
- Complete all required written and research assignments;
- Develop a public presentation of their research;
- Provide Research Progress Reports and a Final Paper at the conclusion;
- Complete the McNair Mentored Research Experience by the given deadlines;
- Make any required revisions in a timely fashion;
- Attend required meetings with the McNair Program Director and Counselor;
- Hand in all required documents, by the requested deadlines, and with your mentor's signature.

Develop & Deliver Professional Research Presentations

Students culminate their McNair Program experience by presenting their research at a McNair National Research Conference. In addition, students have the opportunity to attend additional McNair conferences nationwide and to network with graduate school representatives and McNair scholars from across the country.

Attend Graduate School Success Seminars and Workshops

Students attend graduate school success seminars and/or workshops that focus on specific topics designed to educate them about the graduate school application process, including how to identify the graduate programs that "fit" their needs and interests, and how to excel in graduate school.

Visit Graduate Schools and Meet with Prospective Graduate Faculty Members

Students travel to various graduate schools throughout the country to examine institutions and departments as possible graduate school destinations.

Professional Development

Maintaining the goal of personal and professional excellence, the Wayne State University McNair Scholars Program provides workshops on financial management, interpersonal communication, individual guidance and mentoring regarding the graduate school application process, graduate school persistence, and professional norms.

III. WSU McNair Scholars Requirements and Procedures

Eligibility Requirements

Full time undergraduate students who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply to the McNair Scholars Program:

- U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Have or will have satisfactorily completed 60 credit hours of course work by the time you are fully admitted to the program.
- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.8
- Low-income first-generation college student and/or students from under-represented groups in graduate education.

Once accepted into the McNair Scholars Program, you are eligible to participate and receive research stipends until you graduate, provided you are in good standing, from the McNair program, currently 16 consecutive months. You **MUST** be an undergraduate student to participate. Upon acceptance into the program, the program staff will meet with each scholar to complete assessment materials and to discuss locating an appropriate faculty mentor.

Academic Counseling

Individual academic counseling from the program counselor enables students to maximize their undergraduate program and to prepare for graduate study. **During the academic year, Scholars must meet with the McNair Program Counselor at the beginning and end of the academic term to review academic performance and conduct goal setting.**

Admittance and Required Assessments

All scholars will complete the following:

- Student Contract
- Pre-Needs Survey
- Individual Development Plan

Applications to the McNair Scholars Program are competitive. Wayne State University McNair Scholars Program is funded to serve 25 students each project year.

Requirements

By the end of the Mentored Research Experience, all McNair Scholars must submit the following:

- All required assignments
- Final paper and faculty mentor approval form
- Final progress report

In addition, all graduating senior scholars must submit the following:

- Copy of official GRE scores
- Copies of all letters of acceptance
- Copies of all letters of rejection
- Copies of all financial awards

Attendance at McNair Seminars

1. Attendance Policy

The McNair seminar schedule and the Summer Research Institute schedule will be provided to scholars and will be posted on the WSU McNair web site. **Attendance at seminars, workshops, graduate school application preparation workshops, and other McNair events is mandatory.** You are expected to schedule work, classes, and other activities in a manner that does not create conflict with your McNair participation.

2. Penalty for Non-Attendance

Scholars are expected to notify the McNair office if they are going to be absent from a seminar/workshop session, graduate admission preparation workshops, scheduled meetings with McNair staff or another McNair event. They are to call 313-577-5050 and press 4 to reach a McNair staff member. If no staff member is available to take their call, they are to leave a message. An email may also be sent to the Program Secretary with a cc to the Program Director. McNair staff emails are located on the first page of the student handbook.

Students may incur up to 4 absences during the academic year (September - April). **After 4 absences, the student is at risk of being dismissed from the McNair program.** If a student has an extenuating circumstance, they should inform the Program Director immediately! The Program Director reserves the right to request from the student documentation to substantiate any absence. The decision to dismiss a student from the McNair program rests solely with the McNair Program Director. All dismissal decisions made by the program director are final.

3. Penalty for missed assignments

Failure to turn in required exercises/assignments on time will result in possible dismissal from the McNair program. The decision to dismiss a student for missed assignments rests solely with the program director. All dismissal decisions made by the program director are final.

4. Academic Probation, Program Probation, and Program Suspension

Scholars with a cumulative grade point average below 2.8 are placed on academic probation. Graduate school admission officers are hesitant to admit students below a 3.0, but Wayne State University McNair Scholars Program staff recognizes that students have more potential than what may show on a transcript. Academic probation status allows those scholars an opportunity to improve their grade point average over time while remaining engaged in the scholarly environment. Scholars placed on probation are still mandated to attend all seminars and scheduled counseling sessions but are prohibited to travel for conferences for one semester. Scholars will be provided an academic improvement plan which may require additional counseling sessions and engagement with campus based academic support resources. Scholars on probation must continuously make positive academic progress, meaning, the cumulative grade point average must increase every semester. Full McNair scholar privileges are re-instated once the cumulative grade point average is over a 2.80. McNair scholars must have a minimum 2.50 GPA in order to apply to participate in the Summer Research Institute and will receive a reduced stipend.

Scholars who fail to maintain active participation in the McNair Program will be placed on program probation. Upon notice of probationary status, scholars will be provided with a plan to regain active and positive standing. Should scholars refuse to agree to the probation plan, they may be subjected to automatic program dismissal. Scholars on probation must continuously make meaningful progress in their probation plan every semester. Scholars placed on probation are still mandated to attend all seminars and scheduled counseling sessions and are prohibited to travel for conferences for one semester. Full McNair scholar privileges are reinstated once the probationary plan has been completed. McNair scholars must have completed their probationary plan in order to apply to participate in the Summer Research Institute and will receive a reduced stipend.

Scholars that continuously display a lack of professionalism will be suspended from the program. The suspension can commence due to a multitude of infractions like: excessive tardiness, poor decorum, no show or cancelled meetings with the counselor, missed seminars, reneging after confirming attendance at a conference, or misbehavior at a conference. Any McNair staff member can nominate individuals for suspension with supporting information. While suspended scholars are still mandated to attend all seminars and scheduled counseling sessions and are prohibited to travel for conferences. If the scholar does not demonstrate some improvement during the program suspension, it can lead to automatic dismissal from the program.

Student Responsibilities

The WSU Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program academically and financially supports talented undergraduate students who desire to earn a doctoral degree. The McNair program fosters intellectual collegiality, provides an undergraduate research experience, and demystifies the

graduate school application process. The McNair Research Experience, an essential element of the program, engages students in research projects that genuinely advance the research programs of their faculty mentors—thus, McNair scholars are expected to maintain the highest standards of excellence and integrity.

McNair Scholars are expected to:

- Meet all deadlines for submission of required documents, e.g. research proposals, final research papers, weekly research update reports
- Submit a research proposal/abstract, describing the intended research project, identifying the faculty mentor, and outlining the research to be completed; the research proposal must bear the faculty mentor's approval
- Perform/conduct up to 20 hours of research per week during the summer program
- Contribute time and service to the university or community.
- Meet weekly, or as scheduled, with their faculty mentor during the summer and bimonthly during the academic year
- Attend the Graduate School Application Seminars, and complete all assignments within designated time frame
- Attend a weekly Research Methodologies Seminar
- Participate in all scheduled activities, workshops, trips, and courses
- Notify the McNair Program Office of address changes, telephone changes, and/or names changes as soon possible
- Regularly schedule and attend meetings with the McNair Program Counselor for the purpose of academic counseling, graduate school advising, professional development, and other assigned topics
- Present your research at a student research conference
- Complete and submit program evaluations for all workshops, courses, activities, and research experiences
- Cooperate with all follow-up contact (written questionnaires and telephone interviews) by the McNair Staff through the completion of the scholar's doctoral degree

Student Benefits:

- Invaluable research experience that will meaningfully contribute to faculty mentors' research projects
- Courses on graduation admissions preparation, academic wellness & persistence strategies, and research methodologies
- One-on-one faculty and McNair staff mentoring
- Academic, financial aid, and graduate school advising
- Graduate school application and GRE fee waivers
- Fully funded travel opportunities to visit and present at numerous graduate schools around the nation
- Opportunities of graduate fellowships provided by numerous universities
- Research stipend

Submission of Research Proposal

All McNair Scholars are required to submit a well-developed, three to five page research proposal. A proposal rubric will be provided to you which includes but is not limited to the following:

1. The Research Question(s) under investigation and Methods used to address these questions.
2. A projected time table for the 8-12 week summer program.

Please note that the McNair Scholar's research project advances not only the learning of the student but also the research of the faculty mentor. In fact, the research project is to be a collaborative effort. You may join a research project that the faculty member has initiated or you may identify a topic and seek a faculty mentor whose research interests mesh with your own research goals.

Graduate School Visitation

Graduate School Visitation Stipend – (Provided resources availability)

The McNair Scholars Program may assist in a graduate school visitation, for selected rising seniors. Travel arrangements must be approved by the Program Director prior to the actual visit. Scholar must email the Program Director and Counselor jointly informing them of their request for a Graduate School Visitation Stipend.

All approved graduate school visitations require an individual pre and post meeting with the Program Counselor.

Upon returning from all McNair sponsored trips, scholars are required to submit original itemized receipts. All receipts must be in the scholar's name. Expenses require the McNair Program Director's signatory approval.

During WSU McNair program sponsored trips and events, the McNair program will provide financial resources to cover scholars' meals, registration, transportation and other related expenses. McNair Scholars are prohibited from charging expenses to the program without prior authorization from McNair Staff.

The Graduate Record Exam (The GRE)

McNair Scholars are eligible to receive a 50% GRE fee reduction voucher through a national partnership between the McNair Scholars Program and Educational Testing Services (ETS). Fee waiver availability is subject to the continuation of this program in partnership with ETS. McNair Scholars can apply for a GRE fee waiver from the McNair Program staff. Fee waivers must be presented to register for the GRE. You should begin the voucher process during July.

IV. Safety and Insurance

Safety

All McNair Scholars are expected to use extreme caution to ensure the safety of personnel, equipment, and the environment.

Insurance

Because your stipend is not considered a wage, you are not insured by Workman's Compensation if you are injured during the McNair Mentored Research Experience. For this reason, you are encouraged to have accident coverage either through a parent's policy or through the accident policy program sponsored

by the University, or through some other policy of your own. For further information contact the at 313-577-5041.

V. Particular Details and Challenges

Stipend Award process

In order to receive your research stipend, you must submit completed a 12-20 page research paper on your project and obtain your mentor's approval for both your research paper and your research presentation.

Taxes on Scholar Stipends

McNair Scholars are responsible for paying any tax liability generated by the research stipends.

May I Work and/or Take a Credit Course

The summer McNair Scholars Program requires a commitment. However, the program evaluates each scholar on a case-by-case basis. McNair Scholar's must have prior approval to take summer classes concurrent with participation in a McNair funded mentored research experience.

Scholarly Research Conferences

Scholars may be provided the opportunity to attend one of the following national McNair conferences: UCLA National McNair Research Conference, University of Maryland College Park National McNair Research Conference, and University of Maryland Baltimore County National McNair Research Conference. Scholars who have participated in a McNair funded research experience are required to present at on-campus research conference, which may include: Wayne State University La Academia del Pueblo Research Conference, and/or Warrior Scholars: The Wayne State University Conference for Undergraduate Research and Creative Work. Subject to annual programming, Scholars may also have the opportunity to attend or present at a research conference in their discipline and/or the Annual Yale Bouchet Conference on Diversity and Graduate Education at Yale University.

Scholar Recognition

At the end of the Academic Year Program, the McNair Program will sponsor a closing celebration and recognition ceremony.

Evaluations

During the course of your tenure in McNair Scholars, you will be required to participate in a number of assessment activities that evaluate program effectiveness. These activities include individual and focus group interviews, surveys and written assessments.

Web Resources

National McNair Websites

[List of Graduate Schools that offer Application Fee Waivers](#)

[McNair Scholars Program, Student Resources](#)

[National Graduate Fellowships List](#)

Research Internship Websites

[National Science Foundation REU \(Research Experience for Undergraduates\)](#)

[NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#)

[National Institutes of Health](#)

[Big Ten Academic Alliance](#)

[Leadership Alliance](#)

Graduate School Websites

[Council of Graduate Schools \(CGS\)](#)

[Directory of Graduate School Programs](#)

[Guide to Graduate School, GRE Prep, Rankings and Newsgroup](#)

[Educational Testing Services \(ETS\) - practice GRE tests and diagnostic GRE](#)

[Application Essay Help](#)

Financial Aid

[Finaid! The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid](#)

[FastWeb](#)

[Students.gov](#)

[GoCollege: The Collegiate Webservice](#)

[Princeton Review](#)

[College Scholarships Connection](#)

VI. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Faculty Mentor Responsibilities

The WSU Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program truly appreciates those faculty members who step forward to become McNair Faculty Mentors. McNair Faculty Mentors provide Scholars with regular, one-on-one mentoring through dialogue and interaction, direction on the undergraduate research project, encouragement for PhD studies, and suggestions for programs of graduate study.

McNair Faculty Mentors are expected to:

- Provide references for introductory background reading materials relevant to the assigned or specified project
- Provide insight about, commentary on, criticism of, as well as approval of the student's research outline (research proposal), research paper or final project, and scholarly abstract
- Approve the student's research schedule
- Meet with each student bi-weekly throughout the summer program. Meetings may be used for review of research, discussion of research project, direction of study, etc.
- Serve as positive role models in research, scholarship, and academia as a whole
- Encourage the student to earn the bachelor's degree, as well as to apply and matriculate into a doctoral program
- Alert the McNair Program Office of any difficulties, questions, or concerns—of an academic and/or personal nature—that the student may be encountering
- Help the student understand the rigors of graduate education
- Utilizing a brief program questionnaire, evaluate the student at the end of each semester
- Identify/recommend graduate school programs
- Hold the McNair scholar to standards of scholarly excellence

Faculty Benefits:

- Access to McNair students nationwide, providing a potential graduate school pool
- \$500 as a token of appreciation
- Guide potential scholars through the research process
- Impact the future course of the academy and society by increasing the number of first generation/low income and underrepresented students who complete post-baccalaureate degrees

APPENDIX B

Path to the PhD

Most undergraduates have questions about what a PhD actually is and how to earn one. The diagram below shows the progression from a bachelor's degree, to the master's degree, and then on to the top of the pyramid, or the doctoral degree (PhD).

Earning a bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) usually takes between 4 – 6 years. Students typically take General Education courses on a wide range of subjects during the first and second years, followed by a number of courses specifically designed to give them advanced knowledge in a Major and Minor subject.

The master's degree (M.A. or M.S.) is awarded after taking 10 – 14 additional classes in a single subject. master's degrees are typically earned in 1 – 2 years of study. Many students seek graduate assistantships, in which they work at the university and receive free tuition and a stipend payment in return. Classes are smaller, more reading and research are required, and students work closely with their professors.

The doctoral degree (PhD) is awarded after a student becomes an expert in a field of study. The PhD may require up to 15 courses, after which the student conducts and writes an original research project, called a "dissertation." Upon successful completion of the dissertation, the student is awarded the "Doctorate of Philosophy," or "PhD". Doctoral studies typically take 5-8 years, and most students work as university instructors or researchers, and receive free tuition and a salary.

APPENDIX C

Students with Disabilities

Applicable Laws for Americans with Disabilities
1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Section 504

Colleges and universities nationwide have been protecting the rights of students with disabilities since the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, specifically Section 504, which states:

No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Unlike Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the ADA applies to employers, public services, public accommodations, communication providers and transportation providers regardless of whether they receive or benefit from federal funding.

The ADA defines a person with a disability to mean a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

The ADA provides coverage in five different areas:

1. Employment
2. Public services/transportation
3. Public accommodations/transportation
4. Telecommunications
5. Miscellaneous

If you believe you meet the above characteristics, please contact WSU's Student Disability Services Office and provide the McNair Program with documentation

Phone: (313) 577-1851

Videophone: (313) 202-4216

Fax: (313) 577-4898

www.studentdisability.wayne.edu

Email: studentdisability@wayne.edu

APPENDIX D

McNair Admissions Criteria

Federal Regulations Governing McNair Application Qualifications and Admission guidelines, determined by the United States Department of Education, can be viewed at:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/triomcnair/legislation.html>

A student of any ethnicity who is both a first generation college student (neither parent has received a college degree – they can have received an associate’s degree and/or some college and the student will still be considered first generation) AND considered low income according to federal guidelines (see federal income guidelines at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html>) OR a member of an underrepresented group (African American, Hispanic, Native American, Alaskan Native, Native American Pacific Islander).

In addition, the student must:

- Commit to attaining a doctoral degree.
- Be a U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident.
- Be currently enrolled at WSU.
- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.80

Student Contract

Wayne State University Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program Participation Contract

I, _____, accept the offer to participate in the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program. I understand that the purpose of the Program is to prepare me for doctoral study. Furthermore, I understand that my acceptance to participate commits me to the following:

Full Participation in the Summer Research Institute, including:

- _____ Up to twenty hours of guided research per week
- _____ Upon completion of the research project and approval of faculty mentor, the student will receive a research stipend (GPA 2.8 or better)
- _____ Attendance at all scheduled seminars
- _____ Attendance at all scheduled individual sessions
- _____ Completion and submission of the research abstract/research outline
- _____ Completion of pertinent literature review relevant to research experience
- _____ Completion of research paper and presentation of findings at a research conference
- _____ Attendance at all graduate school application classes
- _____ Weekly (or regularly scheduled) meetings with faculty mentor
- _____ Completion and submission of all program assignments
- _____ Refraining from taking summer classes without program notification and approval

Full Participation in the Academic Year Activities, including:

- _____ Attendance at all scheduled workshops and meetings
- _____ Attendance at required grad school visits and research conferences
- _____ Attend required meetings with the McNair Program Counselor
- _____ Completion and submission of all program assignments by the deadlines
- _____ Take the Graduate Record Examination (or another appropriate pre-graduate school examination), and submit copies of scores prior to the beginning of fall semester of the senior year

Additionally, I agree to:

- _____ Complete and submit all required program evaluations
- _____ Notify the McNair Program Office of any change of address, telephone, and/or name
- _____ Submit copies of all graduate school, financial aid, and funding notifications
- _____ Submit official copies of all standardized test scores
- _____ Cooperate with all follow-up contact by the WSU McNair Program
- _____ Uphold standards of personal and professional excellence
- _____ Remain an enrolled student in good standing at Wayne State University

I understand that if I do not meet these requirements, my program participation may be terminated.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____