



Making the Most of Summer 2020: Science & Research

We are providing ideas to structure an engaging and productive summer in order to keep building on your current skills and preparing for your future career pathway. The document provides a range of recommendations to explore career options, network, learn about research projects, and effectively prepare for future potential opportunities.

Develop your scientific understanding and communication skills

- **Read primary literature articles** that you find interesting and challenge yourself to annotate these texts, craft future directions of your own, and evaluate the results presented. See which researchers are being cited frequently in articles of interest and learn more about the investigators conducting these studies.
- **Discuss published research findings** by organizing a journal club with a group of friends or lab members.
- **Craft a research proposal** by exploring current scientific articles published by a UChicago faculty member of interest and detailing future aims.
- **Network** with research experts to expand your professional contacts and also to learn more about various graduate programs. Learn about the work of UChicago faculty members as there may be a way for you to contribute to these efforts virtually or explore potential future opportunities.
- **Write a grant proposal** for ongoing research or research that was stopped by COVID-19. Build your scientific communication skills and prepare an effective proposal for future grant application cycles.
- **Read a book** to learn more about a scientific area of interest, or check out [books that have inspired UChicago professors](#).

STEM Broader Impacts Opportunities

Explore ways to share your passion for science with students or the local community. Create your own virtual events or online tools.

- **Engage students in learning science** by helping K-12 schools and summer programs that are exploring creative ways to help students learn during the current situation. See if your local elementary, middle, or high school is offering summer opportunities for students that you could contribute to remotely or reconnect with those teachers that got you excited to learn science and see if they have recommendations for how to get involved.
- **Participate in virtual events or create your own!** Many organizations including museums, zoos, and aquariums are offering virtual webinars or workshops, and [digital volunteer](#) programs - take advantage of these offerings to learn more about these impressive organizations, the work that they do, and how they effectively communicate complicated



scientific concepts to community members. If you find an organization or program that you would like to contribute to or learn more about reach out to see if you can get involved!

- **Highlight your design skills** and build a website for an RSO, family business, or a personal website to share your portfolio and resume. You can also write a blog or develop a podcast to share information on any topic. Pick a topic that is interesting to you, identify articles and experts, and share your findings!

Network and explore career paths of interest

Leverage the UChicago alumni network to learn more about roles and organizations of interest. This is a great time to learn more about various career trajectories and recommendations that professionals have for you moving forward.

- **Conduct informational interviews** to gain information about exciting career paths. Leverage [WISR](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to connect with UChicago alumni and grow your professional network.
- **Explore scientific research conferences** of interest. Many webcasts and digital events offer an opportunity to learn from experts and gain exposure to various research topics.
- **Craft an abstract** for a research project that could be used to apply to present your work at future conferences or symposia.
- **Research graduate schools** of interest and the application process moving forward. Find the programs and researchers that are conducting studies that interest and motivate you.

Self-care and life skills

Take the time now to develop important life skills and a self-care routine.

- **Learn to cook** a new dish! Offer to cook and deliver a meal to neighbors trying to manage childcare and work obligations at home.
- **Develop an at-home exercise routine** to stay in shape and give yourself breaks throughout the day to stay mentally fresh.
- **Take up or revisit a craft or hobby** - origami, bike repair, gardening, the instrument or art supplies you put down at the end of high school.
- **Self-care is critically important** - [read here for additional tips on managing anxiety and stress](#) and [here for advice on staying well while studying from home](#).