

**Program**

***How many students will be selected to participate into the BRAIN program?***

- ❖❖ Approximately 40 students will be selected to participate in the BRAIN program.
- ❖❖ We often receive approximately 200 applicants per year.

***May I send in my transcripts, letters of recommendation, and resume BEFORE I finish and submit the online application?***

- ❖❖ Yes, please arrange for your transcripts to be sent as soon as you decide to apply. ❖❖ Also notify potential recommenders as soon as possible, to give them time to submit on time by January 13, 2012 (via email to [brain.applications@gmail.com](mailto:brain.applications@gmail.com)).
- ❖❖ You may submit your resume or CV via email at any time in the application process, but no later than January 13, 2012. ❖❖ See below for further instructions.

***How should application materials be submitted?*** ❖❖ Once you have decided to apply, request your letters of recommendation and your transcripts immediately. You do not need to finish the online application before you send in your materials. ❖❖ Transcripts should be sent in hard copy either directly from your institution to us, or sometimes you can pick up a hard copy sealed and placed in a signed envelope directly from your registrar to mail to us yourself. Check immediately at your registrar's office. ❖❖ Letters of recommendation should be emailed directly from your recommender to [brain.applications@gmail.com](mailto:brain.applications@gmail.com) (Letters will be accepted only if they are sent from the recommender's email address, are submitted in PDF format, and are formatted on institutional letterhead.) ❖❖ Resumes or CVs should be emailed in PDF format to [brain.applications@gmail.com](mailto:brain.applications@gmail.com). ❖❖ The full program application is available and needs to be completed online. (You may start and stop the application several times before final submission.) ❖❖ See the program website for more information.

***Can I check which application materials have been received by Mr. Poh and Ms. Weaver?*** ❖❖ Yes, your online application account will include a checklist of received materials updated every few days. ❖❖ Please email if you have submitted materials but they are not checked off on your application site. (Email [rpoh@gsu.edu](mailto:rpoh@gsu.edu)).

***What does a day in the life of a BRAIN Fellow look like?***

- ❖❖ Upon arrival, Fellows will be allotted time to settle in and unpack. Fellows will be given a neuroscience textbook and BRAIN Binder of orientation course materials at check-in.
- ❖❖ For the first week and a half of the BRAIN program, Fellows will be required to participate in full-day orientation activities. These include tours of campus, obtaining ID cards and building access instructions, and participating fully in an introduction and/or review course on basic concepts in neuroscience. This week also helps Fellows prepare to work in the labs and adjust to the BRAIN program and their peers.
- ❖❖ For the remainder of the BRAIN program, Fellows will spend most of their time working in labs. BRAIN Fellows will be required to fill out a time sheet. Fellows and their Mentors will discuss the need for any weekend lab work. It is not unusual to work in the lab on the weekends.
- ❖❖ BRAIN Fellows will also be expected to attend weekly half-day seminars on a variety of topics related to research, careers, and presentation skills.

***What will I do with all of the research I am conducting in the BRAIN program?*** ❖❖ BRAIN Fellows will be expected to present their research in a poster symposium and turn in a research report or grant proposal at the end of the BRAIN program.

***Do Fellows receive a stipend for participating in the program?***

- ❖❖ Yes. Fellows will receive a stipend or a salary of \$3,000 for participating in the BRAIN program.
- ❖❖ Payments will not begin until almost halfway through the program, so Fellows need to arrive on campus with means to pay for meals and activities before the first portion of the stipend is received.
- ❖❖ With regard to taxes, US citizens should consult with their tax advisors on how to report. Taxes will be deducted automatically from stipends for non-citizens.

***Will the BRAIN program provide housing?*** ❖❖ Yes. The BRAIN program can cover the costs associated with housing. BRAIN Fellows can live in the student apartments on the campus of Georgia State University or Emory University. (We are currently negotiating for housing at one of these two institutions, not both.) However, meals and personal transportation are not covered by the program. (See more information below.) The student apartments are very comfortable and have a refrigerator. You will share your apartment with 2 other members of the BRAIN program (single sex apartments). If you are local to Atlanta and prefer to make your own living arrangements, we will allow that alternative.

***Will the BRAIN program provide transportation? ❖❖*** During the welcome week to the program, Fellows will be given information on how to access free shuttles to the various metro Atlanta colleges and universities involved in BRAIN. If you are residing in program housing, you can walk to Orientation activities. During the research component of the program, Fellows who are not able to use inter-college shuttles will be able to purchase discounted fare cards on Atlanta's public transit system (MARTA) and/or pay for a parking pass. We will also run our own small shuttle van.

***Should I bring my car? ❖❖*** It is not required that you have a car, but you may find it helpful. A parking deck adjacent to the student apartments will be available for BRAIN Fellows who have a car. (MARTA cards are not available to those with car passes.) There will not be a fee for parking in this deck, but there may be a fee on other campuses.

***May I move into my student apartment earlier than the start of orientation?***

❖❖ No. Move in will be the Wednesday May 23rd and you must be on campus by 6:00 pm.

***May I stay in my student apartment beyond the end of the BRAIN program? ❖❖*** No. You must vacate your student apartment by noon on Saturday, August 4th, the day after the closing luncheon.

***If I currently live in Atlanta, must I stay in the program housing? ❖❖*** No. It is not mandatory that BRAIN Fellows reside in the provided student apartments. However, Fellows may want to enjoy the opportunities to become friends and colleagues with other BRAIN Fellows. Additionally, local Atlanta traffic problems could prevent a Fellow from arriving promptly at BRAIN events and laboratory duties.

***Can friends of BRAIN Fellows stay in the Fellows' student apartments?***

❖❖ No. Absolutely not.

***Do I have to participate in the entire BRAIN program? ❖❖*** Yes. There is no flexibility in the start and end dates of the program. Only participants who are available for the entire program will be selected, and it is expected that all BRAIN Fellows participate in all events and for the entire duration of the program.

***May I leave Atlanta during the BRAIN program? ❖❖*** Research is the first priority for BRAIN Fellows and often requires weekend work. If and only if you have no other BRAIN related obligations over the weekend, you may leave AFTER work on Friday and return BEFORE work on Monday. However, we do not encourage leaving.

***May I receive academic credit while participating in the BRAIN program?***

❖❖ No. BRAIN Fellows receive stipends in lieu of academic credit.

***May I take academic classes while participating in the BRAIN program?***

❖❖ No. Fellows are required to commit their full attention to the BRAIN program.

***May I keep my other job while participating in the BRAIN program?***

- ❖❖ No. Fellows are required to commit their full attention to the BRAIN program.

***What will my research experience be like?***

You will be assigned to either the LeftBRAIN or RightBRAIN format.

- LeftBRAIN: One option is a format similar to a professional program for practicing scientists offered at Woods Hole, Cold Spring Harbor, or Friday Harbor, in which Fellows work in a single lab facility with a rotating team of outstanding instructors to develop skills using various research techniques such as behavior analysis, pharmacology, electrophysiology, and/or molecular biology.
  - One BRAIN Fellow described LeftBRAIN as a workshop in which professors from various fields introduced their research techniques and enabled LeftBRAIN Fellows to perform relevant techniques using the crayfish animal model.
  - Another BRAIN Fellow described LeftBRAIN as different from RightBRAIN in that students worked together in groups to learn several different techniques and then were allowed the opportunity to choose their own projects and which of those techniques to apply on a crayfish model.
  - Another BRAIN Fellow described LeftBRAIN by noting that rather than entering the lab of a faculty member in which most decisions about research projects have already been made, LeftBRAIN Fellows are able to participate in all steps from initial brainstorming to the presentation of results.
- RightBRAIN: The other option is an individual lab format, in which Fellows work with individual Mentors to join ongoing research projects using techniques available in the Mentors' labs.
  - One BRAIN Fellow described RightBRAIN as an immersion into an existing project in a neuroscience lab, with opportunity to contribute to tasks related to data collection and analysis, similar to work done by research assistants at most colleges or universities.
  - Another BRAIN Fellow described RightBRAIN as work in an established lab, which may focus on any part of the neuroscience field, from cellular work to cognition in humans.
  - Another BRAIN Fellow comments that RightBRAIN enables a student to enter into a mentoring relationship with a faculty member and to gain insight into the daily tasks and struggles faced by those who have made neuroscience research their career. This Fellow also notes that a RightBRAIN Fellow contributes daily to the research project that his/her mentor is planning, conducting, or analyzing during the summer, and that all Fellows are able to present at least initial findings during the poster presentation.

***If I am admitted to the individual lab format (RightBRAIN), how will I be paired up with a mentor?***

❖❖ When the application review is completed, the CBN Undergraduate Education selection committee will make suggestions for possible mentor matches. ❖❖ If you are accepted as a BRAIN Fellow, you will be provided with information about the mentors and will be able to suggest your preference. Please note that the selection committee reserves the right to make the Fellow placements in the laboratories. Once assigned, Fellows cannot request a different Mentor than the one to which they are assigned. ❖❖ A special networking luncheon will be held on June 1st, 2011 to give Fellows and Mentors the opportunity to meet each other.

***What should I do if I am not satisfied with my mentor decision?***

❖❖ If you are not satisfied with the final decision, give it your best shot and try to work in the lab for the first few weeks. If you are still unhappy and would like to switch Mentors, you should first speak with the BRAIN Program Coordinator to address your concerns. Often, it is possible, with some communication, to make the match work to the Fellow's and the Mentor's advantage. If this strategy does not work, a Fellow can submit a request in writing stating reasons for the need to change Mentors and then the program will work to facilitate that change. Changing mentors should be considered as a last resort.

***At which school will I conduct my research?***

❖❖ The CBN is a consortium of seven metro-Atlanta area schools. BRAIN Fellows conduct research in the laboratories of Emory University, Georgia State University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Georgia Institute of Technology, or Morehouse School of Medicine. All institutions have been sites for lab experiences in past years of BRAIN.

***Why will I be asked to consent to the use of my survey responses, research presentations, reports, and focus group or interview comments for education research?***

❖❖ CBN faculty members are conducting research on your experience in the BRAIN program, so that future programs can be designed in ways that are most effective for undergraduates.

**Benefits**

***What are the benefits of participating in the BRAIN program?***

❖❖ An intensive, first-class research experience in the biomedical or behavioral sciences.  
❖❖ Mentoring from eminent scientists at the CBN member institutions. ❖❖ Guidance in the development of a professional poster and presentation skills that prepare you for making scientific presentations. ❖❖ Weekly seminars on special topics to prepare you for success in research. ❖❖ The opportunity to meet a diverse group of talented students with similar career interests and goals from all over the United States. ❖❖ A chance to make lifelong friends and memories.  
❖❖ Free housing at Georgia State University during the program and a \$3000 stipend. ❖❖ Living in the vibrant, exciting city of Atlanta and exploring all it has to offer for the duration of the program. ❖❖ Jump-starting your career.