I am interested in working on research while I am in school. How should I get started?

There are a number of ways to obtain research experience while you are at GW. DC is a very rich public health environment with many opportunities to volunteer, intern, or work part or full time.

GW has a career site with general services listed that can help you get started: http://careerservices.gwu.edu/. SPH-specific career counseling resources may be found at https://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/career-center.

GW jobs (including Departmental positions) are listed here: https://publichealth.gwu.edu/services/career-center and on it is a public health specific job site: https://publichealth-gwu-csm.symplicity.com/

Be sure that you are signed up for the Departmental listserve in addition to the SPH listserve—many opportunities are communicated through this channel. To do this, send an e-mail to listserv@hermes.gwu.edu with subject line "Subscribe Epi" and in the body of the e-mail, they should also write "SUBSCRIBE EPI".

Other places to look include:

- American Public Health Association http://www.apha.org/professional-development
- Idealist http://www.idealist.org/
- Public Health Employment Connection http://cfusion.sph.emory.edu/PHEC/index.cfm?CFID=4736402&CFTOKEN=91099003
- Specific government or business websites (e.g., CDC, NIH, WHO, PAHO, etc.)
- Look on websites at the many public health organizations in the area: DC Department of Health, Alexandria City, Fairfax County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Arlington County, etc. We are fortunate to live in an area with many public health efforts which = jobs for students.

Can I work with faculty in the Department?

Faculty in the Department appreciate students! As much as we can, we hire from our own programs and from the School. In general the ways to work with the faculty are to follow up on jobs from the listserve or our public health job site and talk with faculty with whom you share research interests to see if they have research opportunities. Having your resume in professional shape from the beginning of the program is useful so that if an opportunity opens up, you are ready to submit right away. There are different types of skillsets that research in the Department use: for some, you may need to have intermediate or advanced programming skills, others the ability to go out into the field at night to do interviewing. If you are not ready for some of the jobs yet, keep a list of faculty who are hiring for them and when you do have the requisite skills, contact them again later in your program to see what is available.

Don't forget to look in other SPH Departments, too, as there is research throughout the school; epidemiology is a foundational science of public health and is used in every type of research, so other Departments may have relevant openings.

How many and what types of positions are there?

Typically there are about two dozen graduate students working as paid research staff in the Department at any one time. Most student research positions are funded by grants which means they may be short or long term, hourly or salaried, temporary or permanent. There is no one type of position—so look carefully at the announcement to be sure you know which kind it is. Sometimes there are a number of positions open, sometimes none or just a few.

How many hours can I work?

This depends on the type of position as well as on you (whether you are on a specific type of visa, work elsewhere at GW, or are on a scholarship, etc.). The majority of student positions are hourly and students in hourly GW positions may work no more than 20 hours per week in the fall and spring semesters, 40 hours in the summer.

When you are applying for a job, remember to look closely at the job requirements. Some jobs require late nights or weekends while some are during a standard work week. Working while being a student is a great experience and will help integrate the material you are learning in the classroom. At the same time, you want to be sure that you do not take on so much that you do not do well in both your job and your courses! Both are important so be clear on your responsibilities so that you succeed in each domain.

If you want to be an Instructional Assistant in a course, please let the faculty you are interviewing with know this; teaching and research may not be possible during the same semester.

What is the salary for an hourly research position?

Hourly research jobs at GW in the Department are currently set at a wage of approximately $15/hour.

Can I volunteer in the Department?

There may be activities that you can volunteer in. Talk with faculty working in the area of interest to see what is available. There are strict criteria about when volunteers are allowed so while faculty may be grateful for the offer, it is not always possible to accept volunteers.

Can I use my paid research position for my practicum and/or CE?
It depends on the project and on the faculty. Talk with the Practicum/CE Director to see if your current position may be appropriate to incorporate either the practicum or CE. In general, if SPH faculty are the PI then it may not be used as a practicum though it may be appropriate for the CE.

Will I automatically get benefits if I work in research?

At GW, benefits depend on the type of position one is in. Hourly positions do not receive benefits. Talk with the prospective faculty employer to see what benefits (tuition or otherwise) are associated with the position.

If you are working at another site (GW Hospital, Children's, private companies, NIH) check with the prospective employer on their benefits. Some positions do confer tuition remission at GW.

Should I set up "an informational interview?"

While there may be some companies and fields that do recommend this, in our program we generally do not. Faculty are happy to meet with you when they have open positions to discuss whether it would be a good fit for your interests and skills, but the "informational interview" when there is no position available is generally not recommended.