The Schar School of Policy and Government encourages student scholarship with programs that introduce you to sophisticated research methods. As early as your first semester, you can begin to develop essential skills for analyzing pressing policy issues.

The Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP) matches students with professors who assist each other on studies of mutual interest, with funding opportunities for the student.

Dozens of new undergraduate research projects with Schar School faculty mentors are available each year. Recent examples of URAP projects include:

- Congressional Polarization
- Assessment of Local Policies to Reduce Jail Populations
- Mapping Shadow Influence of Elites
- Building a Virginia Legislative Database
- The Political Economy of Fiscal Oversight Boards
- Understanding China's Grand Strategy
- Migrant Remittances
- Political Participation at Home

Mason’s selective, interdisciplinary Honors College works with Schar School students to begin research projects in their first semester through the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program (URSP) and the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR).

The Schar School is ranked No. 22 in the world, No. 11 in the U.S., and No. 1 in the Washington, D.C., region for its public administration program. The school is also ranked in the Top 20 in the country and No. 2 in the region for the quantity and quality of its public policy research output. Further, Mason is one of only 120 U.S. universities on the Research 1 list compiled by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.
"When I first got into URAP I was expecting to conduct research on my own which was intimidating... to my surprise, I was one of a group of seven people that would be conducting research for the project. Working in a group provided support and guidance as a new student to Mason and URAP."

-Zuri Hodnett
Sophomore, BA in Government and International Politics
Project: "The Domestic Origins and Global Implications of the Obama Administration's Effort to Advance LGBTQ+ Rights" with Prof. Eric McGlinchey

"The professional and personal development that students who are a part of URAP are able to gain, alongside the technical skills that they are able to pick up in the process, are experiences that transcend what can be learned from a traditional classroom setting."

-Hadiyyah A. Abdul-Jalaal
Senior, BA in Government and International Politics
Project: "New Illicit Networks Along the Migration Routes: Human Smugglers, Transnational Organized Crime and Corruption" with Prof. Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera

"Now, after working with URAP for multiple semesters, I’m inspired to continue with research. I seek research and project-based classes and feel confident in my abilities to begin and end a research project. I have gained vital experience in seeking sources, accumulating information, and structuring a research paper that I would have never learned if I didn’t join URAP."

-Molly Reed
Junior, BA in Government and International Politics
Project: "When do Members of Congress Get Along?" with Prof. Jennifer Victor