

TAYA Lab Undergraduate Research Assistant Application: updated October 2019

**Application for Teen and Young Adult Lab (TAYA Lab)  
Undergraduate Directed Research or Volunteer  
Lab PI: Sophia Choukas-Bradley, Ph.D.  
University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychology  
Office: 3413 Sennott Square**

**Lab contacts: TAYA Lab Manager Brianna Ladd, B.A.; email: [tayalab@pitt.edu](mailto:tayalab@pitt.edu)**

*Information about Directed Research and Volunteer positions in the TAYA Lab*

**Description of Research:**

The Teen and Young Adult (TAYA) Lab is focused on understanding interpersonal and sociocultural influences on adolescent and young adult development. Dr. Choukas-Bradley is a faculty member in the Developmental, Clinical, and Social Psychology programs, and her research combines theories, methods, and research questions from these fields. Current areas of focus in the TAYA Lab include social media use, body image, sexual behavior, the objectification of girls and women, and LGBTQ adolescents. Detailed information about Dr. Choukas-Bradley, the lab team members, and the lab's research is available here: <https://www.sophiachoukasbradley.com>.

**Duties of Students:**

A Directed Research or Volunteer position in the lab is ideal for enthusiastic, hard-working undergraduate students who are interested in obtaining research experiences in Psychology, are specifically interested in the research areas of the lab, and are able to commit 5-10 hours to lab work each week. Directed Research students and Volunteers participate each week in various lab tasks necessary for the research process. These tasks include: collecting, entering, and managing data; completing readings and participating actively in weekly lab meetings; and pursuing an independent research project. This research training experience is ideal for students who are interested in pursuing graduate school in Developmental Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Social Psychology, or related fields.

In order to be a good fit for the lab, students must have a high degree of flexibility and maturity, strong attention to detail, and outstanding interpersonal and organizational skills. Students will work closely with Dr. Choukas-Bradley, lab manager, and other students, and they will also interact directly with participants in the lab, including adolescents who identify as members of the LGBTQ community. It is essential that students are able to work effectively on their own and also as part of a team. For both Directed Research and Volunteer positions, students are required to have a minimum 3.5 GPA, to have completed the course requirements of the Directed Research program (occasional exceptions made for outstanding first-year students), and to complete relevant clearances for working with children (Act 33/34/73) prior to beginning their work in the lab. Directed Research students and Volunteers participate each week in various lab tasks necessary for the research process. These tasks include: collecting, entering, and managing data; completing readings and participating actively in weekly lab meetings; and pursuing an independent research project.

Applications are welcome throughout the year, but students join the lab at the beginning of a semester and interviews typically occur toward the end of the prior semester. Students who are interested in applying for a Directed Research or Volunteer position should complete the steps below, and you may contact us at [tayalab@pitt.edu](mailto:tayalab@pitt.edu) if you have specific questions that are not addressed online; but please first carefully review all information available here <http://psychology.pitt.edu/undergraduate/experiential-learning/directed-research> and on Dr. Choukas-Bradley's website [www.sophiachoukasbradley.com](http://www.sophiachoukasbradley.com).

***Application Instructions: TAYA Lab***

Students interested in applying for Directed Research or Volunteer positions should email the following documents to Brianna Ladd (B.A.) at [tayalab@pitt.edu](mailto:tayalab@pitt.edu)

1. Your CV or resume
2. An internal transcript (this can be a photo of your official transcript or a copy-and-pasted list of grades from your transcript)
3. A personal statement (roughly 500 words) that addresses the following questions:
  - a. Basic information:
    - Name; year at Pitt; major(s) and minor(s), if applicable
    - What type of position are you applying for: Directed Research or Volunteer? If you are applying for a Directed Research position (for course credit), would you be willing to be considered for a Volunteer position if we do not have Directed Research positions available? (Directed Research positions offer one, two, or three credit-hour courses. Three credit-hours is preferred, but exceptions may be made for one or two-credit hour courses if necessary. Please indicate in your personal statement how many credit hours you are applying for. Volunteers are expected to volunteer for 5-10 hours/week.)
  - b. Why are you applying for a Directed Research or Volunteer position with Dr. Choukas-Bradley in the TAYA Lab? Please note that this personal statement is an important part of how we determine whom to interview; this is your opportunity to thoughtfully discuss why you would like to join the TAYA Lab and why you feel you would be a good fit. Be sure to address the following:
    - what specific research areas you are most interested in related to the lab (see website)
    - why you think you would be a good fit for this lab
    - any plans you currently have regarding graduate school and/or career and how working in the TAYA Lab may help you pursue these goals
4. A document in which you write the following:
  - a. Please state that your GPA is 3.5 or higher, or if your GPA is below 3.5, why you believe you should be considered for the lab in spite of not meeting this requirement
  - b. Please state that you have met each of the course requirements of the Directed Research program: (1) you have completed 12 credits of psychology courses; and (2) you have taken STAT 0200, 1000, or 1100; and (3) you have completed PSY 0035, Research Methods in Psychology (if you have not met the requirements – for example, if you are a first-year student, please address other relevant experience)
  - c. Please state that you will be able to complete the necessary clearances (Act 33/34/73) prior to beginning your work in the lab
5. A writing sample from a Pitt Psychology course that demonstrates strong critical thinking, writing skills, and aptitude for research (at least 5 pages; no page limit)

*Application Process:* Dr. Choukas-Bradley and her team will review all applications submitted through email (see above). Selected students will be invited to complete an interview with the TAYA lab manager and/or graduate students. Based on that interview, selected students will then be invited to interview with Dr. C-B. If you are invited to join the lab and decide to join us, you will complete paperwork with Dr. C-B and the advising office and complete all clearances before beginning your work in the lab.

If you submit an application to [tayalab@pitt.edu](mailto:tayalab@pitt.edu) and do not receive an email confirming our receipt of your application within seven days, please resend your email. Thank you for your interest in the TAYA Lab!