

Mahek Bhatia: My experience at the International Conference of Undergraduate Research 2024

Being immersed in legal research has been central to my undergraduate degree- not just for essays and coursework. I have been involved in several research assistant roles, led and managed an independent research project, and, of course, worked on my undergraduate dissertation. These experiences have fostered a strong interest in research and even inspired me to consider it as a career path. Attending the International Conference of Undergraduate Research (ICUR) was a fantastic opportunity to present my dissertation research, which I have been very invested in and passionate about, to a global stage.

The application process was streamlined and straightforward. I had to condense my dissertation into a 250-word abstract and submit it by the deadline. ICUR provides several resources, including question-and-answer spaces, to help build your abstract, which I found very useful. I also used my wonderful supervisor's (Rachael Blakey) support and guidance, which was immensely helpful. My main advice on abstract writing is to put yourself in the shoes of the reader- consider them a non-expert in the field- and ensure that the abstract is accessible to them.

Presenting at ICUR initially felt intense and nerve-wracking. Summarising a year-long, 12,000-word project in 10 minutes seemed like a daunting task. With some preparation, it got more manageable. ICUR provides a range of resources which can support you as you build your presentation, including valuable feedback from your panel chair. It was incredibly rewarding to put my dissertation out in the world and have an interdisciplinary audience engage with it. Public speaking is always a nervous endeavour, but I ensured I maintained eye contact with friendly faces in the audience while steadily and confidently explaining my ideas. A crucial tip I once received from an academic is to always keep

the text on the slides minimal, allowing the audience to focus on what you are saying. I also practiced my presentation extensively and received feedback from friends and family, which was very helpful.

I highly recommend ICUR to all fellow law students interested in presenting their research. It is a wonderful opportunity to hone your research and presentation skills and showcase your ideas to a global audience.

By Mahek Bhatia