1 to 2 Graduate Student Mentors Needed for 2027 SMaRT Internship Program

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE-OAK RIDGE INNOVATION INSTITUTE

UT-ORII Science Alliance Seeking Applicants for Fully Funded Graduate Research Assistantship Positions

UT-ORII Science Alliance seeks 1 to 2 graduate research assistants (GRAs) for the 2027 SMaRT (Student Mentoring and Research Training) summer internship program. Mentors will participate in the program's planning and administration and will receive a full 12-month graduate assistantship for their efforts.

The University of Tennessee-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute's (UT-ORII) Science Alliance and UT Knoxville's Center for Advanced Materials & Manufacturing (CAMM) recruit ~40 undergraduate interns each year to participate in the SMaRT summer internship program. This is a unique 10-week interdisciplinary research and professional development experience hosted jointly at UT and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). For more information about the SMaRT program, please visit: SMaRT Internships – UT-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute (utorii.com).

The SMaRT interns are placed in ~3-4-person cohorts and mentored by faculty, research staff, UT-ORII staff and graduate students. Successful applicants for this position will perform critical mentoring functions, providing support and guidance to the interns. The SMaRT graduate assistant mentors' primary responsibilities are to be a peer mentor to the interns during the summer, ensuring that the students complete a series of professional development and science communication-related tasks (e.g. completion of CV, a scientific poster, and a scientific presentation) and to educate students about the steps and skills necessary to complete graduate education. These peer mentors are not expected to provide hands-on research mentorship to the interns during the summer months. Successful applicants will want to mentor and instruct students outside the laboratory. An understanding of the unique opportunities provided by the partnership with ORNL is needed.

The graduate student mentors' responsibilities are expected to take ~20 hours/week for the 10-week summer program. In the fall and spring, the mentors will assist in reviewing applications and planning SMaRT activities. The pre- and post-program duties are estimated to take at most 100 hours over both semesters.

SMaRT Graduate Student Mentor

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Spring 2027 Semester:

- Participate in professional development programs and SMaRT planning meetings
- Contribute ideas and assist with planning activities for SMaRT interns
- Assist in the review of intern applications
- Assist with any UT-ORII related event needs

Summer: May – August

- Support UT-ORII staff/faculty with the day-to-day operations of the program
- Work closely with the SMaRT team and interns for all events, questions, professional development workshops, etc.

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- Provide direction and support to interns as they prepare their PowerPoint and poster presentations for the end-of-program symposium

Fall 2027 Semester:

- Participate in program wrap-up and various reporting meetings on campus
- Assist in the review of intern applications
- Assist with any UT-ORII related event needs

QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be currently enrolled in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) doctoral program at UT (Required)
- Must be in good standing with both the home department and graduate school
- Must show successful completion of the OPIc speak test at advanced high or superior level, if instruction at prior undergraduate and master's institutions was not in English (Required)
- Strong written and oral communication skills (Required)
- Experience presenting posters and seminars (Preferred)
- Experience mentoring students (Preferred)
- Availability to work all 10 weeks during the summer (Highly Preferred)
- Research experience with or related to ORNL (Preferred)

COMPENSATION

These positions will be provided with a $37,512 annual salary plus benefits, full tuition and fees.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please submit the following to oriismart@utk.edu by Monday, November 15, 2026:

- A CV
- A cover letter explaining your interest in and qualifications for being a SMaRT mentor (up to 2 pages)
- A brief description of your research and its connection to joint UT-ORNL efforts (up to 1 page)
- Two or more recommendation letters. (The letters can be sent directly to maintain confidentiality.)