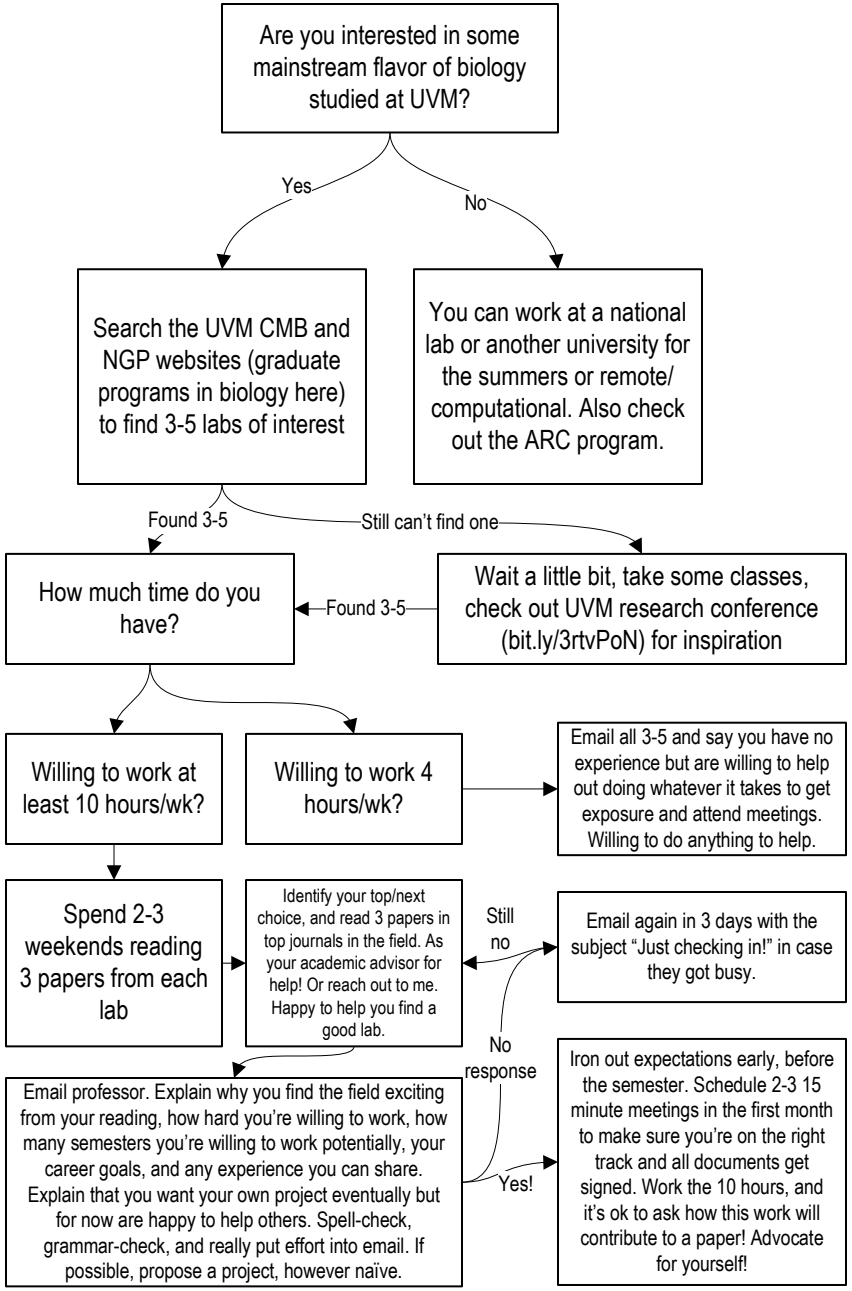
Are you interested in some mainstream flavor of biology studied at UVM?
Yes
No
Search the UVM CMB and NGP websites (graduate programs in biology here) to find 3-5 labs of interest
You can work at a national lab or another university for the summers or remote/ computational. Also check out the ARC program.
Found 3-5
Still can't find one
How much time do you have?
Found 3-5
Wait a little bit, take some classes, check out UVM research conference (bit.ly/3rtvPoN) for inspiration
Willing to work at least 10 hours/wk?
Willing to work 4 hours/wk?
Email all 3-5 and say you have no experience but are willing to help out doing whatever it takes to get exposure and attend meetings. Willing to do anything to help.
Spend 2-3 weekends reading 3 papers from each lab
Identify your top/next choice, and read 3 papers in top journals in the field. As your academic advisor for help! Or reach out to me. Happy to help you find a good lab.
Still no
Email again in 3 days with the subject "Just checking in!" in case they got busy.
No response
Email professor. Explain why you find the field exciting from your reading, how hard you're willing to work, how many semesters you're willing to work potentially, your career goals, and any experience you can share. Explain that you want your own project eventually but for now are happy to help others. Spell-check, grammar-check, and really put effort into email. If possible, propose a project, however naïve.
Yes!
Iron out expectations early, before the semester. Schedule 2-3 15 minute meetings in the first month to make sure you're on the right track and all documents get signed. Work the 10 hours, and it's ok to ask how this work will contribute to a paper! Advocate for yourself!