The University includes research as one of its stated purposes. In addition to faculty members in academic departments, a large staff of research scientists, engineers and technicians conduct basic and applied research. Most of these activities are externally funded and are conducted in the laboratories of the University of Dayton Research Institute.

Several hundred students are employed in research programs in accord with the University's emphasis on integration of research and instruction. In addition to financial benefits, this research participation provides students with valuable experience and an exposure to issues at the forefront of contemporary science and engineering.