



Undergraduate Research Mentorship Best Practices

This document is intended for faculty advisors overseeing undergraduate research within the Honors Program. Extended undergraduate research experiences enable students to explore the interplay between theory and practice and to investigate original research questions. Mentors play an essential role in the undergraduate research process by providing guidance and feedback.

To better support your work with undergraduate researchers, the Honors Program is sharing best practices on undergraduate research mentorship from the Council on Undergraduate Research and other organizations focused on undergraduate research.

Tips for Mentoring Undergraduate Researchers/Honors Students

1. Establish clear expectations. Talk to your mentee about work schedules, responsibilities, and communication styles. How often will you meet? How will you track progress? If the student has questions, what is the best way to contact you? Be explicit about what you expect and invite feedback from your mentee.
2. Help your mentee establish a timeline for project completion. Discuss key milestones in the research process and help your mentee think about next steps to move their project forward.
3. Help students be resilient. Help them understand setbacks are a normal part of the research process. Help students acknowledge setbacks and develop plans to move forward. Share your own personal experience with setbacks and how you moved past them.
4. Foster independence. Helps students take responsibility for their projects and assume ownership.
5. Balance rigorous academic expectations with emotional support and appropriate encouragement.
6. Support your student's professional development and explain the norms of your discipline(s).
7. Talk about future plans and career goals with your mentee.
8. Provide constructive and timely feedback. Acknowledge what your student is doing well.
9. Encourage questions from your mentees.
10. Encourage student to present their work at appropriate conferences and meetings.

Additional Mentoring Resources can be found here:

<https://www.cur.org/insights/mentoring/>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01007/full>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1329710.pdf>

If you have any additional resources, please send them to us. We would be happy to share them with the broader Honors community. Thank you for your continued support of the Honors Program.