

How to Mentor Undergraduate Researchers

From the Council on Undergraduate
Research

Elements of Mentoring

- Variation in Student Capabilities
- Developing Intellectual Skills
- Developing Interpersonal Skills
- Establishing a Working Relationship
- Gaining Self-Insight

Goals and Opportunities

- Becoming Engaged in Problem-Solving
- Learning the Values and Ethics of Doing Research
- Learning Proper Work Habits
- Frustrations and Rewards of Doing Research

What Mentors Should Expect

- Mentoring is an Educational Activity
- Undergraduate Research Students are not Graduate Students
- Mentors Must Accommodate to Varying Levels of Preparation, Skills, and Abilities
- Mentoring can be a Major Commitment
- Writing Letters of Recommendation

What Students Expect

- Having a Good Working Relationship with the Mentor
- Achieving Something Significant
- Focus on Product Rather Than Process

Skill Development

- Planning Activities
- Literature Review
- Collecting Data
- Analyzing Data
- Interpreting Data
- Communicating Results

Summer Versus Academic Year Research

- Advantages of Summer Research
- Time Management and Academic Year Research
- Project Needs to be Manageable

Communicating Research

- Developing Written and Oral Communication Skills
- Finding Opportunities to Present Work
- Conferences, Research Symposia, “Posters on the Hill”

Mentoring Tips

- Be Patient
- Consider the Student's Level of Understanding
- Encourage Questions
- Be Available
- Be Prepared
- Schedule Regular Meetings
- Discuss Issues Beyond the Research Project

Conclusion

- Wide Ranging Benefits to the Student
- Benefits to the Mentor
- Fond Memories
- The Role of OSCAR