# Undergraduate Research Mentoring Agreement

**Purpose: This document is a tool to set clear expectations for both an undergraduate student and their faculty mentor as a guide for the student's research experience. It is analogous to a course syllabus or independent study contract.** It should be completed after an initial agreement to work together has been reached. It can be used for any type of undergraduate research (for credit, for pay, or volunteer) in any context (e.g. laboratory, field work, community engagement). The student could be mentored on a project of his or her own design or on a contribution to the faculty mentor's research. Furthermore, this agreement is intended to form the basis for assessment of progress and evaluation of outcomes, either formally or informally.

**Directions:** The student and mentor should complete most of this agreement together, using the template to facilitate your conversation as you establish and clarify expectations for communications, milestones, and outcomes. Fill it out at the beginning of the research term, and refer to it as needed throughout the term. At the end of the research term, use the agreement to discuss the student’s progress (particularly for section 4).

At a minimum, both the student and mentor should retain completed copies. Some funded research opportunities may require that this agreement by filed with an administrative office. In that case, be sure to retain copies for referral during the term.

The Coordinator for Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research also should receive a copy of all completed agreements. Please email a scanned copy to [undergraduateresearch@ou.edu](mailto:undergraduateresearch@ou.edu).

## 1. General Information

* **Student name and ID number**:
* **Student email address:**
* **Mentor name:**
* **Mentor Department:**
* **Mentor email address:**
* **Research term** (e.g. Semester/Year):
* **Course and Section Numbers** (if any):
* **Brief** (2-3 sentences) **description of research project**

## 2. Background

The student should complete this section prior to meeting with the mentor and these responses should be considered when discussing the remaining items.

* **I am most confident about this strength/useful knowledge/skill that I bring to this project**:
* **I anticipate that my greatest challenge in accomplishing this research might be**:
* **I think that the most important thing for someone mentoring me to know is**:
* **I think that the most important thing for someone mentoring me to do is**:
* **I will consider this experience a success overall if I**:

## 3. General Expectations

* **Communication plan**: *What is the best way for the student to contact the mentor with questions? What is the best way for the mentor to contact the student? What are the agreed upon best-case and worst-case response times? Will there be regular check-in meetings? If so, how often?*
* **How many hours per week, on average, should the student spend working on the project? Are there restrictions for when that work may take place?**
* **If the student is enrolled in credit hours for this research, how will the final grade be determined?** (may wish to refer to milestones and outcomes below)
* **Should issues or problems that arise be sent to the mentor immediately, after reasonable attempts to solve independently, or held until the next regular meeting?**
* **Who else should the student turn to for assistance on this project?** (e.g. graduate students, other students)
* **Does the student need to get the mentor's permission before presenting this research at a conference and/or submitting it for publication?** Y/N
* **Which, if any, of the following OU resources should the student use to prepare for or complete the project?** (check all that apply)
  + Complete one of the online CITI tutorials (human subjects, clinical, etc) offered through OU's Institutional Review Board.
  + Complete responsible conduct of research training through the Graduate College.
  + Complete safety trainings offered on-line through OU Environmental Health and Safety Office.
  + Complete departmental or duty specific safety training.
  + Consult with an OU subject or reference librarian for assistance finding sources.
  + Make an appointment with the Writing Center for feedback on drafts of papers.
  + View website and/or attend a workshop offered through the Research Office about presenting your research at a conference.
  + Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## 4. Research Milestones

Identify several tasks that the student should aim to accomplish as s/he carries out this project, including a tentative schedule.  Be sure to include any product(s) that the student is expected to complete by the end of the research term, such as a paper, creative work, or presentation. (Add more fields as needed).

Example Research Milestones:

*Identify six articles to read.*

*Successfully clone gene of interest.*

*Administer survey.*

*Submit proposal to present at Undergraduate Research Day.*

*Turn in the first draft for a final paper.*

* **Milestone 1:** 
  + Target completion date:
* **Milestone 2:** 
  + Target completion date:
* **Milestone 3:** 
  + Target completion date:
* **Milestone 4:** 
  + Target completion date:

## 5. Student Outcomes

Identify several outcomes (skills, knowledge, professional development, etc.) that are important for the student to develop through the process of completing this project. Use these questions to get you started: What does the student want to get out of this research experience?  What does the mentor want the student to get out of the experience? (add more fields as needed)

Example skills outcomes:

*Can identify relevant sources from library databases.*

*Learn to operate a thermocycler to complete PCR.*

*Can successfully use Final Cut Pro to edit my film.*

Example content knowledge outcomes:

*Can compare/contrast 3 different scholars' interpretations of "Brave New World."*

*Can summarize the latest research about the causes of depression among the elderly.*

*Can explain and understand the concepts behind the PCR technique and its application to the lab's work.*

Example professional development outcomes:

*To show my artwork in a gallery.*

*To attend a professional conference.*

*To create a writing sample/portfolio for graduate school applications.*

*To help me decide on my career options.*

* **Outcome 1:**
  + Student level at start of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Student level at end of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Describe gains or progress made:
* **Outcome 2:**
  + Student level at start of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Student level at end of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Describe gains or progress made:
* **Outcome 3:**
  + Student level at start of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Student level at end of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Describe gains or progress made:
* **Outcome 4:**
  + Student level at start of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Student level at end of project: *(no experience, beginning, adequate, advanced)*
  + Describe gains or progress made:

**Student signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor signature:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_