VIMS Summer REU Program
Mentor-Mentee Expectations

The quality of summer research experience depends greatly on developing a productive mentor-mentee relationship early in the summer. Your mentor is an expert who has chosen a career in research and education, and thus has a great deal of experience working with students and helping them to succeed. Take advantage of those experiences and skills. A mentoring experience is more than simply supervisor-employee relationship. He or she will be your primary source of support throughout the summer program. However, a strong mentor-mentee relationship is not top-down; rather, it requires contributions from both parties and a mutual understanding of the expectations and responsibilities.

What is Mentoring? (from http://www.pathwaystoscience.org/; NASA FIRST Mentoring Program Handbook (2008)

Mentoring is giving your time, attention, insights, and advice. Mentoring is about helping a mentee develop social [connections and resources] within an environment where they have the resources and support to develop technical and intellectual capital. Simply providing resources for a mentee to accomplish a research project (i.e. develop technical/intellectual capital) is not mentoring. That is the minimum requirement to setup an appropriate learning environment. Mentoring takes place in the personal interactions with the mentee.

What is a mentee?

A mentee is a self-motivated individual seeking to continuously promote personal development. A mentee recognizes personal strengths and weaknesses and actively seeks methods for personal growth. […] A successful mentoring relationship not only depends on the characteristics of the mentor, but also on the characteristics of the mentee.

REU Program Expectations and Responsibilities

• Participate fully in orientation week.
• Working with your mentor, craft a research project that can be completed within the 10 research weeks of the program. Write a proposal for that project to be shared with your mentor and the VIMS community.
• Prepare and give a 5-7 minute talk about your research proposal to your peers (Prospectus Presentations).
• Conduct your summer research project.
• Write and submit by the end of the program a scientific paper about your project.
• Prepare and give a 15-minute talk about your research at the REU Final Presentations Program in August.
• Participate in all required professional development activities (Field Trips/Friday seminars/workshops) as well as all other program activities that do not interfere with research.
• Attend lab meetings or other appropriate gatherings to integrate into the laboratory.
• Volunteer to help other faculty and REUs with their research as opportunities present themselves and your research responsibilities allow.
• Support your fellow REU students.
• Experience what it means to work at a marine research laboratory.
• Have fun learning.

REU Mentee Responsibilities

• Work with your mentor to develop your summer research project and the written and oral activities associated with it.
• Meet with your faculty mentor, post doc or graduate student supervisor, or laboratory technician regularly to ensure you are meeting your research and summer goals.
• Come prepared to meetings with your mentors. Bring requested materials. Ask questions. Bring concerns. Discuss timelines and deadlines. Seek to fully understand what is expected of you.
• Be respectful and professional.
• Be timely and diligent. Meet program deadlines and deadlines set by your mentor.
• Communicate with your mentors about personal and program responsibilities, as well as scheduled events.
• Participate fully in the experience. Integrate into the laboratory and seek opportunities to help your lab mates and fellow REUs as time allows.
• Work a 40-hour work week (roughly 8:30 am-5:00 pm with ½ hour for lunch, but exact hours can be discussed with your mentor)

Mentor Responsibilities

• Allow students time to attend REU orientation activities, REU Program field trips, and REU professional development seminars and activities (typically on Fridays).
• Work with your REU to develop a mutually acceptable research project.
• Meet with your REU on a regular basis to discuss project status, provide guidance and feedback, and address questions and concerns.
• Communicate expectations about laboratory practices, research project(s), schedules, time commitments, laboratory meetings, etc.
• Integrate your student into the laboratory and expose students to "the culture of science."
• Provide feedback on student skills and progress as well as the proposal, presentations, and final paper.
• Help your REU to understand the broader culture of science, graduate school and career paths, as well as the responsibilities of scientists and ethical dilemmas they face.

Problems/Issues

If you encounter any problems with your mentor, mentee, or the program, please contact the REU Program Coordinator, Grace Massey or Grace.Massey@vims.edu; or Program Director, Rochelle Seitz, seitz@vims.edu

Mentor-Mentee Agreements

Sometimes it is helpful to create a structure for communicating with your mentor-mentee to ensure expectations are being met by all individuals and nothing falls through the cracks. There are many different ways to ensure communication remains open and productive. Below are some suggested considerations initiate those conversations before signing below.

Mentor-Mentee Communication Plan: How and when will we meet? Formal/Informal? How will we communicate outside formal meetings? Who can I talk with when my mentor is unavailable? Who will be the day-to-day supervisor of my work? How do lab meetings work and does everyone go? What is the best way for us to be in touch and to schedule meetings?
Insert comments:

Work schedule: When am I expected to be in the lab/field? When will I be unavailable? When will my mentor be unavailable?
Insert comments:

Other Discussed Expectations or Responsibilities:
Insert comments:

Student's Name (print): _____Faculty Mentor (print): _____

Signature/Date: _____Signature/Date: _____

Daily supervisor OR Graduate Student Mentor name (print): _____

Signature/Date: _____