



CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY  
**OFFICE OF STUDENT RESEARCH  
AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

### **Summer Scholars Faculty Mentor Expectations 2025**

The role of the mentor begins with the application. Mentors should help students formulate an interesting and viable project, work collaboratively to complete the application, and provide a letter of support.

Over the summer, the faculty mentor guides the student's research. The Summer Scholars Program has a full slate of workshops and activities that provide students with community and support, and we also have various steps to help students pace their research progress. The students in the Summer Scholars Program thus do not rely entirely upon their faculty mentors. The faculty mentor, though, is someone with research expertise and content area knowledge, so the mentor can provide more precise guidance in terms of formulating research questions, locating sources, formatting data, etc.

Faculty do not need to be on campus all summer to serve as faculty mentors. We recognize that summer research, and even a holiday, can take faculty off-campus. In-person meetings with students are of course ideal, but in this day of long-distance collaboration and telecommuting there are a variety of modes for faculty to mentor student projects. We leave the particulars of the mentoring relationship to individual faculty members, although we do ask that you communicate steadily with students in some form throughout the 8-week session.

Below you can find more specifics about responsibilities and tips for mentoring summer scholars.

#### **Before the summer:**

- Work with the student to design a project (or a task within your own project) that best suits their goals. A successful project will draw on the students' interests and academic/career aspirations, as well as your own areas of specialty.
- Define clear expectations for the project. What would qualify as a successful project for you? Many students, especially in the sciences, will get anxious over "failed" experiment results, even if those results are interesting and publishable in their own right.
- Define clear expectations for your working relationship. Explain what you expect from the student, and ask what help and support they expect from you.
- Decide when and how you will meet or communicate with your student. Establish a schedule of meetings, and stick to it. You will likely need to meet frequently in the beginning stages of the project, and less often as the students get their bearings. Meetings can be in person, via video conference, or via email if necessary (though in person meetings are best). Let your student know the best way to reach you, and when you will be unreachable. Let the student know this schedule so they do not panic when you don't reply. Please make sure to be honest with your students about your availability, so that they do not expect more out of you than you can give.
- If applicable, consider providing articles or references about the previous and current

research related to your project before the start of the summer, so that student can leap in once the program begins. Also consider offering any required training or orientations early. It might be useful to instruct them in lab protocols or to show them how to use online databases before the summer begins.

- Be prepared for students to begin working on the first day, and have things ready for them to do. Do not worry about overburdening these students – they have been selected because of their exceptional academic record. You can always adjust the workload later on if they seem to be struggling.
- Attend the Summer Scholars Faculty Mentor Orientation session to be held virtually in May 2025.

### **During the summer:**

- As applicable, set up a working schedule. When will your student be giving you written work? How will they structure their time and scholarly activities? What will “good progress” look like?
- Encourage your students to attend activities (both academic and social) hosted by the ORCA. Summer sessions can be isolating for undergraduates, and it is important to involve them as much as possible.
- Work with your student on their presentation for both the Showcase (in August, if they can attend) and the Symposium (in September). You might have comments on the content as well as the presentation form itself. This is a great moment to mentor students on professional presentations – what makes an effective poster, what is the best way use PowerPoint, how do you pace and time a conference talk, how do you prepare for Q and A, etc. (If there are any findings that you do not want your students to present— for example, if you are waiting for a patent or want to publish your research before it is made publicly available – be sure your student knows that).
- Please be sure to remain in communication with your Summer Scholar throughout the project, including the period leading up the summer, including timely e-mail correspondence.
- Your moral support of your Summer Scholar is very important. Please plan to attend the Welcome Picnic, the Shirting Ceremony, and the Symposium in September.

### **After the summer:**

- If possible, showcase student work within your department through newsletters, hanging posters or photographs, research talks, etc. This can inspire other students to engage in undergraduate research as well.
- Encourage your student to disseminate the results of their research at meetings, conferences, competitions, and through publication. The ORCA offers Research LENS Travel monies throughout the year (with four quarterly deadlines), and maintains a list of research journals that publish undergraduate work.

If at any time in the process you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the ORCA. We are happy to help.

Effective mentoring is a key component for successful undergraduate research learning experiences. To ensure mentor preparation and implementation of best practices, ORCA will provide gateway education, professional development, and training resources.

Mentees will be encouraged to reach out to the ORCA Director with any concerns regarding the mentoring environment during Summer Scholars. Mentoring agreements submitted at the beginning of Summer Scholars empower mentors and mentees to communicate about expectations and policies. These agreements establish roles and practices for both mentees and mentors. Mentors may fail to fulfill their obligations through the following:

1. Demonstrating behaviors that jeopardize the students' learning through the research experience.
2. Failure to show up for scheduled meetings, collaborative work, or research times without communicating with the mentee.
3. Failure to approve timesheets or otherwise withholding pay for work completed by the mentee.
4. Failure to satisfy the mentoring agreement with regards to work expectations, effective communication with the mentee, satisfying commitments, or working within the defined structures or workplace rules.

On the rare occasion that a faculty or staff member is unable to fulfill the obligations as a research mentor, then one of the following may occur:

1. Intervention mediation by the Director.
2. The Summer Scholar may be re-assigned within the program to help their learning.