# Reflections for Undergraduate Mentees

The Duke URS office is piloting the use of these documents to support effective mentoring relationships between undergraduate students and their mentors. Research shows that intentionality in the mentoring relationship can promote positive outcomes for both parties (1). The following reflection questions are designed to help mentees identify their priorities, motivations, and goals in preparation for a conversation with their mentor, who will also complete their own reflection questions. Not all questions will seem directly relevant, so it is perfectly acceptable to focus on those that best align with the type of research being conducted. Mentors and mentees should then meet to discuss their responses and complete the “Mentor-Mentee Expectations Agreement” to align expectations and foster a productive research experience.

## Undergraduate Research Trainee Expectations

Students should take time to reflect on these questions and be prepared to discuss their responses with their mentor.

1. Why do you want to do research?

1. What are your career goals? Discuss any steps, resources, and training necessary to accomplish these goals. How can this research experience and the mentor–mentee relationship help you achieve them?

1. What would success in this research experience look like to you?

1. How many hours per week and at what times/days do you expect to work on this research? Is this work expected to be in done in a specific place?

1. Assuming a good fit, how long do you expect to work with this mentor/research group? Do you want to write a senior thesis?

1. What, if any, specific methodologies, technical, or communication skills do you expect or want to learn as part of the research experience?
2. Will the research that you will be involved in be confidential? Are you allowed to discuss your project with other individuals outside of your research group/mentor?

1. What role will your mentor play in the development of your skills as a writer? Is your mentor willing to help you with your research-related writing along the way or does he/she only want to read it after it is in its final version? Does your mentor have suggestions of people that could proofread your writings?
2. If you have previous research experience, what skills do you expect to bring to your new research group?

In addition to the responses to the questions above, be prepared to discuss the following topics with your mentor:

* Expectations for the mentee’s attendance at group or departmental seminars
* How often the mentee should expect to receive feedback regarding overall progress
* The best mode/way to communicate with each other and expected response time
* The best way to agree on action items
* Other preferences your or your mentor have for your working relationship

**Additional Prompts for Lab Research:**

1. How do you learn best (written procedure, verbal instructions, watch and repeat, etc.). What can your mentor do to help you learn the techniques and skills in a timely manner that you need to be successful in your research lab? What can you do before you start in the lab to allow you to be successful in this research group?

1. Once you are trained in basic techniques, would you prefer to continue to work closely with others (e.g. on a team project), or independently? Do you prefer that your mentor watch closely what you do, or do you prefer a hands-off approach to being supervised?

1. How will you document your research results? Is there a specific protocol for keeping a laboratory notebook in your research group?

1. To whom do you expect to go if you have questions about your research project? Does your mentor expect you to come solely (or first) to them, or should you feel free to ask others in the research group? If others, can your mentor identify those in the group who would be good resource people for your project?

1. Are you comfortable with the methodology and techniques used in the lab? Does it involve the use of animals, for example? Does it involve lengthy field trips where you might be isolated with other researchers for weeks at a time? How do you feel about that?
2. Do you know all the institutional safety and ethics training that is required to work in your research project? Discuss the required training with your mentor and establish a deadline by which you should complete it.