



Policy on Faculty Mentors of Undergraduate Research

The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) helps students get involved with research, scholarship, and creative projects with a faculty mentor. Research and scholarship is a process of careful inquiry leading to the discovery of new information, products, and/or creative work. This scholarship is informed by the current primary literature to elucidate gaps in the knowledge base. It also can come in the form of scholarly creative work. This process occurs in all majors and programs at UCF and can greatly heighten the undergraduate academic experience. For the purpose of the programs offered through OUR, undergraduate researchers must comply with the following:

- Students must have a faculty mentor affiliated with UCF to endorse the work. Many of our dissemination opportunities also allow faculty from other institutions to serve as faculty mentors. See additional information below for who can serve as a faculty mentor.
- The research project involves systematic inquiry (define a research question), design (apply methods of analysis to generate results), implementation, and dissemination of findings. Examples may include developing scientific experiments, analyzing literature, and creating new models. This work culminates in knowledge advancement in the respective discipline(s). OUR supports all creative endeavors as well (including artwork, writing, and composing music).

Who is eligible to mentor undergraduates in research?

Faculty mentors make a valuable contribution to the training and development of undergraduate researchers. They serve as content reviewers and guide students throughout the research process. For the purpose of the programs offered through OUR, the basic criteria for serving as a faculty mentor are:

- Full-time UCF faculty status
- Expertise in areas compatible with the intended research project and, usually, a terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., MFA) from a university
- Qualified faculty members from outside institutions (e.g., other university, federal research institutes) may serve as faculty mentors for those presenting at the annual Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE), seeking Travel Awards to present at external conferences, or publishing in UCF's Undergraduate Research Journal (URJ). Please contact OUR for more details.

While these faculty are typically tenured or tenure-seeking with titles of Assistant, Associate, Professor, or Emeritus status, exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis with the support of the appropriate department chair. For instance, most Instructors and Lecturers, as well as some adjunct faculty, may serve as mentors if they have a terminal degree and the consent from their department chair. Graduate students and postdoctoral associates might also play a role in mentoring with the consent of their research faculty advisor who meets the above qualifications.

If you are unsure whether a mentor meets these criteria, please contact OUR.