Mentor Checklist

*Follow these steps when you first have a student get started doing research.*

# Establish clear expectations

* Set student work schedule and a plan for what the student should do if they can’t come to work on a given day.
* Set times for regular meetings and establish expectations for those meetings.
* Make it clear who the students should ask questions to (a graduate student, professor, etc.) and the preferred method of communication (email, drop-in meetings, etc.).
* Get the student’s contact information (phone number, email) and emergency contact information.
* Introduce the student to other people and give them a tour of the work space. Make sure they know which parts of the space they have access to (for example, if they can use the refrigerator).
* If the student is enrolled for course credit, discuss the criteria for giving a grade and any expected product or paper due at the end of the semester.
* Get to know your student: talk about their major, career goals, and ideas about what they would like to get out of the research experience so you can tailor the experience to their goals.
* (If applicable) Give student a lab notebook or other way that they should document their work.

# Before the student starts working

* **Volunteer form:** If the student is volunteering as a research assistant and is not enrolled in course credit, they should fill out the Volunteer Registration Form & submit it to Human Resources: <http://humanresources.ku.edu/sites/humanresources.ku.edu/files/docs/Volunteer_Form.pdf>
* **Online safety training:** Students in labs & arts should complete all relevant safety training through KU Environmental Health & Safety: <http://ehs.ku.edu/ehs-course-list> Mentors should keep documentation that students completed relevant trainings.
* **Orient to safety equipment and hazards:** Students should complete any safety training particular to your lab or research group before they start working with equipment. Give the student a tour of the space, being sure to point out any safety hazards (radioactive materials, etc.). Show students how to operate any safety equipment like eyewash stations; you may want to demonstrate this a few times so the student is comfortable enough to use it in an emergency.
* **Human subjects & IRB approval:** If working on a project that involves human subjects, make sure student has completed human subjects training: <https://research.ku.edu/human_research_protection_program>. If the student will need to get IRB approval before starting on a project, explain how that process works to them and help initiate that process.

# Discuss the project

* Have students watch the “Research Cycle” video (<http://ugresearch.ku.edu/student/researchbytes/researchcycle> ). For students joining an ongoing project, walk through each step of the cycle using the example of your research. Explain how whatever part of the project they will be working on fits into the big picture. For students who will be starting a new project, give a big-picture overview of what you know about the area they are interested in and suggest possible readings or gaps in the research where the student might want to position their research project.
* Give students a few journal articles to read that are central to the research topic and ask them to write summaries or plan to discuss them with you. You can ask them to watch these videos about how to read a journal article (<http://ugresearch.ku.edu/student/researchbytes> ) or offer other advice to guide their reading.

# Define the first steps

* Set some clear goals for the first couple weeks of the research experience so the student knows what to expect.
* You may want this initial period to assess the student’s current background knowledge & skill level, and then you can make a more long-term plan. Many mentors fill out an Undergraduate Research Contract with their students or do something similar to the “milestones” section: <http://ugresearch.ku.edu/mentor/research-contract>