

Expectations when collaborating with a faculty member

On research, scholarship or a creative project

In this document:

- **What do faculty expect me to be able to do when working with them?**
- **What types of tasks will faculty give me to do?**
- **How may I ensure that my experience working with faculty is meaningful?**

What do faculty expect me to be able to do when working with them?

In general, faculty expect students to:

- be interested in the work they will conduct with the faculty member
- be willing to work hard and give 100% of their effort while they are working with the faculty member
- commit to working with them for an agreed-upon number of hours per week for an agreed-upon period of time
- think critically, analytically and creatively

What types of tasks will faculty give me to do?

Faculty have different expectations regarding the types of work students will perform, the kinds of products they expect students to produce, and the evaluation of student work. Faculty expectations may differ based on whether the student is receiving academic credit or financial compensation or volunteering, but in all cases, the student is expected to bring his/her "A" game. This is not a line on your CV; it's a commitment to conduct a project.

How may I ensure that my experience working with faculty is meaningful?

1. **Find a faculty member who is doing work that excites you.** How do you do this? Look at the faculty member's webpage. Read primary articles/books written by the faculty member – or at least read the article abstract or book summary. You are not expected to be an expert in the subject, but you are expected to be knowledgeable about what the research group is investigating and you need to be able to talk about what it is about the topic that excites you.
2. **Talk to the faculty member before committing to working with her/him.** Ask about the faculty member's expectations. Specifically ask about: the kind of work you will do, the products (manuscript, poster, oral presentation, etc.) you will be expected to produce, how you will be evaluated, the time commitment that will be expected of you, what you can expect to learn, whether you need any prior experience and/or courses.
3. **Be clear about your expectations upfront.** For example, if you would like a letter of recommendation or to be co-author on a scholarly publication, let the faculty member know that at the beginning and ask what you will need to do to achieve your goal. Agree on a plan of action for the semester to achieve benchmarks towards the agreed-upon goal.