

# **MENTORING UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS: BEST PRACTICES**

## **ADVICE FOR MENTORS**

- Set up a work plan with interns; outline both short and long-term goals and a timeframe for reaching them.
- Agree how often you will meet face-to-face and discuss what can be addressed via email.
- Encourage your interns to plan meeting agendas in a way that best fits their needs. The interns' job is to pose questions and to raise issues; a mentor's job is to respond and make suggestions based on their concerns. At the end of the meeting, ask the intern whether her goals have been met and her questions answered.
- Help interns break up large tasks into smaller ones so that they are not overwhelmed by the research and thesis writing process. Help interns to understand a linear flow or a series of stages within their larger research process.
- Have a system for remembering previous conversations with interns (e.g., an intern log-book, a file in which all meeting notes are kept, etc.) and follow up on issues interns have discussed previously.
- Encourage interns to take an active role in the critical feedback process. Have them specify what kind of feedback they seek on a particular draft or paper (With which sections do they seek most help? Do they have particular theoretical or methodological concerns?) Have them evaluate their own writing and bring their evaluations to your meetings.
- Temper criticism with praise when it is deserved. Remind interns that you are holding them to high standards because you believe they can meet those standards.