

Research Expectations, 2024

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This document outlines my expectations of you as a research student and what you can expect of me as a mentor. It is meant to avoid misunderstandings on both sides by placing expectations up front. If there are other items you would like to add on either side of this discussion, I am open to modifications.

Things you can expect during the research process and from your faculty mentor:

1. Expect to be taken on a journey of excitement, inspiration and challenge. Along the way, expect some hard times too; you will most likely feel frustrated or overwhelmed. It is possible you will feel like quitting, but those feelings are all normal and you should NOT quit!
2. Expect that a high standard of work will be required of you.
3. Expect that drafts of your research paper will be revised many times (maybe as many as 10-25 times).
4. Expect to take advantage of the resources at your disposal. Your peers, other faculty, the Writing Center, the Quantitative and Analytical Reasoning Center, the Computer Center and Science Support Center may all be important resources for you in addition to your faculty mentor.
5. Expect to manage your time efficiently and keep track of your weekly work. If you are doing research as a full-time student (16-credits) you are expected to work at least 40 hours per week (pro-rate this hourly expectation based on the numbers of credits you are pursuing). It benefits you to keep careful records of what you do each day and turn in your weekly timesheet (by email) at the end of every week along with a paragraph summarizing what you worked on, any difficulties you had, and your plan for the following week. It is your responsibility to stay on track and keep your faculty mentor up-to-date. Your work will often be carried out independently and it is your responsibility to seek help and input when necessary.
6. Expect to develop good research habits. Pay attention to detail, keep accurate records, and extend your critical thinking skills. Hone your organizational and self-management skills to save both time and headaches. Successfully managing a research project requires motivation, self-discipline, and cooperation with others. Things will not always run smoothly and plans sometimes go awry, so be prepared for the unexpected.
7. Expect that your faculty mentor will provide comments on research paper drafts within 1-2 weeks of receipt. Do not hesitate to send a reminder email if you have not heard back from me after 1 week.
8. Expect constructive criticism. Although receiving criticism can be disheartening, feedback is intended to encourage your thinking and writing abilities. The end result will be a clearer and more coherent paper of a high standard. Try not to take constructive criticism personally.
9. Expect to receive writing style critique. Every paragraph should start with a topic sentence which summarizes the entire paragraph. If it does not, then the paragraph needs to be split into several to maintain organization. Every sentence within the paragraph should support the main idea, every paragraph should support the main argument of the section, and evidence needs to be presented and cited throughout the paper to support claims.
10. Expect your faculty mentor to point you in research directions and provide guidance, but not to directly provide you with resources except under special circumstances. It is your responsibility to seek out appropriate resources, do exhaustive research and critically think about your research.
11. Expect your faculty mentor to be open to your ideas, provide a sounding board for your thoughts, and provide you constructive criticism.

12. Expect your faculty mentor to provide you with encouragement, support and a safe learning environment – in both the lab and in the field. Please raise any issues of concern with your faculty mentor immediately.
13. Expect to meet with your faculty mentor on a weekly basis unless some other schedule is provided.
14. Expect to work with peers to improve your research – please proofread and peer-review all of your writing before you send it to faculty whenever possible.

Things I expect of you as a research student:

1. I expect that you are academically competent, can handle the theories and major concepts in your area, but will acknowledge and work on any weaknesses or acquire any necessary technical or research skills you lack.
2. I expect you to read primary research articles to support your research and keep an organized and detailed Annotated Bibliography (read and write about at least one article per week). Turn this in bi-weekly on Fridays.
2. I expect that you are able to express yourself professionally both orally and in writing. Remember, although my role is to guide you in using appropriate discipline-specific language conventions, the writing is your responsibility.
3. I expect that you keep me informed about the progress of your work and whether you are facing any problems.
4. I expect that you can organize your time, meet deadlines, and that you will ask for help when you need it. You will keep a detailed timesheet and turn it in on the Friday of each week.
5. I expect a detailed timeline of your research plan – and I expect to be kept updated in terms of deviations.
6. I expect to see research proposals and paper drafts frequently for revision.
7. I expect you to interact with me in a respectful, professional manner, even by email. You can call or text me in an emergency, but I prefer email as the main contact method.
8. I expect that you will work to maintain a professional relationship with me and that we will both put in the thought and energy to keep it working. If at any time you are unhappy with this relationship, I expect that you will first discuss it with me, then, if it is not resolved, discuss it with other EEON faculty or a Dean.
9. I expect that you attend weekly meetings with me and other research students (either an organized EEON lab meeting or an organized group meeting on your project – or both).
10. I expect that you will provide me with drafts of your writing with 1-2 weeks for my review and edits.
11. I expect that you will do your absolute best to make the changes I recommend to your writing – you will likely need to go through many drafts prior to your research being acceptable for publication.
12. Early in the process you will need to do paperwork for the college in preparation for your field and lab work. Please find the appropriate forms in the Science Support Center, fill them out, get them signed and turn them in.
13. If you use any lab, clean up after yourself, always lock the door and don't share access with others. You will be asked to help with a big clean-up at the end of the quarter. Organization and sharing are key!

Research student

Date

Faculty mentor

Date

Carri J. LeRoy, Ph.D.

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LeRoy Freshwater Ecology Lab

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