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**SEEDS Partnerships for Undergraduate Research (SPUR)**

**Expectations for Mentors**

The SPUR Fellowship is the highest honor in the SEEDS program, and fellows are encouraged to be the outstanding leaders in the future of ESA. The Fellowship supports the undergraduate student in designing and conducting an ecology research project of their interest. SEEDS has established a partnership with field stations and mentors to offer rich summer research opportunities tailored to meet the students’ interests, career objectives and growth as a scientist. Additionally, SEEDS provides leadership development opportunities before and after the summer experience through our annual SEEDS Leadership Meetings. SEEDS will also support Fellows in delivering their research findings at the ESA Annual Meeting in the following summer. Information about SPUR is available at [www.esa.org/fellows](http://www.esa.org/fellows).

The success of the SPUR program depends upon mentoring provided by mentors to students. The goal is to foster a positive, supportive relationship with the mentee. The mentor is to guide the Fellow/s from a relatively dependent to as independent status as their research competency grows. Mentors must be prepared to spend time and energy teaching the mentee about the project. This includes key ecological concepts, field techniques, research design and statistical methods. We also hope that mentors will facilitate career information, networking and professional skills development.

***Before the summer***

1. Participate in the interviewing and hiring process of student(s):
   1. Review applications and comments from SEEDS staff interview with applicants.
   2. Schedule interview with students. Be explicit during the interview and hiring process regarding what the student will be doing, hours needed to work, working conditions, scope of independence they will have in their work, etc.
   3. Inform SEEDS staff regarding decisions.
   4. Notify the student(s) your have selected via email, cc to SEEDS staff.
   5. Complete the Summer Research Information form and send it back to SEEDS staff.
   6. Forward any hiring documents to students specifying when those are due back.
   7. Provide project background information/reading before start of the summer program.
   8. Encourage students to think about some research questions they might like to pursue.
2. Participate in a conference call with SEEDS staff to go over expectations and questions.
3. Be familiar with the ESA Code of Ethics: <http://www.esa.org/esa/about/governance/esa-code-of-ethics/>. Ensure that all graduate students who will be significantly involved with Fellow/s are also familiar with the ESA Code of Ethics.

***During the Summer***

**Weekly:**

1. Meet regularly with student(s) to discuss:
   * The overall research project.
   * Data analysis (1-2 hours a week of statistics).
   * Student progress including concerns, questions, and other research opportunities.

**Weeks 1 - 2:**

1. Identify and introduce someone on site whom Fellows’ can turn to for their day-to-day concerns or who can help address immediate issues if you are not present. This can be a the resident advisor, graduate student, or some other station personnel.
2. Provide an orientation to the field station and residence and any policies and procedures that students should be aware of, including safety, what to do in case of emergency or sickness or injury etc.
3. Discuss summer expectations and the Individual Development Plan (IDP) of Fellow/s.
4. Work with student(s) daily for the first 2 weeks of the program to design research questions and methodologies. If graduate students will be significantly involved in guiding students, please include them in the discussion as appropriate with sensitivity to allowing students to create their independent research. Keep in mind that Fellows may not have any prior research experience.
5. Offer some training in field techniques and statistical analysis. The sooner that students may be introduced to data analysis methods, the better things will be in the research process.
6. Provide ESA SEEDS staff with schedule of enrichment activities that you expect students to participate in: scientific seminars, education and outreach activities etc.
7. At the end of Week 2, students are required to submit a 2 page research proposal. Mentors are asked to provide feedback and work with student(s) to define a research question, methods and materials needed. Please refer to the SPUR Proposal Guidelines for developing a research proposal. We would like students to be able to complete all sections of the proposal. They will very likely need your recommendation on which papers to read for the literature review and statistical methods that will be used for the project. The research proposal will also need to be submitted to SEEDS once you sign off.

**Weeks 3 - 4:**

1. Meet at least twice a week with student(s) to discuss research, data, and student progress.

**Rest of the Summer (Weeks 5-11 as relevant)**

1. Meet regularly with student(s), **at least once a week** to discuss research, data, and student progress.
2. Provide reasonable amount of work time for student to prepare for a presentation on site (if organized).
3. Be available (in person, via email or telephone) during the last two weeks of the program to provide assistance to the student in preparing for any presentation at your site.
4. Wrap-up up all project related issues three days before the end of the summer research.
5. Complete the SEEDS mentor evaluation survey within one week of the summer experience.

Other considerations

1. Mentors have a powerful impact on students. Your words, listening, attitude, time and coaching are very important to students.
2. Take the time to get to know your students as a person. H/She may be far away from home for the first time. Do help Fellows settle comfortably within the community by including them in community activities and introducing them to others.
3. Please be punctual for all appointments with Fellows.
4. Please commit a reasonable amount of time during work hours for students to conduct the necessary research and provide guidance on experimental design and analysis. Those who have not had previous research exposure are particularly in need of attention. Please also be understanding that students may not have the specific background for your research opportunity even if they have had prior research experience.
5. If you have more than one student, please be mindful that you offer enough support and guidance so both will flourish under your mentorship.
6. Do encourage Fellows to post photos and updates on the SEEDS FaceBook page.

***After the Summer***

We encourage you to retain contact with your students into the future.

1. If appropriate, continue working with the student in further developing his/her research.
2. In January and February, provide feedback on the abstract proposal to present at the ESA meeting
3. In Spring, provide feedback on the research presentation to be delivered at the Leadership Meeting and ESA annual meeting
4. Inform student of any other opportunities for career development e.g. workshops or scientific meetings or research opportunities etc.
5. Update SEEDS staff about student(s) contribution to presentations, publications, etc.

Contact Teresa Mourad [teresa@esa.org](mailto:teresa@esa.org) or Fred Abbott [fred@esa.org](mailto:fred@esa.org) at ESA at any time to discuss questions, comments and concerns you may about your student or the program.

**Checklist of items to submit to ESA**

1. CC email notification of offer to student/s.
2. Completed and signed Summer Research Information Form.
3. Schedule of enrichment activities that students may participate in: scientific seminars, education and outreach activities etc. Please provide dates, times, speakers, topics or activity description. Include the end of summer symposium for student presentations if you are arranging one.
4. Approved Research Proposal (to be submitted by student)
5. SEEDS Evaluation survey of Fellowship experience

Please submit required items to Fred Abbott, ESA Diversity Programs Coordinator at

202-833-8773 or [fred@esa.org](mailto:fred@esa.org)