Biology 499R, Research for Credit
Faculty/Mentor Information

Independent research can play a pivotal role in the intellectual development of undergraduates. While their training can be time consuming for all involved, it is also incredibly rewarding.

As a potential mentor for undergraduate researcher in your laboratory who is taking Biol 499R, the research for credit program, you should be aware that:

- In registering for Bio499, students are agreeing to do research in your lab for at least two semesters. The student is agreeing to work ~12-16 hours per week in and out of the lab on their project. Failure to do so should result in a lower grade.
- Students will work on a project both semesters, gaining more independence throughout the year. They should ultimately understand the scientific background, design experiments, analyze data, and report conclusions. In intellectual ownership, they are more than just work/study laborers, but they are not yet at the level of graduate students. Your mentorship will help them develop their scientific knowledge and skills.
- Students are expected to arrange meetings with their faculty mentor minimally three times during the semester. Students should also meet regularly with the faculty mentor or with their more direct mentor (sometimes a postdoctoral fellow or graduate student) initially to discuss expectations for the project and thereafter to review their progress. Poor communication by the student should result in a lower grade.
- Students must also attend four course meetings about research and science communication skills during the semester and turn in several assignments before their final project report or poster. We welcome your support of your students’ efforts on these preliminary assignments, but your signature of approval is only required for the final report/poster.
- At the end of the fall semester, the student will submit a research report. The report should include the background information on the area of research and the methods used, any data gathered, and analyses completed. The format of this report should follow that used in a scientific journal appropriate to your field.
- In the spring semester, the student must present a poster at the Biology Undergraduate Research Symposium.
- You are asked to help the students deal with the inevitable experimental complications or failures but also help them develop organizational skills and resilience. Projects are commonly incomplete at the end of a semester; preliminary results and future directions should then be included in the report/poster.
- You will give the student a grade based on the level to which s/he met expectations discussed at the beginning of the semester with respect to learning the field, working in the lab, and writing the report/poster.