



## Exit Interview Checklist for Summer Undergraduate Research Experiences

Congratulations on nearing the completion of your summer research experience! While you've been communicating with your mentor/s throughout the summer, it's important to schedule a debrief meeting so that you can thank your mentors, get some feedback on your progress throughout the summer, close out your work, and get input and advice on your next steps academically and professionally. You should schedule your exit interview in advance, asking your mentor/s if you can have ~30 minutes of their time sometime during the last day or two of your work.

### Topics for exit interviews include:

- Appreciation** – Think back to when you started your summer research experience (oh those long 9-10 weeks ago) and all that you've gained from your experience with your research group. Articulate these gains and thank your mentor/s for helping you to move forward.
- Performance feedback** – Ask your mentor/s to assess your research competencies. I.e., what do they see as key strengths you've developed this summer and what are some areas in which you can continue to grow in the future? Do they have any resources or advice on ways that you can continue to build your skills?
- Wrapping up your work** – Cleaning up your work space, leaving your lab notebook/research notes in good order, and offering to help walk others through your notes and/or pass off your work to another research group member, is a great way to ensure that the project is left in good shape. It's also a great way to leave your colleagues with a final positive impression of you.
- Ongoing involvement** – Are there ways you might remain engaged in the work after the summer? E.g., might there be opportunities to publish with the group? If so, what role do you mentor/s foresee for you in remaining in contact with the team on this work?
- The Big Ask: Letter of recommendation/reference** – While you may not yet know where you'll be applying for graduate or professional programs, or what jobs or fellowships you may wish to compete for, it's not too early to ask if your mentor/s would be willing to provide you with a letter of recommendation and/or serve as a reference in the future (given plenty of advanced notice, of course).
- Big picture advice** – Do your mentors have any thoughts on your future academic/career path? Are there people whom your PI would recommend you speak to or other programs they think you might consider participating?

The best undergraduate research exit interviews provide meaningful feedback and also a framework for staying connected with the work and people whom you've engaged with this summer. You should plan to take initiative in the future to remain in touch periodically. Consider sending a brief email update to say hello and note any upcoming academic/career plans and/or other accomplishments.