

TO THE ADVISORS OF FIRST-YEAR SUMMER RESEARCH PROJECTS

Thank you for your interest in advising a student for a First-Year Summer Research Project (FYSRP). It is your participation that makes this program a success and we look forward to fostering a greater connection between faculty and students in their first year.

We have created this FAQ sheet for students to hand to their advisors as a way of starting a conversation about what students and faculty advisors can expect from each other and from the First-Year Office. Here are some questions we are commonly asked by faculty who participate in the program:

What is the First Year Summer Research Project?

The FYSRP gives students an opportunity to pursue independent research under the supervision of a Dartmouth professor in the summer following their first year of study. The Project's purpose is to introduce students to the pleasure of creative scholarship and the satisfaction of collaboration with Dartmouth faculty. A student may research a topic related to an intended major or pursue an interest in an entirely unrelated field of study. Through the Fall and Winter terms, the First-Year Office promotes this program to students. More information can be found at our website:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~frstyear/work/fysr.html>

Students are expected to confer with their faculty advisor, develop a project idea, and submit a proposal and recommendation letters by the end of Winter term (March 17).

What are my responsibilities as an advisor?

Students are encouraged to work with a professor as they put together a proposal, so that faculty can provide initial guidance on the scope and feasibility of the proposed research. Since first-year students may not have met a lot of faculty members yet, they may approach faculty whose research interests are close to the area they wish to study. In initial conversations, a student may ask if there is anyone you know who might be able to guide them further. If you feel it appropriate, you can consent to being their advisor and write them a letter that comments upon the nature of the research problem, and what the student and you have discussed about your expectations of each other.

As an advisor, we ask you to assist in the design of the project and to help establish criteria for a final report. We also ask that you supervise the project by having regular contact (by phone or e-mail for off-campus projects) with your student advisee throughout the summer. In your recommendation letter, please comment on the quality and feasibility of the proposed research as well as any insight you may have as to the student's ability to complete the project.

Do I need to be on campus during the summer to advise a student?

First-year students will normally conduct research away from Dartmouth, so there is no “residency” requirement for faculty advisors. If you are a faculty member outside of Dartmouth, we do ask that you include in your recommendation letter an outline of how you and the student intend to keep in contact with one another during the project period.

How can a first-year student conduct significant research if he/she has not completed significant course work in the appropriate research methodology?

This is the question we are most often asked by FYSRP faculty advisors. Of course, first-year students are often novices and occasionally naïve about what it takes to complete research, especially in the social sciences. However, the purpose of the FYSRP is to acquaint students with the *idea* of doing research. Conversations about methodological concerns often make for great learning moments that may lead students to take additional courses on how to conduct research. That said, if what the student is proposing is either too ambitious, fundamentally flawed, or even too naïve in its goals and methodology, we hope you will discuss this with the student directly and give them insights as to the importance of sound research design and the difficulty in doing reputable research.

Who do I call if I have questions?

The First-Year Summer Research Project is sponsored by the First-Year Office and many of your questions and concerns can be addressed by calling us at (603) 646-2681. You are also welcome to stop by our office in Room 6 of Parkhurst Hall. The First-Year Deans (Gail Zimmerman, Leigh Remy, John Pfister, Colleen Larimore, and Meg Hancock) can be contacted individually, especially if students tell you that they have been discussing their project with one of us in particular.

A good student relationship with a Faculty Advisor is the key ingredient to a successful First-Year Summer Research Project experience. It is our hope that the conversations you will have with interested students will shape the way they think about doing research, give them confidence in approaching collaborative projects with faculty, and most importantly, foster the kinds of student-faculty interactions that are so important to success at Dartmouth.

Please feel free to contact us with questions and comments. Thank you very much for your contribution in continuing to make the program a success.