

Tips from Previous Project Supervisors

“The student selection process can easily turn out to be more time-consuming than expected. Don’t let this surprise you. Finding the right student for the project is worth a little extra time. For example, asking applicants for writing samples or other relevant materials can often be helpful when you have doubts or questions.”

“Student research assistants are expected to work independently, and most of them find this to be rewarding; however, there are limits to their independence. Even the best students cannot meet the needs of the neighborhood organization without being given clear objectives at the beginning and constructive feedback throughout the project.”

“Projects with realistic expectations as well as clearly defined parameters and goals are the most successful.”

“Be clear about the role and what is expected of the student research from the start.”

“Make sure both you and the student agree that the desired outcome can be achieved in the time available.”

“Do your best to anticipate supports the project will need (computer access, printed materials, mailing lists, etc.). Having them ready can prevent the project from getting slowed down.”

“The students are better able to stay focused on the objective if they understand the context of the research and the intended use of their results. Fill them in on the relevant background as much as you can, and share the organization’s vision with them. If they know why they are working on a project it will result in a better product.”

“If the project needs to be adjusted, always remember to layout clear guidelines for your researcher.”

“Continue to make sure the purpose of the project is understood by everyone. Regular meetings allow the research assistant to ask questions. You will also have the chance to evaluate together the work your researcher is doing and the progress of the project. If you sense confusion - talk about it.”

“Encourage the students to make use of their community and faculty mentors. These advisors are intended to be resource people for the project; consulting with them is part of the student’s job and an important part of the project.”