

Blugold Fellowship: FAQs for Mentors

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What are the goals of the Blugold Fellowship?

- To recruit and retain high achieving students to UW-Eau Claire
- To provide an early introduction to student/faculty research collaboration opportunities

How do students choose their projects?

Students look through abstract books, web pages, and lists of projects submitted to ORSP. In addition, they look at departmental web pages and talk to former Blugold Fellows. Once they select an area of interest they talk to various people in the departments.

If I agree to talk to a student do I have to be a mentor?

No. Many times the freshmen need to talk to a few people in order to understand their interests. My hope would be that you could be a valuable resource in helping them find a good project match.

Please note that some of them are still trying to understand where their interests lie, so even if it seems like they want to work with you it may change. (I have tried to coach them to be professional, but they are still getting their legs at the university).

What is the time commitment for the Blugold Fellowship?

Blugold Fellows work an average of five hours a week on their research projects for a total of 75 hours per semester. The project schedule is determined by the Blugold Fellow and you, their mentor. The students are paid bi-weekly for this work by the fellowship.

What additional benefits do the students get?

For both their freshmen and sophomore years they are awarded \$1500 in scholarship money, and their work stipend, \$1200.

Do they have to work five hours every week?

No. The basic guideline is that a student works about 150 hours over the course of a year. This allows you and the student to work around both of your schedules, including tests and absences, and allows you to do work over breaks and summer. It is whatever works best for the two of you.

Is there any other benefit?

There is a small amount of supplies money that is usually available. Typically it has been \$100 that is transferred into the differential tuition account of your department. Generally this is done over winter break. Larger amounts for travel and supplies are handled through ORSP.

Do mentors get paid?

At this time there are limited funds to pay faculty. In many departments working with students on research during the semester is expected; in this case the student is fully funded for two years. A small stipend is paid out at the end of the year.

Does the project have to last two years?

The expectation is that the student works for a couple of years in the same field so that they can delve deeper into their research area. A few projects end after a year and new ones are started with the same mentor. Oftentimes these second-year projects are driven by student ideas.

I have smaller projects, but not one that lasts two years. Is that all right?

Hopefully you have enough work to have the student work for a couple of years, as the ability to have continuity with mentors is preferred.

Can students work on more than one project at a time for the Blugold Fellowship?

Yes, but it is the hope that the mentors of both projects know about the other project. Sometimes this will work, as not all projects can fill the total time requirement. This type of arrangement should be discussed with the Blugold Fellowship director in order to avoid misunderstandings between all of the interested parties.

Can students get paid for the research they do with me?

They ARE paid to do research. It is not acceptable to get an additional grant to pay the students unless the hours they work in addition to the 4-5 hours per week. Examples of acceptable additional funding are when the work is done in Winterim, when the student works over the summer, or when they are doing MORE than the 75 hours per semester.

Can students come up with their own projects?

This is totally up to the mentor and the student. Some projects have come from students with an interest in an area, and they are looking for someone to bounce ideas off of and as a resource. Many times these projects have some connection with a faculty member's interests.

I don't do research with students because my area is rather unattainable. Can I still be a mentor?

See the previous question. Also note that sometimes you don't have to be an expert in an area to be a mentor. In addition you can sometimes come up with interesting concepts that are more than a term paper, but might not be considered research in your field. These are completely fine. Sometimes it takes stepping away from what is considered "real" research and looking at projects that teach a method of research. I don't know how groundbreaking reading of ancient Greek texts and summarizing them can be, but I have a fellow doing just that.

Does the mentor have to file reports?

No. The expectation is that the students will file reports every weeks with the Blugold Fellowship Director. Copies of these reports are automatically emailed to the mentor. Only if you dispute the report do you need to contact the director.

What output is expected from this project?

The expectation is that the research will result in a finished or presentable project at the end of the second year. The default for this is presenting a poster at Student Research Day. Other methods have included presentations at state or national meetings, papers, and involvement in community projects.

What if the student is not ready to present during their second year?

The hope is that there is some way to have a presentation come out of the project. If it is better to bypass research day, then the hope is that there is an opportunity to present at a later date. This could include a meeting after their time in the program has ended, or finishing up a poster at the end of their two years (i.e. in May) but waiting until the next year to present the work. If you are ever in doubt contact the Blugold Fellowship Director (715-836-5519 or blugoldfellowship@uwec.edu).

Can they work more than two years?

The funding for the Blugold Fellowship runs out after two years. Students can continue through ORSP sponsored research.

What happens if the students goes abroad?

The student will not be in the program that semester, but will have an additional semester of support their junior year. In this case the poster would be pushed back until the end of their junior year.
