Everything you need to know about the First-Year Honors Mentor Program

What is it?
Each spring, first-year Honors students are offered an opportunity to experience the world of research first-hand by working under the guidance of an Iowa State faculty mentor. It’s a unique opportunity to become involved in research early in your academic career.

How does it work?
The matching process begins in the fall. Here’s how it works:
- ISU faculty fill out an online profile that describes the research they are doing and what will be expected of their student mentees.
- You go online, describe your interests and skills, and select five faculty members with whom you’d be interested in working.
- You meet with the mentor and, if you both agree to work together, sign a contract.
- You will then spend 3 or 6 hours each week during Spring semester working with your mentor. Students can earn either one or two credits of Hon 290 for their work in the Mentor Program.

What kinds of research can I be involved in?
There are a wide range of research opportunities to choose from involving many disciplines & departments. You could work on a project that is in your field of study. You can pick a topic that helps you decide on a major, or you can explore a field you just enjoy.

What will be expected of me?
- A time commitment of 3 or 6 hours per week (you and your mentor decide which is appropriate)
- Completion of three evaluations/reflections:
  - Early online “check in”
  - Participation in midterm discussion group
  - Written final evaluation
- You will be graded on Satisfactory / Fail basis

Here’s what happens in the Fall:
- Early Oct: Students register online and choose faculty
- Mid Oct: Students & faculty matched on mutual interests
- Early Nov: Students & faculty notified of matches
- Mid Nov: Students & faculty discuss terms of mentorship, complete contract and register
- Nov 21: Contracts due
- Dec 1: Non-contracted positions open for rematch

Before the program, being at a research university was a vague concept that did not relate to my own life...research work has changed all of that. Participation in this program has helped me build a deeper understanding of ISU—the opportunities that are available here and the work that is done in the field of research.
How do I sign up?

- Go online - [https://sws.honors.iastate.edu/mentee/](https://sws.honors.iastate.edu/mentee/) The system is open from 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 1 to 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 7.
- Describe yourself: Personal information, academic interests, and skills
- Browse for potential mentors: Search the mentor info to find research topics that interest you and faculty with whom you’d like to work.
- Select your top five (5) potential mentors - **Be sure to set ‘Confirm Participation’ to YES by 5:00 October 7.**
- Wait until you hear from us about your match — we will notify you in the second week of November. Don’t sweat it if you’re not matched right away; there’s a lot of switching and adding afterwards.

Registration Tips

Your online profile is the mentor’s first introduction to who you are. When completing your profile be sure to:

**Write in complete sentences**
Whether you write in paragraphs or bullet points, using complete sentences conveys professionalism and thoughtfulness.

**List relevant information**
Write about experiences and skills that relate to the type of project you would like to work on.

**Save your information on your computer**
Type up your profile information and save on your computer. It makes it easier to edit and will be there just in case your browser eats your work.

**Edit before submitting**
Re-read your profile before submitting it. Correct any spelling or grammatical errors.

**When searching for a mentor:**

**Don’t just focus on your major**
The Mentor Program allows you to explore inside or outside of your major. Look for projects that can complement your major. Look for projects that suit your other interests (i.e., working with a mentor in Criminal Justice because you love crime shows). Look for projects in majors that you are considering or might pursue as a minor.

**Google the Mentor**
Investigate the research potential mentors focus on and what other projects they have worked on. This will give you more information on how your interests match up and the type of work you might do.

**Write down and save info on your “Top 5” mentors and why you liked them**
Once we close the registration site you won’t be able to access your preferences. Before you submit your preferences, write down the professors’ names, departments, and project titles. This list will help you remember who you chose and why you selected that mentor/project.

Questions?
Ask your leaders or come upstairs and talk to us: Ashley Overman, Dana Schumacher or Suzanne Wirth.