

FAQs for WISEST Summer Research Program Supervisors

Who has overall responsibility for the WISEST students' work in the research lab?

- WISEST students are assigned to a Principal Investigator who assumes overall responsibility for the students' work in the research lab. We encourage PhDs and Graduate students to directly supervise WISEST students, but they must have the support of their principal investigator who is designated as the "official" supervisor.

What are some examples of research projects the high-school students can contribute to?

- Students assist with one component of an overall research project in the lab, often lending a hand to the work of a graduate or undergraduate student. They perform sub-tasks of other components of the research project to familiarize themselves with the overall project. If there are "quiet" times, they work with other graduate students to become familiar with their projects and the lab techniques required.
- Student directs one component of an ongoing research project that fits into the overall research project. They may occasionally assist others to get a sense of other research projects and lab techniques occurring in the lab or the department.
- Student has an independent project with its own research question designed to expose them to a variety of lab techniques and research components within the lab. The project is designed to give the student an overall sense of the research because they participate in each component (multiple components, techniques, tests, plus compiling results and creating the results summaries / analysis for their data).

What are reasonable expectations of the students' work in the research lab?

- Research often involves tedious, repetitive work, and the students should not be spared from all such work, but it would be good to have a balance between the interesting and the mundane. They appreciate diversity in their tasks and experiences.
- They would like to see the connection between what they are doing and the 'big picture'. How they are contributing to your research.
- Please remember this might be their first job, so gentle reminders about workplace responsibility might be required.
- They will not be knowledgeable about your discipline. We will work to make the best matches possible between the students' interests and qualifications and the projects offered by the Supervisors.
- The Program is an opportunity for the student to learn more about research in general and to gain hands-on experience in a particular field of study.
- The WISEST Supervisor handbook (available on e-class) will provide detailed information to support you and the WISEST student in the research experience.

What responsibilities do supervisors have for WISEST minors in the lab?

- WISEST students are under the age of 18 and therefore must be supervised at all times in the laboratory. The WISEST students must never be left alone in the laboratory or with a person of the opposite gender while out on field research. Summer students are not meant to act as independent researchers at the University; they are not equivalent to graduate students or technicians.

Will the high-school students have any safety training?

- WISEST students will successfully complete WHMIS and BioSafety training in an e-class seminar before their work in the lab begins.
- It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator, as a subject matter expert in their chosen field, to provide laboratory-based training on the specific hazards associated with their work and on the safety procedures put in place within their laboratory. This laboratory-based training must include an orientation of where safety devices such as alarm pulls, drench showers, MSDS datasheets, etc. are located as well as emergency evacuation routes from the laboratory.

What support does the research team have in case of an emergency incident with the WISEST student?

- The ‘WISEST Emergency Response Guidelines for Student Employees’ will be provided to each supervisor at the start of the program. The document outlines the necessary guidelines to ensure proper notification of Emergency Contacts and WISEST, ensure appropriate and effective handling of the situation and to promote a timely and effective resolution. WISEST Emergency Response Guidelines are meant to augment those in place by the University of Alberta and the specific Faculties and Departments students are placed in.
- We will notify you of any relevant health conditions of the student, and the student's emergency contact information (as well as health care number) will be distributed to their direct supervisors for use only in the event of an emergency.

What expectations does WISEST have of its student researchers?

- Selected students are expected to demonstrate initiative, be able to adapt quickly to new situations and experiences, have the confidence to learn independently and the ability to work well in a team.
- Successful WISEST students’ applications will demonstrate: openness and willingness to explore research in a variety of areas within science, engineering and technology, enthusiasm and clarity in the essay, a high academic standing in grade 11 math and science courses, demonstration of an understanding of WISEST and of the goals of the Summer Research Program and strong teacher references.
- They must commit to six continuous weeks of research work with no time off for vacations or competitions.
- They are expected to have both the desire to learn and the drive to make the most of this unique opportunity.
- They are expected to understand that research is interdisciplinary in nature. It can take place behind a research bench, in an office space or in the field. Computer work plays an integral role in trail-blazing research.
- WISEST Student Researchers will be valuable contributors to their research team. This includes coming to work every day ready to put forth their best effort (i.e. punctual, well-rested, and appropriately dressed).
- They must commit themselves to the research team’s reasonable work expectations. Compensation is based on a seven-hour workday however, research laboratories often work on schedules required by the projects they are engaged in and they are expected to participate accordingly.
- Student Researchers are not only ambassadors of their schools; they are representatives of WISEST and of the University of Alberta. WISEST students will behave in a respectful, responsible, and appropriate manner at all times during their participation in the Program.

- Student Researchers are accountable for their behaviour during all aspects of the Program. The WISEST staff will administer disciplinary measures when self-discipline proves inadequate. In serious situations parental involvement or removal from the WISEST Summer Research Program may be necessary.
- At the end of the Program, the students will prepare and present research posters about their research projects.
- WISEST students will commit to presenting your WISEST research experience to teachers, peers and younger science classes within their schools.

Can a research project involve field research?

- WISEST students can work in field-based research activities. Given that there are more risks associated with this type of placement, it's important that the student researcher and their parents/guardians are fully informed of the nature and risk associated with the planned field activities.
- Young women who are minors are required to be supervised by a female supervisor throughout the duration of the field activity and travel to/from the same.

If we're aware of a bright and enthusiastic grade 11 student whom we would like to have placed as a WISEST student in our research group, can we specifically request her/him?

- WISEST students are selected on the basis of an application process and consideration of a variety of criteria. We do not accept specific students into the program and then place the students into a specific research project as requested by supervisors.

How will the WISEST staff support the principal investigators and direct supervisors of the WISEST students?

- The student coordinators will meet with all Supervisors in early May to answer any questions and to provide information about the Program.
- During the program, the student coordinators will visit each lab at least once to talk with the student and supervisor(s).
- Please let us know if any problems arise as soon as possible.

Are there other WISEST activities that will take the WISEST students out of the lab?

- WISEST students meet as a group for two hours each Monday afternoon to participate in a variety of activities to complement and enhance their research experiences. These Professional Development Seminars are informative, interactive sessions led by educators, scientists, and researchers. Students develop important skills necessary to succeed in an academic career and gain insight into the diverse career and academic opportunities available in scientific research.
- Students are expected to participate in the 'Lunch 'n Learn' professional development sessions over the Friday noon hour. The Friday Lunch 'n' Learn Sessions will provide students with the opportunity to learn and hone new skills required to successfully navigate their way not only through the WISEST Summer Research Program but also through their future career.

How are the high-school students paid?

- WISEST is responsible for all aspects of the students' payroll, including securing the funds needed for their hourly wages. The students are expected to work for approximately 35 hours/week over the six-week period.