

# 2024-2025 Mentoring Best Practices: Session I Materials



## **Session I:** Aligning Expectations and Effective Communication

Oct. 11, 2024, 12 – 1:30pm, Conf. Rm. L (North), Prentice Women's Hospital, Chicago

Oct. 18, 2024, 12 – 1:30pm, Norris Student Center, Evanston

## **Session II:** Fostering Independence and Promoting Professional Development

Nov. 15, 2024, 12 – 1:30pm, Virtual

## **Session III:** Assessing Understanding and Cultivating Ethical Behavior

Dec. 6, 2024, 12 – 1:30pm, Virtual

## **Session IV:** Equity and Inclusion

Jan. 10, 2025, 12 – 1:30pm, Chicago (location TBD)

Jan. 24, 2025, 12 – 1:30pm, Evanston (location TBD)

## **Session V:** Defining and Articulating Your Mentoring Philosophy and Plan

\*Prerequisite: Completion of sessions I-IV required prior to session V.

Feb. 21, 2025, 12 – 1:30pm, Evanston (location TBD)

Feb. 28, 2025, 12 – 1:30pm, Chicago (location TBD)

**Office of the Provost  
Advancing Mentoring  
Excellence Program**

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## RESOURCES

Information on counseling and other types of support can be found at:



# I. Introduction & NU's Context

## **MENTORING EXCELLENCE AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

Northwestern supports the cultivation of an inclusive community of individuals who are dedicated to excellence in mentoring, who model diverse and inclusive mentoring practices, and who help others become effective mentors and mentees at Northwestern University.

Developing and implementing effective mentoring practices is necessary in order to build a supportive, equitable and inclusive community; to attract, retain, and develop talented scholars; and to contribute to an institutional culture that prioritizes well-being and scholarly growth.

At Northwestern, faculty mentorship work should be guided by four core Foundational Principles of Mentoring Practice: **intentional, inclusive, relational, and holistic**. These principles were developed in 2020-2021 by the Provost's Office Mentoring Council, composed of faculty from across the schools. The principles, best practices, and list of resources are designed to assist all faculty serving in formal or informal roles as mentors and mentees.

## **MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT:**

**RESOURCES ON MENTORING, WELL-BEING, AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION EDUCATION**

## **MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS & PROGRAMS**

Faculty mentoring takes place in multiple forms, including one-on-one relationships between individuals and group-based mentoring, and includes the mentoring of faculty colleagues, postdoctoral trainees and students. Many departments and schools offer formal mentoring programs for early career faculty. The Office of the Provost offers small group mentoring for department chairs and early career faculty through the Chairs Mentoring Program and Provost's Small Group Faculty Mentoring Program.

# Office of the Provost: Four Foundational Principles of Mentoring Practice

Effective mentoring should incorporate the following four principles in the design of the mentoring program or relationship. These principles are applicable across the various contexts of mentoring and can help ensure that the benefits of mentorship extend to individuals, units and the institution. Each principle includes examples of best practices that can be used to develop and support mentoring activities.

## **PRINCIPLE ONE: INTENTIONAL**

Setting intentionality is the foundation of any successful mentoring activity. Developing an agreed upon set of goals and activities will help both mentor and mentee cultivate a meaningful relationship and attain the defined objectives. Some examples of best practices include:

- Collaboratively develop and document a shared understanding of why and how the mentoring relationship will occur. Defining these parameters at the beginning can help establish mentoring as a normal, professional activity. Activity details should include the following:
  - Goals for both mentors and mentees.
  - Expected duration of relationship and time requirements for both parties.
  - Protocols for HOW communication will occur between parties (i.e., expectations for frequency and duration of meetings, access during after work hours, etc.).
  - Protocols for WHAT will be communicated within and outside of the mentoring relationship. A good ground rule is to agree that what is discussed between parties will remain between the parties, and what is learned may be applied and shared.
  - Expected practices and roles for communicating meeting agendas and activities.
  - Defined periodic check-in points to allow both parties to reflect on their progress toward stated goals.
- Minimize distractions during scheduled meetings and prepare ahead of time by completing assigned work or readings.

- If one party holds evaluative authority over the other, this does not preclude effective mentoring from taking place. However, parties should identify the relationship context up front and establish ground rules to manage this dynamic.
  - For supervisory mentoring relationships, assigned work and projects should not extend the agreed-upon duration of the formal mentoring relationship.
  - For mentoring between faculty members or where mentors have formal review or promotion authority, the specific nature of that authority and awareness of the power differential should be discussed at the outset and clearly understood by all parties.
- Individuals should seek to cultivate a diversified network of mentors, as this can help normalize mentorship as a best practice in the academy and minimize over-reliance on a single mentoring relationship in which there exists a level of supervisory authority.

## PRINCIPLE TWO: INCLUSIVE

Strive to create an inclusive space to which parties can bring their best and most authentic selves. Examples of best practices include:

- Ground the relationship with the understanding that mentors and mentees will inhabit different perspectives and worldviews. These differences can be linked to age, rank and various social identities, among other characteristics.
- Mentors should take responsibility for educating themselves on issues of systemic bias, privilege and representation in higher education and (if applicable) within the specific discipline or scholarship area. Understand how these factors affect groups in different ways and be mindful of how these factors may be impacting mentees.
  - Mentors should also be aware of their own preference biases, open to views from mentees and others, and take care to ensure they are doing everything possible to provide an equitable experience for their mentees.
- Allow and model flexibility to accommodate differences in life situations. For example, if one or both parties have home responsibilities during early morning hours, schedule your check-ins during a time of day when you know they will be able to participate fully in the conversation.
- Parties should establish and maintain boundaries for discussion topics. For example, agree upfront whether you will discuss non-work pressures and constraints on one's time that may be affecting productivity toward career goals.
- When systemic issues become known, mentors and mentees should use the mentorship resources that are available to them to help advocate for equitable and inclusive institutional practices.



## PRINCIPLE THREE: RELATIONAL

Mentors and mentees are both responsible for actively building a healthy and productive working relationship. Mentors should model and practice effective communication and conflict resolution skills, while helping mentees to develop these same skills. Examples of best practices include:

- Both parties should employ active listening practices by minimizing distractions during scheduled meetings, and preparing ahead of time by completing readings and other pre-work.
- Affirm each other's accomplishments and celebrate milestones.
- Provide constructive feedback that supports and appropriately challenges the other party. Always seek to empower when providing critical feedback.
- Mentors should encourage their mentees' independence and agency, including an understanding that a measure of success is a mentee outgrowing the mentoring relationship.
- Each party should not assume that their own lived experiences and challenges are or should be representative of the other's experiences and challenges.
- Parties should establish expectations for what information will be shared with other colleagues about the mentoring relationship. If, during the mentoring activities, it becomes necessary to share details with others outside of the mentoring relationship, then care should be taken to secure the knowledge and consent of the other party. Otherwise, both parties should respect the boundaries that were established pertaining to sharing information with other individuals.
- Parties should not hesitate to seek assistance or support from designated resources in order to help facilitate difficult conversations.
- Mentors should be willing and able to identify resources that are available to assist individuals with mental health, stress reduction or crisis situations. Be prepared to direct individuals to these offices or to facilitate a referral if necessary.
- All parties should be knowledgeable about their mandatory reporting obligations for instances of sexual and other forms of harassment and discrimination.

## PRINCIPLE FOUR: HOLISTIC

Effective mentoring recognizes and nurtures the development of the whole person by supporting professional and psychosocial growth. Parties should draw on information and resources both within and outside of the institution to expand mentoring networks. Other best practices to keep in mind include:

- Understand that diversified mentoring networks can provide different types of support based on the identified growth objectives. Mentoring networks should include resources that can help mentees advance in their careers, as well as other resources that can provide psychosocial forms of support for personal growth.
- There are many models of mentoring network maps to help individuals identify their different growth objectives and potential sources of mentorship and information to help address those goals.
- Mentors should draw from their own experiences to share advice and knowledge, but should also empower mentees to seek out information and support on their own.
- Mentees should be active participants in defining their own growth objectives and identifying potential sources of mentorship to help meet those goals.

# STEM Case Study:

## "You're Happy With My Work"

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Focus: How to establish a common understanding between you and your mentee of the boundaries, terms, structure and goals of the mentoring relationships.

- Recognize the expectations of the mentee in the mentoring relationship.
- Clearly communicate expectations for the mentoring relationships.
- Align (re-align) mentee and mentor expectations.

### CASE NARRATIVE:

A new student joined my lab nine months ago. As with all of my students, this student and I work from a development plan and update progress quarterly. At the first quarterly update, I gave the student feedback on three things that were going well and three things that could be improved, which is my standard practice. The latter included being more prepared for lab meetings, asking for help to minimize wasting supplies, and how to format data for presentations.

At the second update, the student began by saying, "Things are going well." I said I agreed except, "You seem to be confused at lab meetings, you need to do a better job asking for help, and you're not using our standard format for presenting data."

Our third quarterly update is happening now. To prepare I've talked with two postdocs about how the student is doing. They tell me they're frustrated because the student isn't engaged at lab meetings, makes a lot of mistakes that waste scarce supplies, and data is often disorganized.

As the meeting starts, the student says, "This is a great place for me. I feel I'm making friends and I really fit in. I'm challenged by the work, it's really interesting and everyone keeps telling me how happy they are with my work."



## **GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

What are the main themes raised in this case study?

What kind of conversations regarding expectations might have been more helpful in this relationship?

What kind of conversations would be helpful to understand whether the student will be successful?

Who should be involved in these conversations?

# Humanities & Social Sciences Case Study:

## "You're Happy With My Work"

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Focus: How to establish a common understanding between you and your mentee of the boundaries, terms, structure and goals of the mentoring relationships.

- Recognize the expectations of the mentee in the mentoring relationship.
- Clearly communicate expectations for the mentoring relationships.
- Align (re-align) mentee and mentor expectations.

### CASE NARRATIVE:

One of my graduate students started writing their dissertation nine months ago. When the first chapter was submitted, we met to discuss my feedback. While generally positive, I recommended the student read two recent articles and a monograph from scholars in this specific field to help situate the research. I asked the students to reflect on those readings while working on chapter revisions.

At our next meeting, we discussed the revisions, and the student said, "I feel like I'm making progress". I said I agreed except, "After reviewing what you sent to me, I did not see any additional work on the texts I recommended. These sources will provide important insight to your research, and I think will be very helpful as you work on future chapters."

We're meeting to discuss the next chapter now. In reviewing the material, it's clear the student has not engaged with the texts I recommended.

As the meeting starts, the student says, "This is a great place for me. I feel I'm making progress and I'm really happy with my work because I can focus on the most important ideas we've discussed. I just feel like I'm right on track."

## **GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

What are the main themes raised in this case study?

What kind of conversations regarding expectations might have been more helpful in this relationship?

What kind of conversations would be helpful to understand whether the student will be successful?

Who should be involved in these conversations?

# Constructing Your Mentoring Plan: Concepts & Behaviors

## INTENTIONAL

- Goals
- Expected Duration and Time Requirements
- Communication Protocols
- Confidentiality
- Agendas and Work Activities
- Progress Checks and Adjustments
- Preparedness and Minimizing Meeting Distractions
- Relationship Context and Power Dynamics

## INCLUSIVE

- Create an inclusive space in which parties can bring their best and most authentic selves.

## RELATIONAL

- Build a healthy and productive working relationship.
- Model and practice effective communication and conflict resolution skills.

## HOLISTIC

- Recognize and nurture developments of the whole person by supporting professional and psychosocial growth.
- Draw on information and resources within and outside of NU.
- Expand mentoring networks.

# Constructing Your Mentoring Plan: Worksheet

A blank copy of the worksheet can be found by following this navigation:

Northwestern University > Office of the Provost > Faculty Resources > Mentoring Excellence > scroll down to: *Advancing Mentoring Excellence at Northwestern Faculty Mentoring Training Program* > 2024-2025 Sessions > Session I > Constructing Your Mentoring Plan Worksheet

Or by clicking this link:



## CONSTRUCTING YOUR MENTORING PLAN

**Instructions:** This worksheet is used throughout the Advancing Mentoring Excellence Program. It will guide you through the prompts that you should be ready to review with others in advance of the final session, "Defining and Articulating Your Mentoring Philosophy & Plan."

While mentoring approaches vary, reflecting on your responses to each prompt provides assurance to mentors and mentees that you have thought carefully about and can apply each of the [Four Foundational Principles of Mentoring Practice](#) identified by a committee of faculty peers and endorsed by Northwestern's Office of the Provost:

**Principle 1:** Intentional. Setting intentionality is the foundation of any successful mentoring activity. Developing an agreed upon set of goals and activities will help both mentor and mentee cultivate a meaningful relationship and attain the defined objectives.

**Principle 2:** Inclusive. Strive to create an inclusive space to which parties can bring their best and most authentic selves.

**Principle 3:** Relational. Mentors and mentees are both responsible for actively building a healthy and productive working relationship. Mentors should model and practice effective communication and conflict resolution skills, while helping mentees to develop these same skills.

**Principle 4:** Holistic. Effective mentoring recognizes and nurtures the development of the whole person by supporting professional and psychosocial growth. Parties should draw on information and resources both within and outside of the institution to expand mentoring networks.

Note: It is your responsibility to relate training content to these principles as well as to develop responses that address each of these items in the context of your own mentoring approach.

### INTENTIONAL

*What are my plans for intentional mentoring?*

**Written documentation:** At the beginning of the relationship, what written documentation (such as an agreement or written compact) will I use with mentees to ensure that we have a shared understanding and aligned expectations?

[Enter Text Here]

What specific topics will I use as a draft starting point?

[Enter Text Here]

**Power differential:** What is the context of the mentoring relationship? If I hold evaluative authority over the mentee, how will I approach the power differential? How will I acknowledge and discuss this with the mentee?

[Enter Text Here]



**Intentional agreements typically include the following topics. As you consider your approach to these topics, think about whether there are any specific aspects of the mentoring agreement or written compact that you perceive to be non-negotiable and why. –**

**Goal setting:** Who proposes goals? How often are goals set, revised and updated? How will we monitor progress?

[Enter Text Here]

**Duration:** How long do we expect the relationship to last? How often do we check in to make sure the relationship is productive and helpful?

[Enter Text Here]

**Time commitment (when applicable):** How many hours/weeks/months is the mentee expected to devote to activities that we agree to? When will we revisit these time requirements?

[Enter Text Here]

**Meeting logistics:** How often will we meet and how long is each meeting? How are meetings scheduled? Where do meetings take place? (Commonly for lab groups: where can team members find documentation for roles and responsibilities, processes, routines, lab meeting protocols, etc.?)

[Enter Text Here]

**Agenda:** Who prepares the agenda? What is typically expected to be on the agenda? How far in advance of meetings is the agenda sent? What are the expectations so each of us is prepared for our meeting?

[Enter Text Here]

**Communication between meetings:** What communication methods will we use? How quickly are responses expected? Are urgent matters treated differently? If so, how? What is each of our stance on "after hours communication"?

[Enter Text Here]

**Review and feedback:** What are our expectations of each other so there is sufficient time to review and provide feedback on written or visual materials (e.g. abstracts, manuscripts, posters, presentations)?

[Enter Text Here]

**Confidentiality:** What topics or areas should we mutually expect to be confidential between us? How do we clearly let each other know whether or not a topic is confidential? When discussing either of our work or advocating on each other's behalf with a third party, what is our understanding about first communicating in advance with each other?

[Enter Text Here]

**Agreement updates:** How and when will we review the agreement or written compact to make updates and changes? For negotiable items, how will we suggest possible changes with each other?

[Enter Text Here]

**Agreement disputes:** What process will we use if we cannot come to consensus about elements of this agreement or written compact? Who gets to make what decisions? Who else, if anyone, would be involved (e.g. Director of Graduate Studies, Ombudsperson)?

[Enter Text Here]

## INCLUSIVE

*What are my plans for inclusive mentoring?*

**Perspective seeking:** What practices do I use to demonstrate my willingness to learn about the lived experiences, choices, and views of my mentees?

[Enter Text Here]

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** How do I model flexibility to accommodate differences in life situations and learning styles? What resources are available to me to help me best mentor mentees with varied backgrounds, experiences, and expertise?

[Enter Text Here]

**Modeling professional behavior:** What professional traits and values do I want to model for my mentees? What practices do I use so that I am routinely at my best when working with my mentees?

[Enter Text Here]

**Life experience:** To what extent am I comfortable sharing information about my life and experiences with my mentees?

[Enter Text Here]

**Boundaries:** How will I discuss boundary setting with my mentees? Do I have boundaries that I want to establish for discussion topics? How will I learn about my mentee's boundaries? How do I respond if a boundary has been crossed?

[Enter Text Here]

**Continuous learning:** Where can I find resources to educate myself about mentoring across differences, systemic bias, privilege and representation?

[Enter Text Here]

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## RELATIONAL

*What are my plans for relational mentoring?*

**Active listening:** What is active listening? What skills and practices do I use routinely for active listening? How can I improve my active listening skills?

[Enter Text Here]

**Feedback:** How do I best communicate feedback, both positive and negative? How do I tailor my feedback for different mentees?

[Enter Text Here]

**Conflict:** How do I best manage conflict between a mentee and me? What resources, including an agreement or written mentoring compact, will aid conflict resolution? Who else might I involve to help navigate conflict?

[Enter Text Here]

**Independence:** How do I foster independence in my mentees? What milestones do I look for along this path? How do I communicate with a mentee when they have reached a milestone? How do I communicate with a mentee when they are failing to make sufficient progress?

[Enter Text Here]

**Mutually beneficial relationship:** How do I know if a mentoring relationship is healthy and productive? What behaviors might indicate the need for improvement or change? If a change needs to be made, what steps will I take? What steps do I expect my mentees to take?

[Enter Text Here]

**Closure:** How do I know when it is time to end a mentoring relationship, including ending it earlier than expected? How do I communicate this to my mentees? Who else might I involve in this process?

[Enter Text Here]

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## HOLISTIC

*What are my plans for holistic mentoring?*

**Career exploration:** How do I provide insight, information, and access to opportunities to my mentees so that they can learn about and experience career options both within and outside of the academy? What professional development opportunities do I provide to mentees that expose them to options other than research?

[Enter Text Here]

**Professional growth:** What resources do I provide to support the professional growth of my mentees? How do I help my mentees expand their mentoring networks? How do I equitably make my network available to my mentees?

[Enter Text Here]

**Psychosocial growth:** How comfortable am I asking about the health of my mentees? Do I routinely check in on the health of my mentees? What questions do I ask them? How do I plan to respond to non-academic topics that arise in the course of a mentoring relationship?

[Enter Text Here]

**Referral:** Should they arise, what topics do I feel unprepared to discuss with my mentees or am most worried about? What resources are available, both within and outside of NU to assist when needed? How do I connect mentees to other information and resources within and outside of NU?

[Enter Text Here]

# Examples: Concepts & Behaviors

## INTENTIONAL

- Success is one to three goals with a specific time frame for each.
- We meet weekly.
- As needed: Email and As urgent: Text or Call
- Confidentiality is assumed with exceptions discussed in advance, including my advocacy.
- Mentee provides agenda 24 hours in advance; I can see topics.
- Progress checks and adjustments typically monthly or quarterly.
- Bring a notebook; phones and computers off.
- Your agency and ownership of projects guide how we work together.
- My primary approach is to ask questions to help you explore agenda topics.
- Unit needs to come first; I care about you and your success (second); my needs come third.

## INCLUSIVE

- Being your authentic, best self matters to me. We're going to explore what this might mean for you, and I'm going to be honest and vulnerable about my choices, especially risks and mistakes.

## RELATIONAL

- We each need to know whether we're looking forward to the next session.
- Not all relationships work. Because your success is more important to me than my needs, let's get you to the "better fit" person.

## HOLISTIC

- I ask "how are you?" at the beginning of each meeting with a neutral and curious tone.
- Expect I will refer you to others who know better.
- Dependence on me is unacceptable. I'm committed to helping you build your own mentoring relationships, which might include some of my relationships.



## My Mentoring “WHY”: With Gratitude, Pay it Forward

<p><b>Intentional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Active listening / being present:</i> I am PRESENT for mentee. If I think distraction could occur, I let them know, but seek to minimize distractions</li> <li>• <i>Planned meeting schedule</i> (if primary mentor, then weekly my preference, especially at beginning, but work with mentee for best schedule for them.) Meeting cadence will depend on what mentoring I am providing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Check ins when meeting schedule is less regular—email check-ins OK.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Mentee provides agenda</i> 24 hours in advance; I review to be prepared, add discussion topics if needed</li> <li>• <i>Work with mentee identify goals:</i> Short and long term – some go in the “parking lot” – not top of mind, but not forgotten</li> <li>• <i>Primary Communication via email:</i> mentees have my cell if needed to text or call</li> <li>• <i>I seek to bring more coaching and less “guru mentor” into my mentoring:</i> Focus on identifying challenges and solutions together</li> <li>• <i>Recognition of mutual benefits in mentoring relationships:</i> I have benefitted extensively by being a mentor</li> <li>• <b>Be a platypus: Emulate, Adapt, Evolve</b></li> <li>• <b>Mentor with Agility</b></li> <li>• <i>Know my strengths and weaknesses</i></li> <li>• <i>Confidentiality of relationship:</i> exceptions discussed in advance</li> <li>• <i>Encourage Mentee Agency</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Inclusive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>My goals are to seek to improve and have the courage to fail:</i></b> I have made and will make mistakes. I want to continue learning.</li> <li>• <i>Communicate honestly</i></li> <li>• <i>Allow mentees to be who they are:</i> explore situations where mentees may not feel included.</li> <li>• When possible, work to fit in mentees who have not been previously included as they should (not always in my Division)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Understand that expectations exist:</i> we may experience expectancy violations</li> <li>• <i>Avoid hierarchy:</i> Ask “How do we move forward together?”</li> <li>• <i>Encourage and embrace feedback:</i> Ask for feedback from mentee early and often</li> <li>• <b><i>Recognize mentoring relationships need not be forever.</i></b> Identify a “reassessment time” to practically explore how relationship is going. Assist with change of mentor if needed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Holistic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask “How are you doing?”: Leave space for personal discussion if desired. (Kleenex always on hand if in person)</li> <li>• <i>Allow for emotions:</i> Allow for agenda to change drastically if needed</li> <li>• <b><i>“Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others”:</i></b> For both the mentor and the mentee</li> <li>• <b><i>Develop and use Mentoring Team and Mentoring Networks:</i></b> I am not your “everything” - you cannot be everything to everyone (nor should someone want you to be)</li> </ul>

# II. Establishing the Agreement

## Mentorship Agreement Template

The purpose of this template is to assist you in documenting mutually agreed upon goals and parameters that will serve as the foundation for your mentoring relationships. While mentors and mentees may find mentorship agreements to be useful, they are optional. This template is expected to be altered to meet individual needs.

1. **Goals** (what you hope to achieve as a result of this relationship; e.g., gain perspective relative to skills necessary for success in academia, explore new career opportunities/alternatives, obtain knowledge of organizational culture, networking, leadership skill development, etc.):

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2. **Steps to achieving goals** as stated above (e.g., meeting regularly, manuscripts/grants, collaborating on research projects, steps to achieving independence, etc.):

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3. **Meeting frequency** (frequency, duration, and location of meetings):

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4. **Confidentiality**: Any sensitive issues that we discuss will be held in the strictest of confidence. Issues that are off limits for discussion include:

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5. Plan for **evaluating relationship effectiveness** (e.g., bi-annual review of mentorship meeting minutes, goals, and outcomes/accomplishments):

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6. **Relationship termination clause:** In the event that either party finds the mentoring relationship unproductive and requests that it be terminated, we agree to honor that individual's decision without question or blame.

7. **Duration:** This mentorship relationship will continue as long as both parties feel comfortable with its productivity or until: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Compacts: Mentee

**This compact outlines the parameters of our work together on this research project.**

Mentee:

Mentor:

Our major goals are:

- Research project goals:
- Mentee's personal and/or professional goals:
- Mentor's personal and/or professional goals:

Our shared vision of success in this research project is:

We agree to work on this project for at least (       ) quarters.

The mentee will work at least (       ) hours per week on the project during the academic year, and (       ) hours per week in the summer.

- The mentee will propose their weekly schedule to the mentor by the (       ) week of the quarter.
- If the mentee must deviate from this schedule (e.g., study for an upcoming exam), the mentee will communicate this to the mentor at least (       ) [weeks/days/hours] before the change occurs.

On a daily basis, our primary means of communication will be through: face-to-face / phone / email / instant messaging / other:

We will meet one-on-one to discuss our progress and goals for at least (       ) minutes (       ) time(s) per month.

- It will be the **mentee's/mentor's** responsibility to schedule these meetings (**circle**).
- In preparation for these meetings, the mentee will:

- In preparation for these meetings, the mentor will:

At these meetings, the mentor will provide feedback on the mentee's performance and specific suggestions for how to improve or progress to the next level of responsibility through (circle):  
written evaluation / verbal evaluation / other:

The mentor will train the mentee on new techniques and procedures using the following (e.g., written directions, hands-on demonstration, verbal direction as mentee does procedure, etc.):

If the mentee gets stuck while working on the project (e.g., has questions or needs help with a technique or data analysis), the procedure will be:

The standard operating procedures for working in our research group, which all members must follow and the mentee agrees to follow, include (e.g., wash your own glassware, attend weekly lab meeting, reorder supplies when you use the last of something, etc.):

Other issues not addressed above that are important to our work together:

By signing, we agree to these goals, expectations, and working parameters for this research project.

Mentee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Grant Mentee Compact

## THE BROAD GOALS OF MY RESEARCH PROGRAM

As part of my job as a professor, I am expected to write grants and initiate research that will make tangible contributions to science, the academic community and society. You will be helping me carry out this research. It is imperative we carry out good scientific method and conduct ourselves in an ethical way. We must always keep in mind the ultimate goal of our research is publication in scientific journals. Dissemination of the knowledge we gain is critical to the advancement of our field. I also value outreach and informal science education, both in the classroom and while engaging with the public. I expect you to participate in this component of our lab mission while you are a part of the lab group.

## WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU

Another part of my job as a professor is to train and advise students. I must contribute to your professional development and progress in your degree. I will help you set goals and hopefully achieve them. However, I cannot do the work for you. In general, I expect you to:

- Learn how to plan, design, and conduct high-quality scientific research.
- Learn how present and document your scientific findings.
- Be honest, ethical, and enthusiastic.
- Be engaged with the research group and at least two programs on campus.
- Treat your lab-mates, lab funds, equipment, and microbes with respect.
- Take advantage of professional development opportunities.
- Obtain your degree.
- Work hard – don't give up!

## YOU WILL TAKE OWNERSHIP OVER YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Acknowledge you have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of your degree.** This includes commitment to your work in classrooms and the laboratory. You should maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards.
- **Ensure you meet regularly with me and provide me with updates on the progress and results of your activities and experiments.** Make sure you also use this time to communicate new ideas you have about your work and challenges you are facing.  
**Remember:** I cannot address or advise about issues you do not bring to my attention.

- **Be knowledgeable of the policies, deadlines, and requirements of the Graduate Program, the Graduate School, and the University.** Comply with all institutional policies, including academic program milestones, laboratory practices and rules related to chemical safety, biosafety, and fieldwork.
- **Actively cultivate your professional development.** UW-Madison has outstanding resources in place to support professional development for students. I expect you to take full advantage of these resources, since part of becoming a successful engineer or scientist involves more than just doing academic research. You are expected to make continued progress in your development as a teacher, as an ambassador to the general public representing the university and your discipline, with respect to your networking skills, and as an engaged member of broader professional organizations. The graduate school has a regular seminar series related to professional development. The Delta program offers formalized training in the integration of research, teaching, and learning. All graduate degree programs require attendance at a weekly seminar. Various organizations on campus engage in science outreach and informal education activities. Attendance at conferences and workshops will also provide professional development opportunities. When you attend a conference, I expect you to seek out these opportunities to make the most of your attendance. You should become a member of one or more professional societies, such as the Water Environmental Federation, the American Society for Microbiology, or the American Society for Limnology and Oceanography.

## YOU WILL BE A TEAM PLAYER

- **Attend and actively participate in all group meetings, as well as seminars that are part of your educational program.** Participation in group meetings does not mean only presenting your own work but providing support to others in the lab through shared insight. You should refrain from using your computer or phone during research meetings. Even if you are using the device to augment discussion, it is disrespectful to the larger group to have your attention distracted by the device. Do your part to create a climate of engagement and mutual respect.
- **Strive to be the very best lab citizen.** Take part in shared laboratory responsibilities and use laboratory resources carefully and frugally. Maintain a safe and clean laboratory space where data and research participant confidentiality are protected. Be respectful to, tolerant of, and work collegially with all laboratory colleagues. Respect individual differences in values, personalities, work styles, and theoretical perspectives.
- **Be a good collaborator.** Engage in collaborations within and beyond our workgroup. Collaborations are more than just publishing papers together. They demand effective and frequent communication, mutual respect, trust, and shared goals. Effective collaboration is an extremely important component of the mission of our lab.

- **Leave no trace.** As part of our collaborations with the Center for Limnology and other research groups, you will often be using equipment that does not belong to our lab. I ask you respect this equipment and treat it even more carefully than our own equipment. Always return it as soon as possible in the same condition you found it. If something breaks, tell me right away so that we can arrange to fix or replace it. Don't panic over broken equipment. Mistakes happen. But it is not acceptable to return something broken or damaged without taking the steps necessary to fix it.
- **Acknowledge the efforts of collaborators.** This includes other members of the lab as well as those outside the lab.

## YOU WILL DEVELOP RESEARCH SKILLS

- **Take advantage of your opportunity to work at a world-class university by developing and refining stellar research skills.** I expect that you will learn how to plan, design and conduct high-quality research.
- **Challenge yourself by presenting your work at meetings and seminars as early as you can and by preparing scientific articles that effectively present your work to others in the field.** The "currency" in science is published papers: they drive a lot of what we do. And because our lab is supported by taxpayer dollars, we have an obligation to complete and disseminate our findings. I will push you to publish your research as you move through your training program, not only at the end. Students pursuing a master's degree will be expected to author or make major contributions to at least one journal paper submission. Students pursuing a doctoral degree will be expected to be lead author on at least two journal paper submissions, preferably three or four.
- **Keep up with the literature so you can have a hand in guiding your own research.** Block at least one hour per week to peruse current tables of contents for journals or do literature searches. Participate in journal clubs. Better yet, organize one!
- **Maintain detailed, organized, and accurate laboratory records.** Be aware your notes, records, and all tangible research data are my property as the lab director. When you leave the lab, I encourage you to take copies of your data with you. One full set of all data must stay in the lab, with appropriate and accessible documentation. Regularly back up your computer data to the server.
- **Be responsive to advice and constructive criticism.** The feedback you get from me, your colleagues, your committee members and your course instructors is intended to improve your scientific work.



## YOU WILL WORK TO MEET DEADLINES

- **Strive to meet deadlines: this is the only way to manage your progress.** Deadlines can be managed in a number of ways, but I expect you to do your best to maintain these goals. We will establish mutually agreed upon deadlines for each phase of your work during one-on-one meetings at the beginning of each term. For graduate students, there is a balance between time spent in class and time spent on research and perhaps on outreach and teaching. As long as you are meeting expectations, you can largely set your own schedule. It is your responsibility to talk with me if you are having difficulty completing your work, and I will consider your progress unsatisfactory if I need to follow up with you about completion of your lab or coursework.
- **Be mindful of the constraints on my time. When we set a deadline,** I will block off time to read and respond to your work. If I do not receive your materials, I will move your project to the end of my queue. Allow a minimum of one week prior to submission deadlines for me to read and respond to short materials, such as conference abstracts. Allow me three weeks to work on manuscripts or grant proposals. Please do not assume I can read materials within a day or two, especially when I'm traveling.

## YOU WILL COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

- **Remember all of us are “new” at various points in our careers.** If you feel uncertain, overwhelmed, or want additional support, please overtly ask for it. I welcome these conversations and view them as necessary.
- **Let me know your preference with style of communication or schedule of meetings.** If there is something about my mentoring style that is proving difficult for you, please tell me so you can give me an opportunity to find an approach that works for you. No single style works for everyone; no one style is expected to work all the time. Do not cancel meetings with me if you feel you have not made adequate progress on your research; these might be the most critical times to meet with a mentor.
- **Be prompt.** Respond promptly (in most cases, within 48 hours) to emails from anyone in our lab group and show up on time and prepared for meetings. If you need time to gather information in response to an email, please acknowledge receipt of the message and indicate when you will be able to provide the requested information.

- **Discuss policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with me directly.** Consult with me and notify fellow lab members in advance of any planned absences. Graduate students can expect to work an average of 50 hours per week in the lab; postdocs and staff at least 40 hours per week. I expect most lab members will not exceed two weeks of personal travel away from the lab in any given year. Most research participants are available during university holidays, so all travel plans, even at major holidays, must be approved by me before any firm plans are made. I believe work- life balance and vacation time are essential for creative thinking and good health and encourage you to take regular vacations. However, be aware there will necessarily be epochs – especially early in your training – when more effort will need to be devoted to work and it may not be ideal to schedule time away. This includes the field season for students/postdocs working on the lakes.
- **Discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with me before beginning any projects to ensure we are in agreement.** I expect you to submit relevant research results in a timely manner. Barring unusual circumstances, it is my policy students are first author on all work for which they took the lead on data collection and preparation of the initial draft of the manuscript.
- **Help other students with their projects and mentor/train other students.** This is a valuable experience! Undergraduates working in the lab should be encouraged to contribute to the writing of manuscripts. If you wish to add other individuals as authors to your papers, please discuss this with me early on and before discussing the situation with the potential coauthors.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM ME

- **I will work tirelessly** for the good of the lab group; the success of every member of our group is my top priority, no matter their personal strengths and weaknesses, or career goals.
- **I will be available for regular meetings and conversations.** My busy schedule requires we plan in advance for meetings to discuss your research and any professional or personal concerns you have. Although I will try to be available as much as possible for “drop-in business,” keep in mind I am often running to teach a class or to a faculty meeting and will have limited time.
- **I will help you navigate your graduate program of study.** As stated previously, you are responsible for keeping up with deadlines and being knowledgeable about requirements for your specific program. However, I am available to help interpret those requirements, select appropriate course work, and select committee members for your oral exams.

- **I will discuss data ownership and authorship policies regarding papers with you.** These can create unnecessary conflict within the lab and among collaborators. It is important we communicate openly and regularly about them. Do not hesitate to voice concerns when you have them.
- **I will be your advocate.** If you have a problem, come and see me. I will do my best to help you solve it.
- **I am committed to mentoring you, even after you leave my lab.** I am committed to your education and training while you are in my lab, and to advising and guiding your career development – to the degree you wish – long after you leave. I will provide honest letters of evaluation for you when you request them.
- **I will lead by example and facilitate your training in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as oral and written communication, grant writing, lab management and scientific professionalism.** I will encourage you to seek opportunities in teaching, even if not required for your degree program. I will also strongly encourage you to gain practice in mentoring undergraduate and/or high school students, and to seek formal training in this activity through the Delta Program.
- **I will encourage you to attend scientific/professional meetings and will make an effort to fund such activities.** I will not cover all requests, but you can generally expect to attend at least one major conference per year, when you have material to present. Please use conferences as an opportunity to further your education, and not as a vacation. If you register for a conference, I expect you to attend the scientific sessions and participate in conference activities during the time you are there. Travel fellowships are available through the environmental engineering program, the Bacteriology Department, and the University if grant money is not available. I will help you identify and apply for these opportunities.
- **I will strive to be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful.** I will try my best to understand your unique situation and mentor you accordingly. I am mindful each student comes from a different background and has different professional goals. It will help me if you keep me informed about your experiences and remember graduate school is a job with very high expectations. I view my role as fostering your professional confidence and encouraging your critical thinking, skepticism, and creativity. If my attempts to do this are not effective for you, I am open to talking with you about other ways to achieve these goals.

## **YEARLY EVALUATION**

Each year we will sit down to discuss progress and goals. At that time, you should be sure to tell me if you are unhappy with any aspect of your experience as a graduate student here. Remember that I am your advocate, as well as your adviser. I will be able to help you with any problems you might have with other students, professors, or staff.

Similarly, we should discuss any concerns you have with respect to my role as your adviser. If you feel you need more guidance, tell me. If you feel I am interfering too much with your work, tell me. If you would like to meet with me more often, tell me. At the same time, I will tell you if I am satisfied with your progress, and if I think you are on track to graduate by your target date. It will be my responsibility to explain to you any deficiencies so you can take steps to fix them. This will be a good time for us to take care of any issues before they become major problems.

# Expectations for Mentees

- **Send me weekly email updates on Fridays by 5pm** describing briefly what you've been working on, what you plan to do the following week, and any questions or troubles you had. **Important things to include:** project you worked on, broken equipment, storage/equipment conflicts, if your data looked weird.
- **Attend lab meeting.** The entire lab assembles approximately once a week to discuss our research. Generally, the person leading lab meeting will distribute reading materials in advance. You should read these materials and come prepared to participate actively in discussion.
- **Be organized.** There is a lot of overlap in projects, and it is essential you keep track of all the samples in the way I specify. This includes updating spreadsheets and lab notebooks immediately.
- **Read background information and protocols about our projects, and about our lab's research.** This includes the protocol handout, the wiki, and related journal articles from the lab I've suggested. I'd love to discuss any journal article or protocol, so just say the word and we'll grab some coffee and chat.
- **Be consistent with your lab schedule.** Email/call me if you are going to be very late or unable to make your scheduled lab time.
- **Be independent.** I am periodically away, and I expect you to get things done well without me. Ask questions when I am around, and don't be afraid to try to do some detective work on your own if I am not. We have a helpful, experienced lab, so know folks other than me may be excellent resources.
- **Respect the lab and your colleagues.** Keep it neat and ask if you have questions on equipment use, cleaning, etc. It is very important that you tell me if a piece of equipment breaks. Do not be worried I will be angry. These things happen all the time in labs, and the important thing is I know it is broken and can arrange to have it fixed.
- **Let me know if you need anything from me as a mentor, or if you have questions.** Be up-front and I will do the same.
- **I have an "open door" policy.** Let me know if you are having troubles or concerns you want to talk about with me, work-related or not. My phone number is xxx-xxx-xxxx.

# Research Experience: Expectations

**Objective:** Students will articulate their motivations and goals for doing research, what they bring to the experience, and what they aim to learn from the experience.

- Why do you want to do research?
- What are your academic and personal goals for your research experience?
- What values, experiences, and/or perspectives will you bring to your research team?
- What is your greatest concern about doing research?
- What most excites you about doing research?



# Research Experience: Reflections

**Objective:** Students will reflect on what they have learned and the goals they achieved during their research experience.

- Was your research experience what you expected it to be? Why or why not?
- What academic and personal goals did you achieve in your research experience? How do they compare to the goals you outlined at the beginning of your experience?
- What values, experiences and/or perspectives did you contribute to your research team? Were you able to contribute in ways you did not predict? How?
- How did you overcome your greatest concern about doing research? What was the most challenging aspect of your research experience?
- What was the best part about your research experience? Are you planning to continue doing research? Why or why not?

USER MANUAL FOR:

Conditions I like to work in:

The times/hours I like to work:

The best ways to communicate with me:

The ways I like to receive feedback:

Things I need:

Things I struggle with:

Things I love:

Other things to know about me: