

Best Practices for the Mentor/Mentee Relationship

This document provides guiding principles to support the development of a positive relationship between a mentor and mentee. The purpose of these guidelines is to promote a mutual understanding of expectations and to develop a communicative relationship between the mentor and mentee from the beginning of training. A successful training experience requires commitment from the mentor and from the mentee.

Expectations of a Mentor

- To understand that the educational period is devoted to advanced training intended for the development of skills needed to promote the career of the trainee.
- To work with the trainee to develop a mutually agreed upon research plan with well-defined expectations and goals early in the training period. Evaluate regularly and develop a backup plan if first project is not successful.
- To provide regular feedback on performance and to provide a formal evaluation at least annually.
- To maintain a relationship with the trainee that is based on trust and mutual respect. To cultivate a culture of tolerance and to comply with all existing University policies, including the Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy, Title IX Sexual Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy, Duty to Report and Non-retaliation Policy, and other relevant policies.
- To promote and comply with all ethical standards for conducting research, including all institutional, state, and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, data reporting, ownership, and sharing.
- To ensure that confidential information is properly maintained and disposed of in a secure manner, as required by FERPA and any other applicable federal or state law or University policy or procedure.
- To provide the trainee with guidance and mentoring and to seek the assistance of other faculty and departmental/institutional resources when necessary.
- To encourage the trainee to seek input from multiple mentors, faculty, and peers, and to ensure trainee has regular committee meetings per program requirements, or at least once per year.
- To demonstrate a professional tone of communication and constructive criticism to the trainee.
- To provide a supportive training environment to facilitate the trainee's professional growth.
- To assist the trainee in submitting research for publication in a timely manner and to give appropriate credit to the trainee for work done.
- To acknowledge the trainee's contribution to the development of any intellectual property as appropriate and consistent with all applicable University policies.
- To foster career development and to encourage and assist the trainee to apply for appropriate fellowships and awards that support the transition to independence.
- To encourage and facilitate the interaction of the trainee with fellow scientists both intra- and extra-murally, including the trainee's attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.
- To understand that there are multiple career options available for trainees and to provide assistance in exploring appropriate options, calling on other experts as appropriate.

Expectations of a Mentee

- To understand that the trainee has the primary responsibility for the development of their own career which requires lifelong learning.
- To develop with the mentor a mutually agreed upon research plan that includes well-defined goals and timelines. Develop a backup plan if first project is not successful.
- To seek regular feedback on their performance and career planning and ask for a written evaluation at least annually.
- To perform research activities conscientiously, to maintain complete and accurate research records, and to catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project.
- To comply with all ethical standards, including all institutional, state, and federal regulations as they related to responsible conduct in research, possible conflicts of interest, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, data ownership, reporting, and sharing.
- To show respect for and work collegially with faculty, trainees, staff, and other individuals with whom the trainee interacts.
- To comply with all existing University policies, including the Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy, Title IX Sexual Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy, Duty to Report and Non-retaliation Policy, and other relevant policies.
- To assume progressive responsibility and management of their research project(s) as it matures.
- To demonstrate honest and professional communication with the mentor.
- To have open and timely discussions with the mentor concerning the dissemination of research findings, authorship and the distribution of research materials to third parties.
- To work with the mentor to disseminate research results through regional/national presentations, peer reviewed publications, etc. in a timely manner
- To understand that the trainee is ultimately responsible for their own career development.
- With respect to data ownership, to understand that the original notebooks, digital files, and tangible research materials belong to the institution and will remain in the lab when the trainee finishes training, in accordance with institutional policy.
- To actively seek out opportunities outside the laboratory (e.g., professional development seminars and workshops on oral communication, scientific writing, collaborative research, and teaching) to develop the full set of professional skills necessary for success in the trainee's chosen career.

All mentors and mentees are responsible for adhering to UAB's academic policies, as published in [Catalog of Graduate Programs](http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/) (<http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/>)

Notice of Receipt

The document above details best practices of conduct for both mentors and mentees. Additional resources are available in the UAB Faculty Handbook and the Graduate Catalog. By signing below, the mentor and mentee acknowledge receipt and understanding of the document above.

Mentor Name, Printed

Mentor Name, Signed

Date

Mentee Name, Printed

Mentee Name, Signed

Date