Mentor-Mentee Compact

Many problems in mentor-mentee relationships are due to failure to clearly communicate expectations. The most important time for communicating expectations is at the initiation of a new mentor-mentee relationship. The following checklist specifies important items that should be reviewed to establish clear expectations at the time a student joins a laboratory. This is not a contract; it is a starting place for discussion.

Both parties have read:

- *Competencies for the Doctoral Degree*
- *Mentor-Mentee Compact*

Both parties have discussed their expectations regarding the following:

- Definitions of productivity
- Frequency of one-on-one meetings
- Preferred means of routine communication
- Time of arrival and time spent in the lab each day
- Vacation and other leave
- Distribution of laboratory responsibilities
- The broad outlines of the student's dissertation project
- Other matters as necessary to establish expectations

I, _____, have read and discussed the recommended items with my new mentor and agree to fulfill my responsibilities as a student.

Signed_____ Date: _____

I, _____, have read and discussed the recommended items with my new student and agree to fulfill my responsibilities as a mentor.

Signed_____ Date: _____

Mentor-Mentee Compact

Adapted from: Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors: A framework for aligning the graduate student mentor-mentee relationship, January 2017, American Association of Medical Colleges

A foundational principle supporting the development of effective mentor-mentee relationships is the clear communication of expectations between the parties. Communication and aligning expectations are especially important at the establishment of a new mentoring relationship.

Although each mentoring relationship is different, the following are basic commitments that a student and mentor make with one another. These commitments constitute a compact – a formal agreement. These commitments should be revisited regularly as the student develops in the program.

Commitments of the Graduate Student

- I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree. I will be committed to my graduate education and will demonstrate this by my efforts in the classroom, the research laboratory, and all other related academic and professional activities. I will maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, initiative, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards, including complying with institutional and research group standards for contributing to an inclusive research environment.
- I will meet regularly with my research advisor to provide updates on the progress and results of my course work, research, and professional and career development activities.
- I will work with my research advisor to develop a thesis/dissertation project. This will include establishing a timeline for each phase of my work. I will strive to keep engaged with the work, discuss experimental findings and any pitfalls, and meet the established goals and deadlines.
- I will work with my research advisor to select a thesis/dissertation committee. I will commit to meeting with this committee according to program guidelines. I will discuss my progress to date and be responsive to the advice and constructive criticism from my committee.
- I will be a good lab citizen. I agree to take part in shared laboratory responsibilities and will be a careful steward of laboratory resources. I will maintain a safe and clean laboratory space. I will be respectful of, tolerant of, and work collegially with all laboratory personnel. I will be an active contributing member to all team efforts and collaborations and will respect individual contributions. I will also contribute to an environment that is safe, equitable, and free of harassment.
- I will maintain detailed, organized, and accurate research records. I acknowledge that original notebooks, digital files, and tangible research materials belong to the institution and will remain in the lab when I finish my thesis/dissertation so that other individuals can reproduce and carry on related research. Only with the explicit approval from my research mentor and in accordance with institutional policy may I make copies of my notebooks and digital files and have access to tangible research materials that I helped to generate during

my graduate training. I agree to leave my research notebooks, computer files, and laboratory materials in an orderly state accessible to others when I leave the institution.

- I will discuss policies on work hours, medical leave, and vacation with my graduate program and research advisor. I will consult with my advisor in advance of any planned absences and apprise my advisor of any unexpected absences due to illness or other issues.
- I will discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my research advisor.
- I will work with my advisor to disseminate all relevant research results in a timely manner before completion of all degree requirements.
- I will be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of my graduate program, graduate school, and institution. I will commit to meeting these requirements in the appropriate time frame
- I will attend and actively participate in laboratory meetings, seminars, and journal clubs that are part of my educational program. To enhance research, leadership, and additional professional skills, I will seek out other enrichment opportunities, such as participation in professional organizations and meetings, student representation on institutional committees, and coordination of departmental events.
- I will be knowledgeable of all institutional research policies and procedures and will abide by them. I will comply with all institutional laboratory safety practices and animal-use and human-research policies. I will participate in my institution's Responsible Conduct of Research Training Program and practice the guidelines presented therein while conducting my research. I will also seek input on and comply with institutional policies regarding my research design and data analysis. I will not disclose unpublished data to individuals or organizations outside the institution, including through artificial intelligence tools, without permission from my mentor.
- I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career. I recognize that I need to explore career opportunities and paths that match and develop my individual skills, values, and interests to achieve my desired career goals. I understand that there are tools such as the individual development plan that I should use to help me define my career goals and develop my training plan. I will seek guidance throughout my graduate education from my research advisor, thesis/dissertation committee, other mentors, and any other resources that can offer advice on career planning.

Commitments of the Research Advisor

- Throughout the graduate student's time in my laboratory, I will be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful. I will foster the graduate student's professional confidence and encourage intellectual development, critical thinking, curiosity, and creativity.
- I will be committed to meeting one-on-one with the student on a regular basis. I will regularly review the student's progress and provide timely feedback and goal-setting advice.
- I will be committed to the graduate student's research project. I will work with the student to help plan and guide the research project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion of the project.

- I will help the graduate student select a thesis/dissertation committee. I will ensure that this committee meets regularly according to program guidelines to review and discuss the graduate student's progress and future directions. I understand that the function of this committee is to help the student complete the doctoral research, and I will respect the ideas and suggestions of my colleagues on the committee.
- I will provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, equitable, and free of harassment.
- I will demonstrate respect for all graduate students as individuals without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, and I will cultivate a culture of tolerance among the members of the laboratory.
- I will be committed to providing financial resources according to institutional guidelines for the graduate student to conduct thesis/dissertation research. I will not require the graduate student to perform tasks that are unrelated to the training program and professional development.
- I will expect the graduate student to share common laboratory responsibilities and to be a good steward of laboratory resources. I will also regularly meet with the graduate student to review data management, storage, and record keeping. I will discuss with the student intellectual policy issues regarding disclosure, patent rights, and publishing research discoveries.
- I will discuss with the graduate student authorship policies regarding papers. I will acknowledge the graduate student's scientific contributions to the work in my laboratory, and I will provide assistance in getting the student's work published in a timely manner.
- I will be knowledgeable of and guide the graduate student through the requirements and deadlines of the graduate program and the institution.
- I will encourage the graduate student to attend and present their research at scientific/professional meetings and strive to secure and facilitate funding for such activities. In addition, I will provide opportunities for the student to discuss science and their research findings with colleagues and fellow scientists within the institution and broader scientific community—for example, at lab meetings, research days, and seminars.
- I will promote the training of the graduate student in professional skills needed for a successful career. These skills include but are not limited to oral and written communication, grant writing, management and leadership, collaborative research, responsible conduct of research, teaching, and mentoring. I will encourage the student to seek opportunities to develop skills in other areas, even if not specifically required by the student's program. I will also encourage the graduate student to seek input from multiple mentors.
- I will create an environment in which the student can discuss and explore career opportunities and paths that match their skills, values, and interests and be supportive of their career path choices. I will be accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals. I will work with the student on an individual development plan to help define career goals and identify training milestones. I will provide letters of recommendation for the student's next phase of professional development.