

Mentee and Mentor Expectations Agreement

**Adapted from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Group on Graduate Research, Education, and Training (GREAT) and Bradshaw, Pfund, Rediske (2010), Entering Research: A Facilitator's Manual: Workshops for Students Beginning in Research Science and Dr. Trina McMahon, Graduate Trainee Agreement, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

This agreement outlines the parameters of our work together. It will be revisited yearly and modified as necessary.

1. Research project:

The tentative title of the project is _____

The goals of the project are _____

The approximate duration of the project is _____

2. Personal and professional goals:

The trainee's overall personal and professional goals are _____

The mentor's overall personal and professional goals are _____

Our shared goals at different time points are

_____ after _____ years,
_____ after _____ years,
_____ after _____ years,
_____ after _____ years,

3. Mentee's role on the project:

The mentee will have primary responsibility for the project. The mentee will maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards throughout the project. In addition, the mentee will be expected to:

- Read the background literature and stay current on new literature.
- Save all protocols, notes, data, presentations, and manuscripts in the shared laboratory drive in a detailed, organized, and accurate fashion. All items remain property of the laboratory when the mentee leaves. The mentor may use all items as part of training, presentations, manuscripts, grant applications, or teaching and outreach material.
- Work with the mentor to acquire the skills necessary to complete the project goals. This may involve training with the mentor, other laboratory members, or collaborations with other laboratories. The mentor must be kept informed of all collaborations so that they can be acknowledged appropriately. The mentee is also expected to reciprocate with other laboratory members and collaborators to share their skills.
- Work with the mentor to ensure access to the necessary equipment to complete the project goals. All equipment must be treated carefully and returned to its starting state at the end of use. Any equipment problems will be immediately reported to appropriate personnel. Mistakes happen, but it is not acceptable to return something broken or damaged without taking the necessary steps to fix it. Inform the mentor of all outside equipment used so that it can be acknowledged appropriately.
- Present work in written and oral presentations in both informal (i.e. update for a collaborator) and formal (i.e. conference presentation or manuscript) settings. All public presentations must be reviewed and approved by the mentor in advance. PhD students will be expected to be the first author on at least two peer-reviewed journal publications, preferably three or four. Be responsive to advice and constructive criticism. Feedback from laboratory members, the mentor, collaborators, the thesis committee, manuscript and grant reviewers is intended to improve the mentee's scientific work and advance their professional development.
- Meet agreed upon deadlines for the degree program and research project.
- Be a good laboratory citizen by taking part in shared laboratory responsibilities and activities, using laboratory resources carefully and frugally, and maintaining a safe and clean laboratory environment.
- Be tolerant and respectful of all laboratory members regardless of differences in race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, values, personalities, work styles, and theoretical perspectives. Strive to maintain a cohesive and welcoming work environment.

3. Meetings and communications:

- Group lab meetings (60 min, once every week or every two weeks) – One laboratory member will give a formal presentation on their project to the rest of the group. These meetings are scheduled for the entire semester (fall, spring, summer) at the start of the semester. Laboratory members are free to swap dates if they have a conflict.
- Individual lab meetings (45 min, once every week or every two weeks) – Each mentee will meet individually with the mentor to present results, complications, troubleshooting, new directions, etc. for their project. This is also a good time for any conversations about overall progress and goals, personal issues, feedback on things that are or are not working in the mentoring relationship, vacation scheduling, review of this expectations agreement, etc. These meetings are scheduled for the entire semester (fall, spring, summer) at the start of the semester. Laboratory members are free to swap dates/times with other members or reschedule with the mentor as necessary with reasonable notice. Both the mentor and mentee will keep written notes on the outcomes of the individual meetings.
- Non-urgent communications – Email is the preferred method for the mentor, mentee, and other laboratory members to exchange non-urgent information. If a response is required, it should be clearly requested and provided within 48 hours. If it will take an individual longer than this for a detailed response, the individual should acknowledge receipt of the email and estimate a response timeline.
- Urgent communications – Text is the preferred method for the mentor, mentee, and other laboratory members to exchange urgent and/or time-sensitive communications. If a response is required, it should be provided ASAP.

4. Professional meeting(s) and/or networking opportunities:

Mentees that have material to present can expect to attend one professional meeting per year. Meetings that laboratory members may attend include, but are not limited to, SB3C, NAVBO Workshops or Vasculata, BMES Annual Meeting, ASMB Biannual meeting, and the Gordon Conference on Elastin and Elastic Fibers.

The mentor will introduce the mentee to collaborators and colleagues at these meetings to provide networking opportunities. Additional networking opportunities include visiting other laboratories to learn skills or use equipment, meeting with visiting seminar speakers, and participating in laboratory organized outreach activities. The mentor will make every effort to provide connections or networking opportunities as requested to advance the mentees personal and professional goals.

6. When to be and not to be in lab:

Mentees are expected to work 40 – 60 hours/week to advance their research project and meet degree requirements. While taking classes and working as a course assistant, some of these hours will necessarily be taken up by coursework and teaching duties. While working fulltime in the laboratory, this time may include active bench research, as well as other responsibilities and activities including literature review for the research project and seminar attendance for the degree program. Additional professional development activities such as career preparation or exploration, networking, public speaking, scientific outreach, scientific communication, teaching, entrepreneurship, etc. are included in the total hourly range. However, if there are an abundance of additional professional development activities, the mentee would be expected to be working on the higher end of the hourly range to ensure sufficient progress on the research project.

A regular 40 hour week in the U.S. is typically Mon – Fri from 9 am – 5 pm. The mentee should be present in person in the laboratory during most of these regular hours unless previous arrangements have been made. It is imperative that most members of the laboratory have overlapping work hours for safety, training, troubleshooting, and collaboration. It will often be necessary to work outside of these hours to ensure sufficient progress on the research project and PhD program expectations. Any regular commitments (i.e. outreach, teaching, personal caregiving responsibilities) that take the mentee out of the laboratory during regular working hours must be discussed with and approved by the mentor.

All University holidays are honored. In addition, mentees are expected to take no more than two – three weeks of personal and vacation time per year away from the laboratory. Mentees must discuss planned time away from the laboratory with the mentor at least two weeks in advance and must make arrangements for all laboratory responsibilities to be taken care of during that time. All time away must be marked on the laboratory calendar.

7. Funding:

All mentees are fully funded. The mentor will make every effort to ensure that funding continues, as long as the mentee is making sufficient progress toward the research goals and degree requirements. Project changes may occur and graduation dates may be adjusted due to funding constraints. The mentor will also encourage the mentee to apply for individual fellowships as part of their personal and professional development.

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We agree to uphold this agreement. We agree on the stated goals and will discuss any needed modifications at least once a year.

Mentee Name

Mentee Signature

Date

Mentor Name

Mentor Signature

Date

Co-Mentor Name
(if applicable; Faculty only)

Co-Mentor Signature

Date