

Agreement Between University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy (UMSOP) Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors

Predoctoral training entails both formal education in a specific discipline and research experience in which the graduate student trains under the supervision of one or more investigators who will mentor the student throughout graduate school. A positive mentoring relationship between the predoctoral student and the research advisor is a vital component of the student's preparation for future careers and mentoring roles.

Individuals who pursue a graduate degree are embarking on a path of lifelong learning and are therefore expected to take responsibility for their scientific and professional learning and development from the onset. Graduate students must be in charge and take ownership of their progress through the graduate program. This means seeking guidance and knowledge regarding course requirements, program requirements, policies, and procedures. Students must also commit to working on an individual development plan.

Investing deeply in mentoring relationships is one way to take ownership of your journey from consumer to producer of knowledge. Mentoring is defined as:

a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé). (Bozeman and Feeney, 2007, p. 731)

Mentoring offers the psychological/emotional support, support for setting goals and establishing a career path, support for developing academic knowledge, and access to experience and guidance that can bolster students' sense of self-efficacy (Crisp and Cruz, 2009). Mentorship is positively correlated with success in post-secondary educational settings (Edney, 2019) and can prove instrumental to maximizing opportunities to develop key skills needed to be successful in post-graduate study (Chaparro and Cyrus, 2022). Mentors provide guidance on and knowledge about course requirements and program requirements, policies, and procedures, and will be essential partners in helping you to develop your Individual Development Plans.

Faculty members who advise students - with the backing of the graduate program and UMSOP - are expected to fulfill the role of mentor, which includes providing scientific training, guidance and resources, allowing time for graduate students to attend courses, seminars, and workshops on responsible conduct of research and research ethics, and encouraging completion in a timely manner. The faculty advisor also serves as a scientific and professional role model for the graduate student. In addition, the advisor offers encouragement as the graduate student prepares an individual development plan and facilitates the experiences and professional skills development essential for a broad set of career paths.

Responsibilities & Expectations of UMSOP Graduate Students (Mentee)

- **I acknowledge that mentorship is a reciprocal relationship and that I must do my part to maintain it.** This relationship will provide the necessary supports to ensure that I am successful in my graduate program.
- **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 be responsible for reaching out and scheduling these meetings with my research advisor.
- **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 at least annually (or more frequently, 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 use laboratory resources carefully and frugally. 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 demonstrate respect for all individuals without regard to age, sex, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, and I will cultivate a culture of inclusivity within and outside the laboratory.**
- **I will maintain detailed, organized, and accurate research records.** With respect to data ownership, 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, in accordance with institutional policy. 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 will discuss policies on work hours, medical leave, and vacation with my graduate**

This document was adopted from the AAMC's *Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors*, January 2017.

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, intellectual property, 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 and will abide by all institutional policies and procedures.
- **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.** 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 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 I should use the individual development plan to help me define my career goals and develop my training plan. I will seek guidance throughout my graduate education from my research advisor, career counseling services, thesis/dissertation committee, other mentors, and any other resources that can offer advice on career planning and the wide range of career opportunities available.

Responsibilities & Expectations of Research Advisors (Mentor)

- **I acknowledge that mentorship is a reciprocal relationship and that I must do my part to maintain it. 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 continue my interest and involvement as the student moves forward into a career.
- **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 assure that this committee meets at least annually (or more frequently, 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 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 age, sex, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation, and I will cultivate a culture of inclusivity among the entire laboratory.**
- **I will be committed to providing resources, as appropriate and according to my program and UMSOP 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 use resources carefully and frugally.** 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 policies regarding authorship and intellectual property.** 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, as well as teaching requirements, if any, and human resources guidelines.**
- **I will encourage the graduate student to attend and present their research at scientific/professional meetings and make an effort 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 labmeetings, 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 and research ethics, 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.

By signing this document, the research advisor and the graduate student agree to each other's responsibilities and expectations.

Graduate Student (Mentee) Signature & Date

Research Advisor (Mentor) Signature & Date