

Thesis Mentor Responsibilities

The thesis mentor's primary responsibility is to guide and inspire students to reach their scholarly potential. A mentor is expected to promote a student's intellectual growth, guide research progress, and uphold high academic and research standards.

An effective mentor:

- Encourages independence in the student in terms of scientific thought and process.
- Is supportive, accessible, encouraging, respectful, and fosters open communication.
- Ensures that the research environment is safe, equitable, and free from harassment and discrimination.
- Models ethical behavior, and discusses ethical approaches in conducting the research.
- Communicates expectations regarding work habits and behavior in the laboratory.
- Works closely with the student to design a meaningful thesis project.
- Provides consistent and constructive feedback about laboratory skills, writing, and presentations, being honest when performance does not meet expectations.
- Encourages student presentations at local, national, and international conferences.
- Acknowledges student contributions.
- Facilitates timely publication of student research.
- Pursues opportunities to secure resources necessary to provide stable financial support.
- Prepares the student for her or his chosen career path by discussing goals and plans for achieving them.
- Consults with the student in identifying a position upon graduation, and provides letters of recommendation that fully represent the student's experience and accomplishments.

A more complete description of mentor responsibilities can be found at the sources below.

"Graduate Supervision" University of Pennsylvania 2006

www.upenn.edu/provost/images/uploads/Graduate_Supervsr_2011.pdf

"Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors" AAMC 2008

www.aamc.org/gradcompact

Thesis Student Responsibilities as a Mentee

The primary responsibility of a student is to strive toward the attainment of his or her intellectual potential as a scientist. The student should be receptive and attentive to the advice from mentors, ask for help when needed, and work diligently.

An effective mentee:

- Pursues scientific goals with intensity, motivation and creativity, working with integrity in all aspects of graduate training.
- Takes ownership of her or his training, with guidance from the thesis advisor, thesis advisory committee, and relevant graduate group and BGS resources.
- Reads relevant scientific literature.
- Thinks intentionally and often about short-, mid-, and long-term training and development goals.
- Meets regularly with the thesis advisor to provide updates on the results of activities, experiments, and progress in general.
- Initiates meetings on a regular basis with her or his thesis advisory committee in accordance with graduate group policy, and will initiate meetings as needed or desired with members of this committee individually for guidance regarding research and other professional activities.
- Strives to be a good lab citizen, for example by taking part in shared laboratory responsibilities, using laboratory resources carefully and frugally, and working collegially and respectfully with all laboratory personnel.
- Attends and participates in laboratory meetings, and recognizes that seminars, journal clubs, and other professional activities encouraged or required by the thesis advisor, graduate group, or BGS are important to training.
- Maintains a detailed, organized, and accurate laboratory notebook.
- Complies with all institutional policies, including safe laboratory practices, responsible conduct of research, experimental design and transparency as it relates to reproducibility, and individual development plans.
- Discusses policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with the thesis advisor.
- Takes ownership of professional development, through completion of an IDP annually and with guidance from the thesis advisor, the thesis advisory committee, other mentors, BGS resources, and career counseling services.

A more complete description of responsibilities of a student as a mentee can be found at the sources below:

“Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors” AAMC 2008
www.aamc.org/gradcompact

Responsible Conduct of Research, A.E. Shamoo and D.B. Resnick, 3rd edition, Oxford University

Thesis Advisory Committee Mentorship Responsibilities

The primary charge of a thesis advisory committee is to evaluate the scientific progress of the student and to suggest directions in research that will culminate in a successful thesis. The committee as a whole, and as individual members, should be willing as well to help in other facets of the student's scientific and professional development.

Effective mentorship from members of a thesis advisory committee involves:

- Critical evaluation of the student's scientific progress, and of the competencies that relate to scientific pursuit in general.
- Feedback to the thesis mentor and/or student regarding feasibility of research goals and plans, especially when the proposed plan is incompatible with timely completion of the thesis.
- Cross-checks on training in responsible conduct of research and experimental design as it relates to reproducibility, verifying that the lab notebook is complete and well-managed.
- An active interest in the student's professional development, using the student's IDP as one point of discussion.
- Interactions that promote open dialog on science, skills, interests, and aspirations.
- A willingness to step in should problems in the dynamics between the student and thesis mentor and/or other elements of the research environment be recognized.

The chair of the thesis advisory committee plays the primary role in ensuring that the committee meets all of its responsibilities.