Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan Description

Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must upload under “Mentoring Plan” in the supplementary documentation section of FastLane, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. In no more than one page, the mentoring plan must describe the mentoring that will be provided to all postdoctoral researchers supported by the project, regardless of whether they reside at the submitting organization, any subrecipient organization, or at any organization participating in a simultaneously submitted collaborative proposal. Proposers are advised that the mentoring plan must not be used to circumvent the 15-page Project Description limitation. Mentoring activities provided to postdoctoral researchers supported on the project will be evaluated under the Broader Impacts review criterion.

Examples of mentoring activities include, but are not limited to: career counseling; training in preparation of grant proposals, publications and presentations; guidance on ways to improve teaching and mentoring skills; guidance on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas; and training in responsible professional practices.
Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan Template

Orientation and Goal Setting:
The PI will conduct an orientation meeting with the postdoc at the beginning of the tenure to provide him/her with the necessary information about the project and provide guidelines on the regular functioning of the lab and the University. The PI and the postdoc will then work together to define specific goals for the postdoctoral period, including particular skills that the postdoc would like to develop as part of the tenure to facilitate future career plans. A plan to oversee the mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students will be part of this skill set. The PI and postdoc will determine a schedule for regular meetings, both one-on-one concerning the postdoc’s specific project as well as with the entire research team.

Preparation of Grant Proposals, Publications, and Presentations:
The postdoc will work directly with the PI in the search for funding opportunities, as well as the Planning, drafting, and revising of grant applications to a range of private and federal funding sources (NSF, NIH, DOD, and DoE). The postdoc will also be responsible for preparing the first drafts of manuscripts and presentations, which the PI will then review and discuss one-on-one with the postdoc. Revisions will be done in a team-based manner to both improve the postdoc’s communication skills and to demonstrate effective mentorship in this area.

Laboratory and Workforce Management Skills:
The postdoc will be assigned both a graduate and undergraduate students to mentor. Depending on the interest of the postdoc, a team of undergraduate students will be assigned to him/her to lead in a particular aspect of his/her project, allowing him/her to practice small group management and leadership skills, as well as goal setting and effective encouragement methods. The PI will provide feedback on the effectiveness of the mentorship and leadership, as well as act as council for suggestions on how to handle problems that arise should the postdoc wish.

Responsible Professional Practices:
The consideration of and correct decision making regarding ethical issues will be a crucial part of the postdoctoral training. At least once per year at the weekly group meeting, the PI and postdoc will lead a discussion about ethical issues that they have encountered and encourage the junior group leaders to discuss the appropriate courses of action. The postdoc will also be required to attend the University of Maine’s Responsible Conduct of Research course during their tenure as a refresher. The PI will also share tools with the postdoc for determining the correct course of action in the case of an ethical dilemma, including materials through the National Center for Professional and Research Ethics, as well as any project-specific materials through trainings available from the Division of Research Safety, the Institution Review Board, or other relevant groups.