

# The Office of Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs of the University of Pennsylvania Mentorship Compact between Postdoctoral Scholars and their Research Mentors

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## *Preamble*

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Postdoctoral Scholars (PDS) come to the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) from around the world, after completing a terminal degree, to continue their training in a chosen biomedical discipline through supervised research under the mentorship of a Penn Faculty Member. These individuals come with a unique variety of experiences and backgrounds for a defined period, not to exceed five years, to learn new skills and advance their careers, while participating in Penn's world class biomedical research program. PDS are not graduate students, research staff, nor faculty members.

The Office of Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs (BPP) has created this document based on the Association of American Medical Colleges' (AAMC) [Compact Between Postdoctoral Appointees and Their Mentors and the](#) Penn Biomedical Graduate Studies (BGS) Mentorship Compact (revised 3/13/23). This document can serve as a framework for aligning the mentor-mentee relationship between Faculty Mentors and PDS. It can be used to initiate conversations between mentors and mentees at the beginning of their relationship and assist with the alignment of expectations and responsibilities of both parties.

We recommend that Postdoctoral Scholars and Faculty Mentor(s) carefully and thoroughly read the entirety of this document and then discuss its content together to align expectations around work, progress, and goals (e.g., typical work schedules, communication styles, meeting regularity, and publication goals). In addition to their primary research mentor, PDS are encouraged to seek additional advice, input, and guidance from multiple individuals and, if desired, develop their own mentorship committee. If there are co-mentors at the University of Pennsylvania, this compact can be reviewed and discussed with each mentor. If there are any questions or concerns from either PDS or the faculty mentor(s), the Office of Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs is available to discuss.

*It is recommended that this compact be completed and, if helpful, uploaded to the BPP Appointment system within the first 30-days of a new postdoctoral scholar starting in a lab at Penn.*

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*As a mentee I will:*

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- Maintain a relationship with my mentor that is based on mutual respect, aligned expectations, and open and effective communication.
- Work with my mentor from the beginning to establish clear expectations for my research.
- Take ownership of my research project with the input, guidance, and approval of my mentor(s).
- Manage my own professional development with guidance from my mentor(s), BPP resources, career counseling services, and the completion of an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Have discussions with my mentor(s) about my research progress, career goals, access to needed resources, and milestone achievements, by arranging meetings as needed, and maintaining an open dialogue with, my postdoctoral mentor(s).
- Stay informed of the latest developments in my field through reading the literature, speaking with experts and colleagues, attending relevant seminars and scientific meetings, and building a professional network of other investigators both within Penn and beyond for mutual support and potential collaboration.
- Commit to working with my mentor to submit my research findings for publication in a timely manner and that all researchers involved receive credit for their contributions.
- Work with my mentor and other members of our research team to maintain a safe, respectful, inclusive, and secure working environment.
- Clearly communicate time off request with my mentor before taking time away and will track appropriate accrual and use of comp time during holidays and Penn's special winter recess.
- Comply with all institutional policies, including safe laboratory practices, responsible conduct of research training, complete and proper documentation of all experiments, accessing only data that I have been authorized to access, and the maintenance of transparency.
- Respect all ethical and institutional standards when conducting my research and seek appropriate guidance from others, including my mentor(s), the Chair of my department, the Faculty Liaison or Vice-Chair of Education for my department, the Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs Office, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, appropriate school administration, or the Ombuds Office, if presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties or identify a possible source of future conflict.

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*As a research mentor I will:*

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- Maintain a relationship with my mentee that is based on mutual respect, aligned expectations, and open and effective communication.
- Ensure that mutually agreed upon expectations and goals for my mentee's research project and career aspirations are established and updated regularly.
- Ensure my mentee's postdoctoral project is feasible, appropriate, and is supported to the best of my abilities.
- Support my mentee's efforts to build necessary professional skills and to promote independence by participating in academic workshops and activities outside of the lab, presenting at conferences (as appropriate), applying for funding opportunities, and completing an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Arrange meetings as needed and maintain an open dialogue with my mentee.
- Facilitate my mentee's interactions with other scientists, help them build a professional network, and encourage them to attend scientific meetings.
- Work collaboratively with possible co-mentors to further benefit my mentee and facilitate their transition to the next stages of their career.
- Commit to encouraging and supporting my mentee to submit their research findings for publication in a timely manner, ensuring appropriate authorship order, and that my mentee receives credit for their contributions now and in future manuscripts.
- Work with my mentee and other members of our research team to establish and maintain a safe, respectful, inclusive, and secure working environment.
- Work with my mentee to track time off balances and extra work hours during holidays and Penn's special winter recess and will acknowledge and approve time off requests in a timely manner.
- Comply with all institutional policies, including safe laboratory practices, responsible conduct of research, complete and proper documentation of all experiments, and clearly outlining expectations for maintaining, viewing, and archiving data in furtherance of scientific transparency.
- Respect all ethical and institutional standards when overseeing my mentee's research and encourage my mentee to ask for guidance from others, including myself, the Chair of my department, the Faculty Liaison or Vice-Chair of Education for my department, the Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs Office, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, appropriate school administration, or the Ombuds Office, if presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties or identify an possible source of future conflict.

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*Acknowledgement (optional)*

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*You may upload a copy to the BPP Appointment system for storage, if you wish  
(file type "Mentorship Compact")*