

## **Wayne State University**

### **Guiding Principles between Postdoctoral Trainees and Their Mentors**

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), in collaboration with the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA), recommends a “Compact ” be fashioned between all postdoctoral fellows and their mentors at the time of hiring to discuss expectations for career development, performance, and training. They provided a template document for this purpose, and the Wayne State University Postdoctoral Office adapted this format as a starting document for postdocs and mentors to modify as seems appropriate to the particular training experience. The agreed-upon version of this statement of principles must be submitted, along with a formal appointment letter, to the home academic unit at the time of hiring.

Postdoctoral training is an integral component of the postdoctoral trainees’ preparation for career advancement. Postdoctoral trainees typically join an institution to further their training in a chosen discipline after recently obtaining their terminal degree. This training is conducted in an apprenticeship mode where she/he works under the supervision of an investigator qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. The postdoctoral trainee may undertake scholarship, research, service, and teaching activities that together provide a training experience essential for career advancement.

#### **Quality Postdoctoral Training**

Postdoctoral trainees should be trained to independently formulate meaningful hypothesis, design and conduct interpretable experiments, adhere to good laboratory practices, analyze results critically, understand the broad significance of their research findings, and uphold the highest ethical standards in research. The development of additional skills-including oral and written communication, grant writing, and laboratory management-are considered appropriate adjuncts to this training.

#### **Importance of Mentoring in Postdoctoral Training**

Effective mentoring is critical for postdoctoral training and requires that the primary mentor dedicate substantial time to ensure personal and professional development. A good mentor builds a relationship with the trainee that is characterized by mutual respect and understanding. Attributes of a good mentor include being approachable, available, and willing to share his/her knowledge; listening effectively; providing encouragement and constructive criticism; and offering expertise and guidance.

#### **Foster Breadth and Flexibility in Career Choices**

Postdoctoral trainees should have access to training experiences of sufficient breadth to ensure that they are prepared to pursue a wide range of professional career options. Effective and regular career guidance is essential and should be provided by the mentor and the institution.

## Compact

### Commitments of Postdoctoral Trainees

- **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career.** I recognize that I must take a realistic look at career opportunities and follow a path that matches my individual skills, values, and interests.
- **I will develop a mutually defined research project with my mentor that includes well-defined goals and timelines.** Ideally, this project should be outlined and agreed upon at the time of the initial appointment.
- **I will perform my research activities conscientiously, maintain good research records, and catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project.**
- **I will respect all ethical standards when conducting my research including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes.** I recognize that this commitment includes asking for guidance when presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties and reporting on breeches of ethical or compliance standards by me and/or others.
- **I will show respect for and will work collegially with my coworkers, supports staff, and other individuals with whom I interact.**
- **I will endeavor to assume progressive responsibility and management of my research projects (s) as it matures.** I recognize that assuming responsibility for the conduct of research projects is a critical step on the path of independence.
- I will seek regular feedback on my performance and ask for a formal evaluation at least annually.
- **I will have open and timely discussions with my mentor concerning the dissemination of research finding and the distribution of research materials to third parties.**
- **I recognize that I have embarked on a career requiring “lifelong learning.”** To meet this obligation I must stay abreast of the latest developments in my specialized field through reading the literature, regular attendance at relevant seminar series, and attendance at scientific meetings.
- **I will actively see opportunities (e.g. professional development seminars and workshops in oral communication, scientific writing, and teaching) to develop the full set of professional skills necessary to be successful for my chosen career.**
- **At the end of my appointment, in accordance with institution policy, I will leave behind all original notebooks, computerized files, and tangible research materials so that other individuals can carry on related research, I will also work with my mentor to submit the research results for publication in a timely manner.** I can make copies of my notebooks and computerized files, and have access to tangible research materials which I helped to generate during my postdoctoral appointment according to institutional policy.

### Commitments of Mentors

- **I acknowledge that the postdoctoral period is a time of advanced training intended to develop the skills needed to promote the career of the postdoctoral trainee.**
- **I will work with the postdoctoral trainee to define a set of expectations and goals at the outset of the postdoctoral training period, and I will work with the postdoctoral trainee to create an individual career development plan.**
- **I will strive to maintain a relationship with the postdoctoral trainee that is based on trust and mutual respect.** I acknowledge that open communication and periodic formal performance reviews, conducted at least annually will help ensure that the expectation so both parties are met.
- **I will promote all ethical standards for conducting research including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy, and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes.** I will clearly define expectations for conduct of research in my research group and make myself available to discuss ethical concerns as they arise.
- **I will help provide the postdoctoral trainee with opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to become an expert in an agreed upon area of investigation.**
- **I will provide the trainee with the required guidance and mentoring, and will seek the assistance of other faculty and department//institutional resources when necessary.** Although I am expected to provide guidance and education in technical areas, I recognize that education also occurs by example. I will help provide access to formal opportunities/programs in complementary areas necessary for a successful career.
- **I will provide a training environment that is suited to the individual needs of the postdoctoral trainee in order to ensure his/her personal and professional growth.** I will encourage a progressive increase in the level of responsibility an independence to facilitate the transition to a fully independent career.
- **I will encourage the interaction of the postdoctoral trainee with fellow colleagues both here and elsewhere, when possible, and encourage the trainee's attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.**
- **I will ensure that the research performed by a postdoctoral trainee is submitted for publication in a timely manner and that she/he receive appropriate credit for the work she/he performs.** I will acknowledge her/his contribution to the development of any intellectual property and will clearly define future access to tangible research material according to institutional policy.
- **I recognize that there are multiple career options available for a postdoctoral trainee and will provide encouragement to explore appropriate options.** I recognize that not all postdoctoral trainees will become academic faculty. To prepare a postdoctoral trainee for other career paths, I will direct her/him to the resources that explore non-academic careers, and discuss these options.
- **I will commit to being a supportive colleague to postdoctoral trainees as they transition the next stage of their career an o the extent possible, throughout their professional life.** I recognize that the role of a mentor continues after the formal training period.

## Obligations and Responsibilities

### Obligations of Mentors

Mentors' responsibilities include:

- develop, in consultation with the PDT, a mutually satisfactory research project or scholarly program, as detailed in the Training Plan developed during the initial appointment phase;
- encourage PDTs to present their work and to publish their results in a timely fashion;
- provide guidelines on authorship expectations and responsibilities;
- encourage PDTs to acquire and enhance their knowledge and technical skills as dictated by their current and future needs;
- arrange and oversee teaching and service opportunities as appropriate to their discipline and program;
- encourage PDTs to apply for training and research support as appropriate;
- meet regularly with their PDTs to discuss progress in their research;
- provide a written annual review of performance that will be maintained in the home Department/Center/Institute as well as the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs;
- insure that PDTs are aware of University policies regarding postdoctoral training and policies of the University;
- provide career counseling

### Obligations of Postdoctoral Trainees

PDTs have certain obligations to their mentor, the group in which they are working, the Department/Center/Institute with which they are associated, the sponsor whose funds support them, and the University. These obligations include but are not limited to:

- the conscientious discharge of their research, scholarly, service and teaching responsibilities, as applicable;
- conformity with ethical standards in all aspects of training;
- compliance with good scholarly practice including the maintenance of adequate research and other relevant records;
- compliance with University policies and federal, state and local laws regarding the protection of human/animal subjects and due observation of University standards regarding use of isotopes, chemicals, infectious agents, and the like, if applicable;
- open and timely discussion with their mentor regarding possession or distribution of tangible property such as materials, reagents, and the like;
- discussion of laboratory records and other scholarly materials, if relevant;
- prior disclosure of appropriate scholarly information, findings or techniques proposed for dissemination privately, at scholarly meetings, or in publications;
- collegial conduct toward all members of the University community;
- compliance with all applicable University policies

### Research Records

Primary research records created by PDTs during the tenure of their training at the University are the property of the University and are retained by the University when the PDT leaves. Although PDTs may photocopy such records, they must first review with their mentors the records they propose to copy.

Exceptions to this practice may be granted, subject to written prior approval of the Postdoctoral Office, in fields where it can be convincingly demonstrated that there is a well-established practice that individual scholars retain ownership of data generated through their research efforts. In such cases the PDTs will be permitted to retain notes and records associated with their research and publish their findings subsequent to leaving the University, provided an appropriate acknowledgement is made of the University's contribution to the work (e.g., Department/Center/Institute/University cited as performance site; with the written permission of the mentor; and with appropriate acknowledgement of involved

personnel including mentor and source of funding. Please see University Guidelines Regarding Data Ownership at [http://research.wayne.edu/compliance/Data\\_Ownership\\_5\\_2\\_062.pdf](http://research.wayne.edu/compliance/Data_Ownership_5_2_062.pdf)

### **Proprietary Materials**

Proprietary materials developed in the course of the performance of research have intrinsic value. Third party access to these materials helps speed research by circumventing the need to re-create the technology. WSU diligently supports the dissemination of these materials to academic researchers, and strives to identify the most expeditious avenue for distribution.

Ownership of proprietary materials developed at Wayne State University is determined in accordance with WSU's Patent and Copyright Policy ( <http://research.wayne.edu/internaldocs/ippol.pdf>). Technology Commercialization at WSU ( [www.techtransfer.wayne.edu](http://www.techtransfer.wayne.edu)), in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, provides guidance and assistance in determining ownership, distribution options, and drafting and negotiating material transfer agreements.

Please note that materials developed using federal funds are also subject to federal policies, principles and guidelines (see [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/intell-property\\_64FR72090.pdf](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/intell-property_64FR72090.pdf) and <https://s-edison.info.nih.gov/Edison/biological-materials.html>). Materials developed using other sources of funds or third party materials may be subject to other terms and conditions.

## **Training**

### **Orientation**

A compendium of information is provided for each PDT upon arrival at the University. This compendium is also posted on the University web site and includes:

- a copy of these guidelines
- conflict of interest and financial disclosure policies
- intellectual property policies
- procedures regarding misconduct in research
- the sexual harassment policy and nondiscrimination policies
- parking policies
- a clear statement about benefits
- information regarding taxation
- a list of sources of information within the University, including *Wayne State University Personnel Manual for All Non-Represented Employees* (Non-Rep Manual).
- information regarding the Office of the Ombudsman
- working with Information Systems, home department/center/institute will arrange e-mail accounts for their PDTs.

### **Responsible Conduct of Research**

PDTs are considered to be professionals in training. One goal of their professional experience at Wayne State University is to provide ongoing training relevant to the responsible conduct of research. Such training could include the following elements, as appropriate to the individual trainee:

- data management, ownership of intellectual property, tangible research materials, and other relevant material
- mentor/trainee responsibilities
- publication practices and responsible authorship
- peer review
- rights of collaborators
- human subject research
- research involving animals

- research misconduct
- conflict of interest
- compliance with existing Federal and University policies

**Career Development**

- PDTs are encouraged to explore the career development opportunities provided through the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.
- When PDTs engage in teaching, appropriate training is available from the University Office of Teaching and Learning.

**Office of the Ombudsperson**

It is recognized that from time to time disagreements may arise between a PDT and a mentor. PDTs should be clearly informed by the Postdoctoral Office about the options they can exercise under such circumstances. In particular, they should be made aware of services available through any ombudsmen in individual Schools, and through the University's Office of the Ombudsperson.

**By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read the above Guiding Principles between Postdoctoral Trainees and Their Mentors.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postdoctoral Trainee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date