

Commitments of faculty mentors and postdoctoral fellows

The relationship between a postdoctoral fellow and their faculty mentor is at the heart of a successful postdoctoral experience. Sometimes faculty expectations for their postdoctoral trainees are not well-communicated or met, and the converse is true for the postdoctoral fellow. The postdoc trainee relies on their faculty mentor to provide research and career guidance whilst supporting increasing independence, and at times these expectations are not fulfilled. To help build an effective postdoc trainee-faculty mentor relationship, the university has developed the *JHU Mentoring Expectations* document, that outlines commitments of faculty mentors and their postdoctoral fellows. This document is provided on the pages that follow. This document should be discussed by the faculty mentor and postdoctoral fellow at the onset of postdoctoral training and periodically reviewed according to departmental policy.

JHU Mentoring Expectations: Commitments of Faculty Mentors and Postdoctoral Fellows

This document outlines expectations of faculty mentors and postdoctoral fellows (PDFs). These expectations should be discussed together.

Faculty mentors should commit to the following responsibilities:

Training:

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to mentor the PDF.** This responsibility includes committing to the training of their PDF, building on the PDF's individual professional background and being supportive of their individual professional aspirations.
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to participate in ongoing and regular meetings with their advisees to discuss research progress.** The mentor and PDF should agree on expected frequency of and preparation for meetings and use meetings to brainstorm ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and outline next steps. The primary faculty mentor should identify a co-advisor/mentor should the primary mentor be unavailable for an extended period (sabbatical, leave, etc.).
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to encourage their advisees to reach out, as relevant, to additional co-advisors or informal mentors.**
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility clarify the PDF's funding source and to clarify any expectations associate with the funding.**
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to contribute to a training environment that fosters independent, scholarly research, and professional growth.**

Research

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to provide guidance in scholarly research.** This responsibility includes helping to identify a workable research project and helping to set reasonable goals and timelines for research completion. The mentor should encourage the PDF to expand their skill sets and share ideas with others at Johns Hopkins and externally.
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to monitor research progress.** The mentor should encourage effective use of time. The mentor should meet regularly with the PDF to hear updates on progress, results, and challenges in activities and research.

Professional development:

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to discuss career development with the PDF, including in any number of sectors of interest to the PDF.** Faculty mentors should assist in identifying resources to further the PDF's professional goals.
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to participate in a formal annual meeting with the PDF to discuss professional development goals.** The mentor should help to ensure that the document summarizing this discussion is completed and submitted in accordance with program requirements.

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to nominate the PDF for relevant professional opportunities and try to connect their advisees to relevant professional contacts and networks.**
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to allow time outside of research for PDF engagement in professional development activities** including, for example, skill building workshops, professional conferences, additional research collaborations, or other informational sessions.

Respectful engagement and well-being:

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to treat their advisees, other trainees, and colleagues with respect at all times.**
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to commit to being available to meet with the PDF.** The mentor and PDF should agree on expected frequency of and preparation for meetings, and expected timeframe for responding to emails and for providing feedback on work products. The faculty mentor should give their full attention during meetings and should reach out to PDFs who are not making contact.
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to be supportive of the PDF during both successful and discouraging periods of training.**
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to communicate in a respectful and constructive manner, including if the mentor has concerns that the PDF is not meeting the expectations outlined in this document.** This responsibility includes using concrete and specific language when providing suggestions or critiquing work.
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to take an interest in the PDF's well-being, to listen to any concerns, and to connect the PDF, as appropriate, with additional resources.**

Policies:

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to become familiar with and respect University, school, and program policies for PDFs.** The mentor will acknowledge all PDF benefits and entitlements, including, as relevant, minimum salaries for PDFs, paid and unpaid leave as specified in the JHU postdoctoral policy https://policies.jhu.edu/?event=render&mid=764&pid=32375&fid=policy_32375.pdf&=0.207565047739
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to discuss with the PDF relevant policies, commitments, and expectations related to funding, research, sick and safe leave, or vacation.**

Responsible conduct:

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to become familiar with university and professional codes of responsible conduct for PDFs.** This responsibility includes reporting any possible violations as required to relevant parties, including to the relevant Dean's office and to the Office of Institutional Equity.
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to discuss and help clarify authorship or intellectual property issues and appropriately recognize the PDF's contributions to any collaborative work.**

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to model professional behavior in both interpersonal interactions and in scholarly integrity.**
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to complete Title IX Training regarding sexual misconduct and sexual harassment as required by the University.**
<http://oie.jhu.edu/training/>

Continuous quality improvement as a mentor:

- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to participate in mentor training and best practices discussions.** This responsibility includes striving to be a better mentor and to learn tips and practices that improve their work and skills as a mentor for PDFs .
- **The faculty mentor has the responsibility to ask advisees for constructive feedback on mentoring.** This responsibility includes doing their best to respond professionally to these suggestions and consider whether or how best to incorporate them into their mentoring interactions.

Postdoctoral Fellows should commit to the following responsibilities

Training:

- **The PDF has the primary responsibility for the successful completion of their PDF training.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to meet regularly with their faculty mentor.** This responsibility includes providing the mentor with updates on the progress, outcomes, and challenges in research, and professional activities. The mentor and PDF should agree on expected frequency of and preparation for meetings, and will use meetings to brainstorm ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and outline expectations for work and timelines.
- **The PDF has the responsibility to seek additional mentors to expand their training experience, as appropriate.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to understand their funding source and to clarify any expectations in line with this funding.**

Research:

- **The PDF has the responsibility to work with the faculty mentor to develop a research project.** This responsibility includes establishing a timeline for each phase of work and striving to meet established deadlines.
- **The PDF has the responsibility to seek guidance as needed from their faculty mentor, while also aspiring for independence.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to engage in activities beyond their primary research activities.** The PDF should attend and participate in research-related meetings and seminars relevant to their training area.

Professional development:

- **The PDF has the primary responsibility to identify their professional goals and to develop their career plan following completion of their PDF training.** This responsibility includes familiarizing themselves with professional development opportunities within Johns Hopkins and externally. PDFs should identify specific activities to pursue that will advance their professional development and networking.
- **The PDF has the responsibility to prepare a Professional Development Plan (e.g., individual development plan or IDP) annually that outlines their research and career objectives.** This responsibility includes discussing this plan annually with their faculty mentor. The PDF should ensure that the document summarizing this discussion is completed and submitted in accordance with program requirements.

Respectful engagement and well-being:

- **The PDF has the responsibility to treat their primary mentor, other faculty mentors, and colleagues with respect at all times.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to make themselves available, within reason, to meet with their faculty mentor(s) upon request.**

- **The PDF has the responsibility to communicate in a respectful and constructive manner if they have concerns that the mentor is not meeting the expectations outlined in this document.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to be open to constructive criticism by their primary faculty mentor, other mentors, and colleagues.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility, as possible, for their well-being, should consider discussing any concerns with their primary mentor or other mentor(s), and should connect with available resources when needed.**

Policies:

- **The PDF has the responsibility to familiarize themselves and comply with University, school, and program-specific policies and requirements for PDFs.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to discuss with their mentor relevant policies, commitments, and expectations related to funding, minimum salaries, sick and safe leave, or vacation.** As needed, the PDF will provide any documentation relevant to stated policies on leave and other requirements to the PDF's mentor, program/department or the school as per school policy.

Responsible conduct:

- **The PDF has the responsibility to conduct themselves in a responsible and ethical manner at all times.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to familiarize themselves with University codes of responsible conduct for PDFs.**
- **The PDF has the responsibility to engage in responsible research conduct.** This responsibility includes completing the responsible conduct of research training requirements of their specific school and program, and any specific discipline training requirements (e.g., animal and human subject work). The PDF will maintain accurate and contemporaneous records of research activities in accordance with the norms of best practices in their own discipline. The PDF should discuss authorship and intellectual property issues with the faculty mentor.
- **The PDF has the responsibility to complete Title IX Training regarding sexual misconduct and sexual harassment as required by the University.**
<http://oie.jhu.edu/training/>