

Department of Bioengineering Mentoring Standards

Mission Statement

Three central goals in the Department of Bioengineering at UC San Diego are:

- To support engineering and science research for the expansion of human knowledge and human good
- To mentor trainees to become exceptional and independent engineers/scientists
- To cultivate a respectful and open environment

Preamble

Mentoring and training is a central tenet of the department. In order to achieve this goal, open communication is a necessary component in order to align the expectations of the multiple stakeholders. This document is a starting point for building successful mentoring relationships. It is expected that strong mentoring relationships will only develop through regular and open communication between mentors and mentees. The expectation is that this document is a starting point and individualized compacts between specific mentee-mentor pairs can enhance the mentoring experience.

Definition of a mentor. For the purposes of this document, a mentor is a person who is responsible for the professional development of a mentee and is an advocate for that mentee. A mentee can have more than one mentor. A mentor may also have additional roles for a given mentee, such as a supervisor or an instructor.

Expectations of the mentor

- Set a scientific direction for the group and work with you to define an appropriate project
- Be committed to mentoring you
- Provide timely feedback on your research and performance
- Create an environment that is supportive, safe, and free from harassment

Expectations of the mentee

- Determine the requirements of your degree and be responsible for compliance. Your advisor and staff are there to assist in answering questions and identifying committee members
- Communicate research progress and challenges
- Communicate hardships so solutions can be identified and implemented collaboratively

Expectations for shared responsibilities between mentor and mentees

- Transition towards independence of the mentee
- Identifying appropriate professional development opportunities and balancing them with the mentee's main role

Accountability:

Annual evaluations. Mentors will provide feedback on mentee progress in Spring Evaluations. This is an opportunity for mentors and mentees to communicate about alignment of expectations, and identify steps that can help the mentee succeed. It is also encouraged to discuss mentoring needs.

Conflict resolution. If a conflict arises it is expected that mentors and mentees will work together to find a solution. If this is not possible or the mentee does not feel comfortable, the mentee is encouraged to consult with the Department, Associate Dean for students or the Office of the Ombuds for mediation support.

References

Masters KS, Kreeger PK. Ten simple rules for developing a mentor-mentee expectations document. PLoS Comput Biol. 2017 Sep 21;13(9):e1005709. doi: 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005709. PMID: 28934208; PMCID: PMC5608163.

Pfund C, Byars-Winston A, Branchaw J, Hurtado S, Eagan K. Defining Attributes and Metrics of Effective Research Mentoring Relationships. AIDS Behav. 2016 Sep;20 Suppl 2(Suppl 2):238-48. doi: 10.1007/s10461-016-1384-z. PMID: 27062425; PMCID: PMC4995122.

Document history

This document was prepared as part of [The Mentoring Project](#). The contents were developed collaboratively in the Graduate Studies Committee and feedback from several faculty-student workshops was incorporated.