Harvard Ophthalmology Mentoring Program
Guideline for Mentors

PREPARATION
- Introduce yourself by phone or email, and give the mentee ample opportunity to arrange, or set forth the agenda for the first meeting.
- Share a copy of your CV or NIH Biosketch with your mentee in advance of your first meeting.
- Ask your mentee to send an updated CV and to consider his/her short- and long-term goals.

First and second meetings
- Start the conversation with your respective backgrounds and current academic roles.
- Outline what the mentee can expect from his/her mentoring relationship with you. Invite the mentee to speak to other mentees you have or have had to get a sense of realistic expectations.
- Express and show interest in the mentee’s career.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as “What are you looking for in career guidance and mentorship?”
- Listen to the answers and continue with follow-up questions and/or reflection – “What would you like to see happen as a result of our meeting? How important is this goal/issue to you? It sounds to me that what you most want to happen is ____. Is that true?”
- Review your mentee’s CV with him/her and ask any follow-up questions you may have.
- Ask, “What type of position in academic/clinical medicine/research are you ultimately aiming for? How long do you think it will take?” Have a discussion about your mentee’s short- and long-term goals. Define the timeline for the acquisition of skills and completion of tasks such as drafting a project or manuscript, getting feedback on teaching, joining a professional society, applying for a grant, designing an evaluation for other faculty or trainee clinicians, formulating a QI project, developing educational materials for patients and families, creating an interdepartmental initiative or clinic, writing a review paper, a practice guideline, or blog, etc.
- Ask your mentee what institutional/departmental resources he/she needs to achieve his/her goals.
- Decide together on the frequency of future meetings, which can vary based on needs of individuals, but occurs as often as several times a week in research labs to once every month or two.

By the end of the second meeting, your mentee should have created, with your support, a checklist of goals and a clear timeline for completion of those goals.

DISCUSSION TOPICS
Topics for Discussion for Clinicians
- Discuss clinical expectations and goals for continuous learning. How many sessions or inpatient weeks? Does some clinical time involve teaching or being a preceptor with trainees? Are there areas of clinical focus and innovation for scholarship (review articles, case reports, research and collaborations, teaching)?
- Discuss any proposed QI projects – what are the aims? Project design and methods? Assessment? Collaborators?
Assess the mentee’s need for specific skills and how the plan can be actualized over time. Are there other professional committees/organizations he/she should be joining or taking on more of a leadership role? Are there courses at HMS or medical student rotations related to clinical expertise? Are there opportunities to be a tutor or give community presentations or Grand Rounds? Are there teaching skills needed for the mentee to achieve national recognition?

**Topics for Discussion for Researchers**
- Discuss challenges openly (for example, pros and cons of mentee’s independent project versus the mentor’s project) and come to a clear conclusion.
- Give suggestions to your mentee on how to approach different grant funders and communicate with project officers. Review examples of successfully funded proposals and discuss key elements.
- Review the mentee’s current list of mentors. Are other mentors needed, such as those with expertise in basic science, translational research, clinical trials, community-based research, ethics, genetics, epidemiology and/or public health?

**Teaching**
- Discuss courses and lectures taught and evaluations/ratings. Is the mentee responsible for any innovative teaching methods? How can you assist him/her in being invited to speak at strategic venues such as Grand Rounds or conferences? Are there opportunities to give community presentations at local hospitals and practice groups?
- Are there courses at HMS for which the mentee should consider being a tutor or medical student rotations that would be rewarding? Are there specific teaching skills your mentee needs to achieve national recognition?

**Promotion**
- Discuss career trajectory and skills/deliverables needed to progress to next level. Is the mentee familiar with the HMS Guidelines for Promotion in his/her specific Area of Excellence? If not, go over the process with him/her.

**Balance and Negotiation**
- If the mentee wants to discuss the work/family balance, do so, listening to the mentee’s concerns and offering support and advice.
- Discuss the preferred timing of milestones in your mentee’s career trajectory and changes desired in the balance of activities and career/academic workload.
- Provide opportunities to learn about negotiation strategies.
- Advise your mentee on discussions with supervisor/Division Chief and the importance of understanding the Chief’s perspective.
FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

- Set mutual expectations and responsibilities at the onset of the relationship.
- Meet or make contact in accordance with the agreed-upon plan. Mentoring thrives on informal, continuous guidance. Interactions may range from brief email to a phone check-in to a lengthy follow up. Decide together on the best means of communicating and make sure that responses are timely.
- Use the checklist and timeline you have created together to track progress. Be caring and non-judgmental when giving honest feedback about progress and productivity. Applaud successes; analyze failures, giving advice on how to minimize them in the future. Always ask your mentee to reflect on his/her progress.
- Suggest other resources or mentors. Recognize that a community of mentors needs to adapt in synchrony with career and psychosocial development by strengthening some existing relationships, relying less on others, and adding new sources of support.
- Aim to maintain the relationship for at least one year. Reevaluate the mentoring relationship as needed, but at least annually. Agree on confidentiality and no-fault termination.

At any point, feel free to be in touch with the Manager of Faculty Affairs, Anne Levy (Anne_Levy@meei.harvard.edu) with questions or concerns. All communications are confidential.