

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 any proposed research projects – what are the aims? Hypotheses? Project design and methods? Sample size? Pilot data, if any? Collaborators? Authorship? Findings?
- 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.*