

## **MICROBE – HOST INTERACTIONS (MHI) MENTORING COMPACT**

### **Research Advisor & Graduate Student Expectations**

A positive mentoring relationship between pre-doctoral students and their research advisors is a critical component of graduate training. A positive relationship hinges on continuous and clear communication of expectations and the development of a training plan that best suits the student's learning style and the research advisor's mentoring style.

**Research advisors** are expected to provide strong mentorship in scientific training, professional guidance, and instruction in the responsible conduct of research. Research advisors also serve as a scientific role model for the graduate student. Research advisors should therefore be able to clearly communicate their expectations regarding time spent in the lab, format of data presentation, frequency and duration of one-on-one meetings, the preparation of manuscripts and fellowship applications, among others. Finally, and most importantly the research advisors are expected to provide a safe and inclusive environment for the training of their students.

**Students** are expected to take responsibility for their scientific and professional development. Students should take the initiative to ask to clarify expectations if those are not clearly communicated by the research advisor.

*(Adapted from AAMC's Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors)*

To ensure that the above principles are effectively incorporated into every MHI student's training, we strongly encourage that students and advisors meet regularly to discuss expectations of both the student and the advisor, review progress, and set or revise short term and long-term goals. An initial meeting is mandatory. The signature of the mentor and student below indicates that this first meeting has occurred.

Research Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To help with the initial discussion, a few basic expectations of the MHI program regarding Student and Mentor responsibilities are outlined below. We encourage you to use these as points for specific discussion. **THESE ARE JUST INITIAL TALKING POINTS. We encourage a comprehensive discussion regarding the mentors expectations of students joining their laboratory and of the student's goals and expectations.**

### **Commitments of Graduate Students**

- I understand that I have primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree. I will be committed to my graduate education in the classroom and laboratory.
- I will maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement and scientific curiosity.
- I will regularly meet with my research advisor and provide them with updates on the progress and results of my activities and experiments.
- I will review the MHI graduate handbook and uphold the policies and requirements of the program.
- I will attend and participate in laboratory meetings, seminars and journal clubs that are part of my educational program.
- I will participate in my institution's Responsible Conduct of Research Training Program and practice those guidelines in all phases of my professional activities.
- I will be a good lab citizen. I will agree to take part in shared laboratory responsibilities and will be respectful of, tolerant of, and work collegially with all laboratory personnel.
- I will maintain a detailed, organized, and accurate laboratory notebook as required by my adviser. I am aware that my original notebooks and all tangible research data are the property of my institution but that I can take a copy of my notebooks with me after I complete my thesis/dissertation.
- I will discuss policies on work hours, sick leave and vacation with my research advisor and will consult with my advisor in advance of any planned absences.
- I will discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my research advisor. I will work with my advisor to submit all relevant research results that are ready for publication in a timely manner prior to my graduation.

### **Commitments of Research Advisors**

- I will make myself available to my students on a regular basis and will convey my availability to my students.
- I will help to plan and direct my graduate student's project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion of the project. I recognize the possibility of conflicts between the interests of externally funded research programs and those of the graduate student and will not let these interfere with the student's pursuit of their dissertation research.
- I will review the MHI graduate handbook, the MHI Faculty Mentoring document, and the regulations of the graduate school and help the student meet all requirements and deadlines.

- I will lead by example and facilitate the training of the graduate student in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as oral and written communication skills, grant writing, lab management, animal and human research policies, the ethical conduct of research, and scientific professionalism.
- I will not require the graduate student to perform tasks that are unrelated to his/her training program and professional development.
- I will discuss authorship policies regarding papers with the graduate student. I will acknowledge the graduate student's scientific contributions to the work in my laboratory, and I will work with the graduate student to publish his/her work in a timely manner prior to the student's graduation.
- I will encourage the graduate student to attend scientific/professional meetings and make an effort to secure and facilitate funding for such activities.
- I will provide career advice and assist in finding a position for the graduate student following his/her graduation. I will provide honest letters of recommendation for his/her next phase of professional development. I will also be accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals.
- I will provide for every graduate student under my supervision an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, **safe, and free of harassment**. I provide proof that I have completed cultural awareness mentor training (or equivalent training) and I am up to date with refresher training on VU/VUMC on harassment, harassment reporting and responsible conduct of research.
- Throughout the graduate student's time in my laboratory, I will be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful. I will foster the graduate student's professional confidence and encourage critical thinking, skepticism and creativity.

*(Commitment of Student and Research Advisors sections are adapted from AAMC's Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors)*