

Example Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan for an NSF Proposal

[Note: The following mentoring plan is provided as an example; however, the specific mentoring plan a PI develops should fit the project, the department's goals, and the needs of the postdoctoral researcher(s) to be mentored.]

One postdoctoral researcher will be funded on this project. The postdoctoral researcher's development will be enhanced through a program of structured mentoring activities. The **goal** of the mentoring program will be to provide the skills, knowledge and experience to prepare the postdoctoral researcher to excel in his/her career path. To accomplish this goal, the mentoring plan will follow the guidance of the National Academies of Science and Engineering on how to enhance the postdoctoral experience, by providing a structured mentoring plan, career planning assistance, and opportunities to learn a number of career skills such as writing grant proposals, teaching students, writing articles for publication and communication skills [1]. Specific elements of the mentoring plan will include:

- Working with the postdoctoral researcher to establish and implement an **Individual Development Plan** based on the process developed by the FASEB [2]
- Seminars, workshops and individual consultations on **how to identify research funding opportunities and write competitive proposals**, offered by Texas A&M University's Division of Research and Graduate Studies Office of Proposal Development [3]
- Participation in seminars and workshops on **teaching and learning**, as well as access to a teaching mentoring program, conducted by the Graduate Teaching Academy under the auspices of the NSF-funded Center for Integration of Research Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) and Texas A&M University's Center for Teaching Excellence [4]
- Opportunities to **network with visiting scholars who are leaders in our field** by having lunch or dinner with them when they participate in the department's visiting speaker series
- Participation in a **journal club** for graduate students and postdocs, in which participants meet weekly, along with a faculty facilitator, to discuss and critique recent journal articles in the field and to discuss how to write and submit journal articles
- Travel to at least **two conferences each year** [name conferences here] (travel funds are included in the budget), with the goal that the postdoctoral fellow present a poster or paper at the conference.
- Participation in a monthly brown bag lunch series for postdoctoral fellows and graduate students in our department, in which speakers will be invited to discuss subjects related to **career development** such as how to apply for a faculty position, career paths outside of academia, tips for negotiating salary and start-up funds, how to plan and independent research agenda, etc.
- Participation in the PI's weekly research group meetings, in which members will be expected to present their research regularly, and feedback and coaching will be given to help all members to **develop their communication and presentation skills**.

Success of this mentoring plan will be assessed by tracking the progress of the postdoctoral fellow through her/his Individual Development Plan, interviews of the postdoctoral fellow to assess satisfaction with the mentoring program, and tracking of the postdoctoral fellow's progress toward his/her career goals after finishing the postdoc.

[1] National Academy of Science, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, "Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience for Scientists and Engineers: A Guide for Postdoctoral Scholars, Advisers, Institutions, Funding Organizations, and Disciplinary Societies," National Academies Press, 2000.

[2] The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, "Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Fellows," <http://www.faseb.org/>

[3] <http://opd.tamu.edu/>

[4] <http://cirtl.tamu.edu/tamu-cirtl/first-page.html>