

UW Biology Mentorship Compact Checklist

Revised April 2021

Mentorship compacts are a method to set expectations in mentor-mentee relationships for new lab members, as well as an opportunity to introduce lab-specific dynamics and overall lab functioning. The checklist below is meant as a conversation starter, rather than a contract, for developing a compact upon joining a lab. Suggested topics of discussion are listed below. Each lab group and each mentor dyad (relationship between mentor and mentee) may look different depending on the career status, goals, and overall dynamics. As you discuss the components of the mentorship compact, we suggest you edit and sign the document to summarize your discussion. As new mentees progress in their studies, dyad dynamics may change and this document is flexible in recognition of evolving relationships and projects.

The Diversity and Equity Committee has suggested policies and points of discussion in blue.

Points to discuss or clarify for the general lab group:

- Is there a lab handbook with expectations and logistics?
 - i. What format is expected for lab notebooks (physical lab notebooks, electronic lab notebook)
 - ii. What is the expectation for a lab notebook when a student leaves the lab?
- What is the goal of the lab research program? What projects are active in the lab? How are the scientific questions determined?
 - i. What do you want graduate students to get out of their tenure in the lab?
 - ii. PI mission statement: These should be a mix of overarching themes that are foundational to the mentorship compact, and specifics related to the lab's research goals
- What are the expected working hours, working conditions, and schedule? Do these vary from person to person?
 - i. Are your students expected to be in the lab during certain hours?
 - ii. Is remote work allowed (in non-COVID times)?
- How is lab meeting frequency, format, and agenda determined?
 - i. What are the zoom meeting rules?
 1. Cams on or off?
 2. Do you use the raised hands-function?
 - ii. Are there standards for participation?
 - iii. Is there an established note taker?
 - iv. What is the general format for lab meetings?
 1. Is it consistent or altered every quarter?
 - v. Are there scheduled lab social events (lab happy hours/lunches/coffee)?
 1. Are they required or optional?
 2. Who is in charge of planning such events?
 3. Where does the financial support come from?
- What is the frequency and agenda of individual meetings?
 - i. How often should meetings take place?
 - ii. Should an agenda be established before the meeting?
 - iii. Should notes be sent out afterwards summarizing the main points?
 - iv. Can students stop by your office for unscheduled meetings?
- How is lab data stored?
 - i. Is there a central storage system (lab hard drive, computer)?
 - ii. Who is responsible for keeping data organized and removing/moving old data?
- What are expectations for documenting research activities (i.e. lab notebooks)?

- What are the expectations for time off?
 - i. Do students need to give notice for vacation/absences/sick days?
 1. If so, how much notice?
 - ii. How much vacation time do students get?
 - iii. Are students expected to work over school breaks?
- What is the best way to communicate with me (the PI)?
 - i. How often do you expect research updates?
 1. In person meeting or emails? For in person meetings, should notes be sent out afterwards summarizing the main points? Should an agenda be established before the meeting?
 - ii. Can students stop by your office for unscheduled meetings?
 - iii. What forms of communication should a new grad/postdoc expect? Text? Slack? Teams? Email?
 1. Are there different expectations for each different form of communication
- What is the lab mentorship statement or philosophy? Does a written document exist?
- Who are the lab's current and potential collaborators?
 - i. What networking opportunities can you provide?
 - ii. Collaboration assistance
- How are conflicts resolved and what mental health resources are available?

Discussion items for the mentor-mentee dyad:

Mentor/Mentee Expectations

- What is it like working with me- (both mentor and mentee) the good and the challenging?
 - i. Describe both the good and potentially challenge parts of your mentorship style?
 - ii. Does this change throughout a students tenure?
- What do I expect from a mentor? (scientifically, professional development, personal)
 - i. What mentorship style do you work best with?
- Where do my salary and benefits come from?
 - i. Explain the different types of funding available in the lab.
 1. Do you expect students to search for external funding?
 2. If so, where have students historically had success?
 3. Is there money available for students to use for supplies?
 - ii. List of fellowships former/current students have had success with
- Who is responsible for knowing training deadlines (graduate school related activities, scholarships, conferences, etc.) ?
 - i. Who is responsible for remembering due dates for LOR, grants/abstract submissions?
 - ii. If it's the student, should they send reminders?
 1. If yes, at what frequency?
- How (and when) can I expect to receive feedback on papers, abstracts, overall progress?
 - i. How long does the PI need to give adequate feedback?
 - ii. How long should students wait before checking in?
 - iii. How often do you expect research updates and in what form?
 - iv. Can students stop by your office for unscheduled meetings?
- Will we discuss an Individual Development Plan (IDP)?

- i. Compacts can complement the use of an IDP which focuses on short- and long-term career plans. Compacts tend to focus on expectations for the working relationship on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.
- Will I be expected to mentor other lab members?
 - i. How does seniority impact responsibilities, funding and mentorship?
 - ii. Will this mentorship be evaluated? How does seniority impact responsibilities, funding and mentorship?
 - iii. Will this mentorship be evaluated?
- When I leave the lab, will I be allowed to take projects with me?

Professional Development

- How often will I attend conferences, and where does the funding to do so come from?
 - i. How often should students present? Is there a preference between oral and poster presentations?
 - ii. Is funding available to cover attendance fees?
- What networking and/or career development opportunities are encouraged – for academia, industry, government?
- Is funding available to cover attendance fees?
- What are the expectations for applying for fellowships or extramural funding?
 - i. Ideally, have a list of fellowships that lab members commonly apply for, rough deadline (for example, “once a year, in the fall”),
 - 1. basic requirements (such as: research statement, personal statement, reference, diversity statement)
 - 2. when possible have anonymous examples of funded projects and examples or tips of what to avoid
- How is manuscript authorship determined?
 - i. Are students first authors on their research projects?
 - 1. If yes, How should students order the subsequent authors?
 - 2. For lab wide collaborative efforts how is order determined?
 - 3. Do undergraduate volunteers get authorship?
 - ii. How many publications should a student strive for?
 - 1. Is there a minimum needed for graduation?
- What is the writing process like? Who writes the paper and makes figures?

Additional Sections (on the DEC version but not GPC)

- Fieldwork Expectations:
 - i. Is it required of all students?
 - ii. Are students expected to provide their own gear?
 - iii. Is there a code of conduct for field work?
- Undergraduate Volunteers
 - i. Do graduate students recruit undergraduates?
 - ii. Is there a vetting system/guide for new volunteers?
 - iii. How do you handle research credits for undergraduates?
 - iv. How are these students mentored?
- Lab Culture
 - i. Are there times to have open discussions about lab culture? Are there opportunities for mentoring feedback?
 - ii. Is there a reporting system in place for harassment in the lab? In the field?

- iii. Is there a lab culture/diversity and equity statement available to be referenced?
- Department Expectations
 - i. Are students expected to participate in all departmental events (i.e. seminars, symposiums, recruitment)?
 - ii. Is participation in the departmental committees encouraged or should students focus on research primarily?
 - iii. Outline of a “standard” progression through the graduate process?
- Lab Equipment and Software
 - i. What equipment is available to students?
 - ii. What training is required to use the equipment?
 - 1. Who is responsible for training new students?
 - iii. Is the equipment owned by the lab or shared among multiple?
 - iv. Can equipment be taken home for remote work?
 - v. What software does the lab have access to?
 - 1. Will students be required to fund software purchases by themselves?
 - vi. What skills should new students practice early on in their tenure?