Mentoring at
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

*Mentee Guide*
THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT
MENTEE GUIDE, UPDATED 3/2015

The Office of Academic Development and Enrichment (OADE) provides this guide as a way to help you navigate the beginning stage of a mentoring relationship. Effective faculty mentoring is vital to career success at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. A good mentor can help a junior faculty member to navigate the complexities of the promotion process, identify skillsets that need development, and help provide guidance on work-life balance issues.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Academic Development and Enrichment at Rod.Aminian@mssm.edu.

I. INITIATING THE MENTOR/MENTEE PROCESS
This section will introduce you to the beginning stage of a mentoring relationship, including finding your mentor, defining your goals, and preparing a Personal Development Plan (PDP).

A. Building Your Mentoring Committee
Junior faculty are encouraged to build a mentoring committee consisting of 2-4 senior faculty. These mentors can be:

• Inside your department/division/institute
• Outside your department/division/institute, but at your institution
• Someone who shares your scientific expertise, either in another department or at another institution
• Someone who has maintained a work-life balance you aim to achieve

You can meet with some of your mentors on a one-to-one basis, and have an annual or bi-annual meeting with your entire committee. You can discuss with your mentors what kind of time commitment they can make, and decide together on an arrangement makes sense.

If you are having difficulty getting started, seek input from your department Mentoring Leader. Click here to find your department Mentoring Leader. The Mentoring Leader is a senior faculty member responsible for helping junior faculty find mentors, and provide information about career development programs that exist within the department.

Once you have selected your mentoring committee reach out to them to set up your first official meetings with each individual.

B. Tips on Initiating a Mentoring Relationship

Initial contact

Decide whether e-mail or a phone call is best. E-mail is recommended if the potential mentor is not someone you know well. If you do not get a response, follow up in a week with another e-mail or phone call.
• In subject line of the E-mail, indicate your specific subject (e.g., "Mentorship Request").
• By way of introduction, explain why you are e-mailing and how you were referred to them (e.g., through your department Mentoring Leader; recommended by another faculty member).
• Be specific & brief in the purpose of your message.
• Ask the person if they are open to being your mentor, or if you should look elsewhere.
• Proofread your message before you send!
• Include a "delivery receipt" on your e-mail if possible.
• Provide your complete contact information and the best times to be reached.
• If you wish to follow up with a meeting, suggest what days and times are good for you.
• Consider attaching a CV (the School CV Format or NIH biosketch if that will suffice) or other relevant documents.

Short-term (or "one-shot" situations)

If you are contacting a mentor for a specific piece of advice and are not seeking a long-term relationship, clarify in advance that you expect this to be a limited time commitment, not a long-term time responsibility.

Examples: Critiquing and reading specific aims of a grant or study section critique

Adapted from document prepared by A. Gore, Ph.D., M. Grace, Ph.D., K. Kaplan, Ph.D., and A. Wang, M.D.

C. Mentee Guidelines

No matter who your mentor is, here are some general concepts and guidelines to keep in mind:

• Skills & Time: Realistic Expectations
  Recognize that one mentor may not be able to help you with everything you need. You may need to find multiple mentors to cover all of the issues/areas you’re interested in.

• Structure, Terms, Understanding, Style
  Establish the nature of your mentoring relationship (in conjunction with the mentor). Will your meetings be formal or informal? What do you hope to get out of the relationship? How often will you meet?

• Feedback and Advice: Be Open
  Constructive feedback and criticism are vital to the mentoring relationship. Even if it isn’t always easy, you need to encourage your mentor to provide earnest, honest feedback.

• Second Opinions
  If you don’t agree with your mentor, be polite and constructive in your disagreement. Feel free to get a second opinion on an issue.

• Evaluating Your Mentor
  You need to ensure that your mentoring relationship works for you. Is it difficult to
contact the mentor? Do they routinely cancel meetings and re-schedule at the last minute? Easy access and open lines of communication are critical to successful mentoring. Your relationship with your mentor may change over time, and be prepared to make changes if necessary.

- **Keep In Touch**
  Be sure to communicate with your mentor. Give your mentor progress reports by e-mail, over coffee, or at a medical school functions.

- **Be Respectful**
  Be prompt to meetings. If you need to reschedule, give your mentor plenty of advance notice (at least 24 hours). Recognize that your mentor is busy, and respect their time.

- **Confidentiality**
  Your mentorship relationship is a personal one. You need to establish with your mentor the degree to which this advice is kept confidential.

- **Appreciation**
  Let your mentor know when they have helped you, and express appreciation for their guidance.

Adapted from document prepared by A. Gore, Ph.D., M. Grace, Ph.D., K. Kaplan, Ph.D., and A. Wang, M.D.
D. Skills Assessment
Before you enter into a mentoring relationship, self-evaluation and reflection are imperative. It’s important to know which of your skillsets need improvement.

The chart below is taken directly from the 2015 ISMMS Annual Faculty Performance Evaluation that is conducted by your Department Chair. Assess yourself on these metrics and present them to your mentor.
Scale Note: 1 = needs improvement  3 = meets expectations 5 = outstanding

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<td>External Service/Leadership — e.g., study sections, professional society committees; editorial boards; public advocacy (e.g. testifying before Congress, lab tours to policy makers, advocating Federal $ for science), public education/ talks to lay audiences/high school science outreach</td>
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E. Creating your Personal Development Plan (PDP)

Faculty are strongly encouraged to create and update a Personal Development Plan (PDP) within six months of hire. Based on your skill assessment and self-reflection, a PDP is a written plan to help you achieve your goals. There is no right or wrong way to complete a PDP as it is your own outline, your own map to success. It is a document that should be under constant revision, evolving along with your career.

The content of your PDP is based on the Skills Assessment that was completed in Section D. You can choose a chart, write out answers in long-hand, or have a combination of both. Bring the completed PDP to meetings with your mentor and discuss strengths, weaknesses and how you can achieve the benchmarks you set for yourself.

You may have several goals you are trying to accomplish. Be sure to check with your department Mentoring Leader if there are specific criteria set forth in the framework of your department mentoring program. If there are, do not forget to include them in your PDP.

Keep the list realistic and use the outline below to help get you started:

1. Define a realistic goal
2. Is the goal short-term (within 12 months) or long-term (years)?
3. List the resources and skills needed to achieve the goal
4. Brainstorm on how to obtain the necessary skills
5. How can your mentoring committee help you achieve this goal?
6. Create a timeline for achieving the goal.

Supplemental: MyIDP (Individual Development Plan for Graduate Students)

For those faculty with graduate students, we encourage you to consider using the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s myIDP tool to help them plan their careers. The tool allows you to examine your skills, interests, and values, help them find a scientific career path that fits those skills, and a wealth of resources to guide them through the process. myIDP also has tools for setting goals for the upcoming year, with optional reminders to keep them on track. Register to use myIDP at http://myidp.sciencecareers.org.

F. ISMMS Required CV format

Keeping your CV up to date will keep you focused on your progress and prepared for meetings with your mentor. Please click here for the School required CV format.
II. DEVELOPING YOUR MENTORING RELATIONSHIP
This section provides tools to ensure that your relationship is on the right track.

A. Leading the Mentoring Relationship

After your initial meeting, it is your responsibility to follow-up with your mentor and establish a schedule of meetings. This is your time, so come prepared with updates based on your previous discussion, and bring questions that you would like answered. If you are not sure what questions to ask during your meetings use this list as starting point.

B. Enjoy the Mentoring Process

Don’t think of mentoring as a burden or obligation – it is one of the most valuable resources at your disposal! While you’ll need to invest time in getting to know each other, your mentor ultimately will help you be more efficient in your work, more empowered in your career planning, increasingly creative in your planning, and more satisfied in your work. Think of the common questions you have as a junior faculty member, and find out what your mentor has to say. Below are some examples of questions you may find useful:

- What resources and programs are at ISMMS that I may not be aware of?
- What opportunities are there for me to collaborate with other faculty in other departments/divisions?
- How can I learn more about the Appointments, Promotions & Tenure (APT) process?
- Would leadership training help me achieve my career goals? If so, where can I get it?
III. ADVANCING THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP

It is your responsibility to know where you stand in your career. In addition to discussing it with your individual mentors, be sure you take advantage of the tools ISMMS offers.

A. Mentoring Committee Reflection

As your work evolves you may find yourself with different mentoring needs. It is your responsibility to reflect on whether your mentoring committee is still able to provide you with the support you require or not. Keep an open dialogue with your mentor, and don’t be afraid to ask for what you feel may be lacking.

B. Appointment & Promotion: Track Specific Requirements

It is crucial to that you know what track you are on and the requirements of advancement within it. If you are unsure of your current track, look back to your offer letter where it is listed. If you have additional questions on how to find this information, please contact facultydevelopment@mssm.edu.

Each track (Investigator, Research, Clinical Practice, and Clinician and/or Educator) has its own timeline, requirements, and criteria for promotion. To ensure you and your mentor are aware of the criteria, review the track summary sheets and discuss the areas you find challenging. Refer to your PDP and work together on strategies to overcome the hurdles they are encountering.

C. Seminars & Workshops

Every year, the Office of Academic Development & Enrichment hosts several events designed to address career development at ISMMS – we strongly encourage you to take advantage of them! Recurring events include the Faculty Resources Fair (summer), Faculty Development Symposium (autumn), bi-monthly Coffee Talks (February, April, June, August, October), and more. Topics apply to all levels of seniority, not just junior faculty. These events also provide a way to network with other faculty members and hear outstanding speakers. Click here to find out what is currently being offered.

D. Infrastructure Groups Contact List

Here is a link to a list of services and resources at Icahn School of Medicine that support faculty. Look over the list and feel free to contact them should you need additional information.
IV. OADE IS HERE TO HELP

The Office of Academic Development and Enrichment is here to serve your mentoring needs. If you have any questions, suggestions, or general comments you would like to leave with us, please contact Rod.Aminian@mssm.edu.

OADE actively works to measure the success of institutional mentoring programs through **Pulse Check Surveys**, a series of short-questionnaires administered to new junior faculty, as well as through direct outreach to department Mentoring Leaders to identify needs and areas for improvement. Any insights you can share with our office are appreciated, and will help us fulfill our mission to junior faculty.

Activities conducted by OADE include:

- **Coffee Talk**, a bi-monthly, informal event where new faculty of all ranks are invited for coffee with Dean Lakshmi Devi to get answers to any questions they may have about Mount Sinai Health System. *Coffee Talk is held on the 4th Thursday of February, April, June, August and October in the Starbucks in Annenberg Lobby (1468 Madison Avenue).*
- **Faculty Resources Fair**, an annual event that gives faculty an opportunity to interface with administrative offices, educational resources, Centers of Research Excellence (COREs), and other services at Mount Sinai Health System.
- **Faculty Development Symposium**, which features an address on a subject related to career development, with break-out sessions for basic science and clinical science faculty.
- **Faculty First**, a quarterly lunch with ISMMS Dean Dennis Charney, which also gives junior faculty an opportunity to meet other junior faculty from other departments or sites.
- **The Dean’s Innovative-Collaborations Prize**, which is targeted exclusively toward junior faculty engaged in a cross-department collaboration
- **Courses and workshops** on a variety of subjects, including lunches with an NIH Program Officer, team management courses, workshops on grant-writing, and more.

We also recommend:

- **Junior PI Club (JPIC)**, a group of junior ISMMS faculty that create a casual forum for Junior PIs to network and make new friends. Events are typically held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at Da Capo (1392 Madison Avenue between 96th and 97th Street). For more information, contact Nelly Andarawis-Puri at Nelly.Andarawis-Puri@mountsinai.org or Avner Schlessinger at Avner.Schlessinger@mountsinai.org.