

Training Expectations for Mentors and Mentees
FM Kirby Neurobiology Center/Neurobiology Program
Boston Children's Hospital
2023

Training is a central element and key priority of the FM Kirby Neurobiology Center/Neurobiology Program.

Our goal is to provide a highly effective training environment such that our trainees become intellectually equipped and technically skilled to conduct research and are prepared to embark upon a successful career development path.

This involves a complex set of features, including a supportive intellectual environment and engagement of faculty. Faculty members need to involve their mentees in ongoing research projects that they anticipate will lead to first authorship on papers. In return, mentees are expected to respond to mentorship, including full participation in the research and adoption of scientific rigor.

We appreciate that there are a variety of possible career paths for our trainees. Trainees are expected to use their time in the Kirby Center to educate themselves about these possibilities, since individual career decisions will shape individual training needs and objectives. Career paths should be discussed candidly between mentor and mentee so that the needs of both are accommodated.

Accomplishing both research and training goals can and should create a harmonious equilibrium.

To achieve this, we strongly urge that all **Trainees**:

- Meet regularly with their mentor and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, including short- and longer-term goals, as well as future plans.
- Prepare an individual development plan (IDP) for review with the mentor within the first four months of the person's start date. The document should be updated and reviewed with the mentor at annual reviews.
- Master the neuroscience field – attend Monday seminars, Wednesday lab results, and engage with speakers. Keep up to date with relevant literature.
- Fully understand and use quality control measures, scientific rigor, and reproducibility, as well as best scientific and personnel practices. This entails taking advantage of courses offered by HMS/Harvard Catalyst, the Biostatistics group at BCH and the BCH Office of Faculty Development.
- Learn how to contribute to and prepare scientific publications and presentations. Attend and present at relevant national/international meetings and conferences.
- Apply for relevant fellowships.
- Interact with other trainees both within their group and more broadly across the Kirby Center.
- Begin to learn mentorship skills.

- Get suitable advice on career development opportunities and participate in appropriate training opportunities geared for academic/industry recruitment. Make use of resources available through the Office of Fellowship Training.
- Allow appropriate time to properly complete a project or hand the project over to others before departing for another job opportunity.
- If a trainee needs personal advice they may approach Amy Weinberg (amy.weinberg@childrens.harvard.edu or 617-919-4023) or the hospital's fully confidential Ombuds Office (617) 355-2865 or <https://extapps.childrenshospital.org/OMRequestSystem/>
- If a trainee needs advice from faculty or wishes to provide input to the Program on training, they may approach the Faculty Trainee Committee:
 - Michela Fagiolini, PhD (Michela.fagiolini@childrens.harvard.edu)
 - Brielle Ferguson, PhD (Brielle.ferguson@childrens.harvard.edu)
 - Jeffrey Holt, PhD (Jeffrey.holt@childrens.harvard.edu)
 - Jonathan Lipton, MD, PhD (Jonathan.lipton@childrens.harvard.edu)
 - Annapurna Poduri, MPH, MD (Annapurna.poduri@childrens.harvard.edu)
 - Mustafa Sahin, MD, PhD (Mustafa.sahin@childrens.harvard.edu)

Mentors commit to:

- Review the mentee's IDPs with them within the first four months of their start date.
- Provide a clear understanding of expectations around work productivity, milestones, and future plans. Provide advice on career development.
- Provide active and constructive advice to mentees on a regular basis through frequent meetings.
- Provide guidance regarding applications for fellowships, and review research plans.
- Conduct annual reviews with a written report/updated IDP (by mentees) prior to the meeting, including an assessment of achievements and future plans.
- Provide a supportive environment for trainees to develop new skills and network. This may include allowing time for course offerings from Harvard Catalyst or the Offices of Postdoctoral Affairs and/or Faculty Development or attendance at conferences.
- Ensure mentees embrace the training environment and are fully aware of and adapt to expectations of high-quality biomedical research neuroscientists.
- Attempt to ensure that all grad students and research fellows have authorship on papers emerging from their work, ideally with at least one first author paper.
- Ensure that papers are worked on and submitted in a timely fashion, ideally before or soon after trainees leave the lab.
- Help mentees solve professional problems and assist them in getting relevant advice for personal challenges, if needed.
- Always maintain a professional relationship with their mentees.
- Provide a safe and accepting work environment. Ensure lab environment is supportive of all lab personnel.