Mentoring Matters:
Supporting Graduate Students & Postdoctoral Scholars

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Mentoring Definition

A close relationship between a graduate student and a faculty member who provides guidance, support and research advice in an individualized manner.

Mentors provide holistic support of mentee personal and professional growth and success by providing research training and linking mentees with appropriate resources when needed.

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Benefits to Mentees

- Productivity and satisfaction

- Academic persistence

- Enhanced skill development

- Foster inclusive excellence

- Publications of research

- Confidence, less imposter syndrome

- Less anxiety and depression

The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM

Additional Expectations

Mentee	Mentor
Articulate to mentors their mentoring needs	Serve as a role model and student advocate
Communicate with mentor regularly	Help students identify and achieve their individual short and long-term educational goals
Participate in program/lab/community activities	Provide ongoing feedback and guidance
Seek feedback	Assist students to build support networks
Explore career options and goals	Modify mentoring style to the needs of the graduate student
Build a mentor network	Empower and help students prepare for their chosen career path

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Mentorship Networks

Encourage your mentee to seek additional sources of mentoring support.

These include networks for:

- Academic feedback

- Emotional support

- Professional development

- Safe spaces
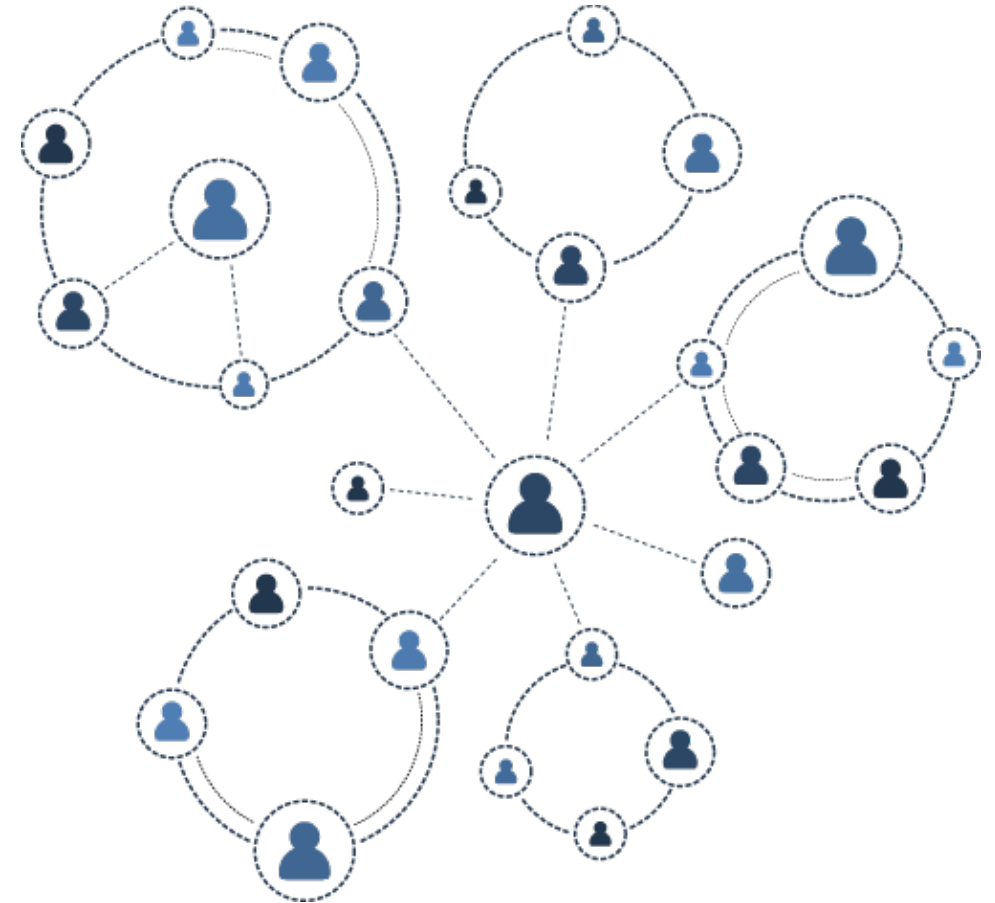
Aligning Expectations

- Problems between mentors and mentees often arise from misunderstandings about expectations.

- Expectations change over time so frequent reflection and clear communication is needed to maintain a collaborative relationship.

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Expectation Topics

- **Research productivity**: research plans, experiment design, writing, conference presentations, notebooks, timelines

- **Authorship**: policies, timing of decisions, raising questions

- **Time/Employment**: employment and leave hours, visa regulations, funding

- **Communication**: frequency of meetings, preparation for and follow-up for meetings, method of communication (form/style), annual reviews

- **Respect**: responsiveness, collegiality, teamwork, shared spaces

- **Professional development and networking**: conferences, department/campus seminars, IDPs, career fairs/exploration of different careers

- **Resolving conflicts**: contacts and resources

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Setting Expectations Tools

- Allows for systematic sharing of goals
- Can be developed together by mentor and mentee(s)
- Should evolve over time
- Types:
  - Written document provided by mentor (mentoring agreement)
  - Handout filled out together
  - Questionnaire to assess expectations and discuss together
- Choose what fits your style best!

Examples here.

Questionnaire for Aligning Expectations in Research Mentoring Relationships

Mentor / Supervisor:		Mentee / Student:	
Time Period:		Dept / Program:	

For each pair of statements, determine your preference. For example with statement pair #1, if you believe the ideal mentoring relationship focuses on common research interests, select 1, 2, or 3. Or if you think the ideal relationship focuses on effective working and communication styles, select 4, 5, or 6. Avoid filling in "3.5" for your responses.

Early Stages of the Mentoring Relationship and Choosing Mentors/Mentees

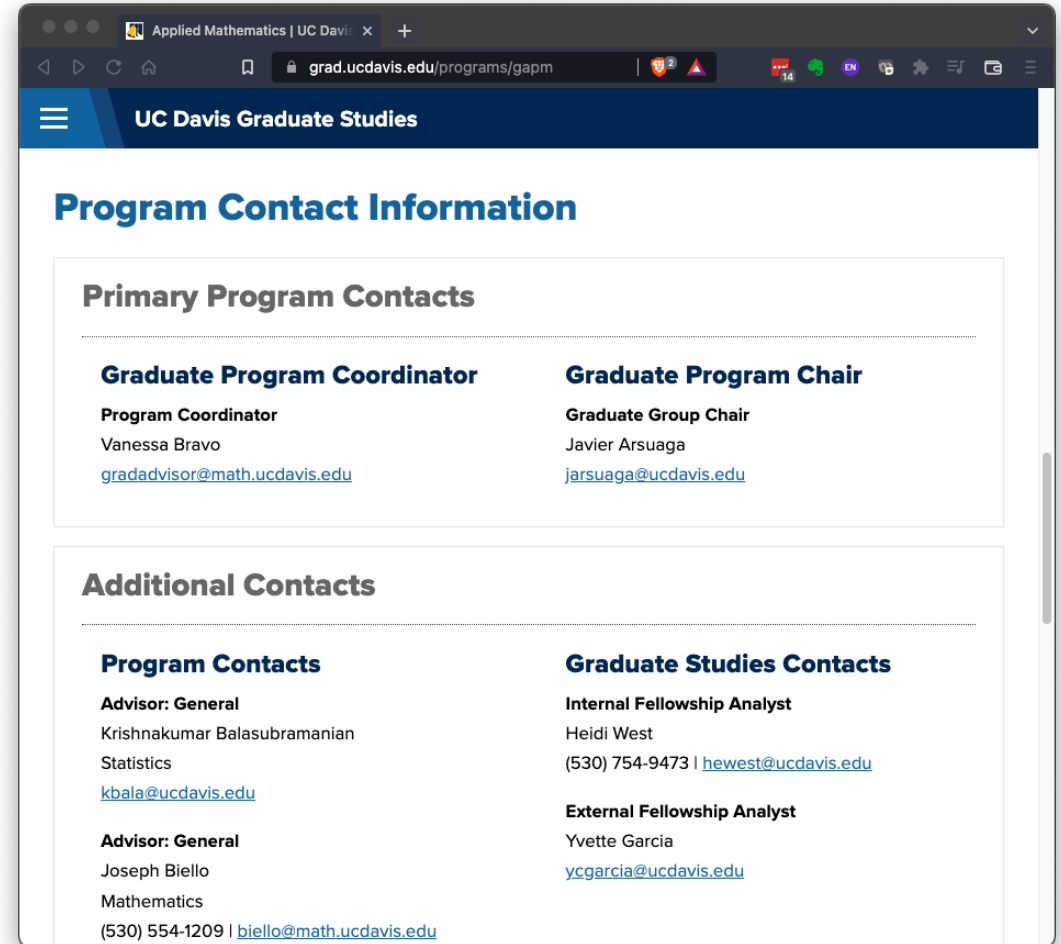|			
1	In an ideal mentoring relationship, the mentor and mentee should have similar research interests	1 2 3 4 5 6	In an ideal mentoring relationship, both should have similar working and communication styles
2	In an ideal mentoring relationship, mentors should provide close supervision and guidance	1 2 3 4 5 6	In an ideal mentoring relationship, mentors should provide much freedom and independence for the mentees to explore and learn themselves
3	Mentors should only accept mentees when they have specific & deep knowledge of the mentee's research topic	1 2 3 4 5 6	Mentors can provide overall guidance, and so should feel free to accept mentees from a broad range of disciplines
4	A personal and friendly relationship between mentor and mentee is important for a successful relationship	1 2 3 4 5 6	A professional relationship is advisable to maintain objectivity for both mentee and mentor during their work
5	The mentor is responsible for providing emotional support & encouragement to the mentee	1 2 3 4 5 6	Personal counselling and support are not the responsibility of the mentor
6	The mentor should play a significant role in deciding on the research focus for the mentee	1 2 3 4 5 6	The research focus should be selected by the mentee
7	When choosing research topics, I prefer to work on projects with potential for high payoffs, even if it involves high risk	1 2 3 4 5 6	When choosing research topics, I prefer to work on projects that have a strong & safe chance of success, even if the payoff is low
8	The mentor should decide how frequently to meet with the mentee	1 2 3 4 5 6	The mentee should decide when she/he wants to meet with the mentor

Mentoring Resources

- Resources exist across campus to develop your mentoring skills, consult on how to better serve students, navigate conflicts, and refer students to appropriate resources.

- If you have mentoring challenges or a concern about a mentee, please seek a resource to help.

Program Support Resources

Graduate Program List
[https://grad.ucdavis.edu/graduate-programs]

Advising Support Resources

Graduate Advisors are faculty members who advise on academic requirements and verify that requirements are met.

Graduate Program Coordinator in your program serves as a primary point of contact for students, day to day practices, policy and paperwork.

Senior Academic Advisors in Graduate Studies advise on degree milestones, Graduate Council & campus policies, graduation requirements and mentorship issues.

Associate Dean for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars in Graduate Studies serves as an advisor and advocate for those in need of additional support.

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Mentoring Resources

- Mentor Resources
- Mentee Resources
- Program Resources
- SAAs in Graduate Studies
- Associate Dean of Graduate Students
- Director of Graduate Student Inclusive Excellence
- GradPathways Institute
- Student Health and Counseling Services
- Student Disability Services
- Office of the Ombuds
- Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs
  - As of Sept. 24, OSSJA will split into two units: the Office of Student Support, and Student Conduct and Integrity
- Harassment & Discrimination Assistance and Prevention Program