**Aligning Mentor and Mentee Expectations\***

Dear GDPE students and advisors,

In the next two pages you will find an exercise to do to clarify each of your expectations about the student’s degree program, and to facilitate conversations about areas where expectations might differ. This is particularly important to do early in a student’s degree, but any time can be helpful, and repeating this annually is a great idea.

You should each work on your own to think about and/or jot down answers to the questions below. If certain questions are not relevant to you – simply skip them. Set up a meeting to discuss your thoughts with each other and your shared or different understandings. Some questions might elicit a short, simple answer or conversation some might elicit a paragraph or longer conversation. That level of detail is up to you. It can be useful to have some written responses or notes from your conversation as a reference, but simply by talking through the different topics is also quite helpful.

*\* adapted from E. Frazier, C. Pfund, and A. R. Butz with information from Branchaw, Pfund, and Rediske. (2010). Entering Research: A Facilitator’s Manual. New York: W.H. Freeman & Co.*

GRADUATE MENTEE EXPECTATIONS

1. Why do you want to do get a research-focused graduate degree?

2. What are your career goals? How can this degree and the mentor–mentee relationship with your advisor help you achieve them?

3. What would success in graduate school look like to you? What would you like to achieve:

a. by the end of your 1st year?

b. by the end of your 2nd year (MS program) 3rd year (PhD programs)?

c. by the time you complete your degree?

4. How long do you expect completing your degree will take?

5. How many hours per week and at what times/days do you expect to be engaged in research?

6. What other commitments or obligations will you have during graduate school (group meetings, teaching, family, religious, community, etc.)? How many hours will these take? How will you schedule around these commitments?

7. What, if any, specific technical or communication skills do you want to learn during graduate school?

8. How do you learn best (written procedure, verbal instructions, watch and repeat, etc.)? What can your mentor do to help you learn the techniques and skills in a timely manner that you need to be successful?

9. What role do you want your advisor to take throughout your graduate career? For example, would you prefer that your advisor is hands-on throughout your graduate work? Or do you prefer a more hands-off approach to being supervised?

10. How will you document your research results? If through publication of peer-reviewed papers, how many and what are some examples of journals you might target?

11. Is there a specific protocol for keeping a laboratory notebook or archiving data in your advisor’s lab? To whom do the data belong?

12. Are you comfortable with the methods used in the lab? Does your work involve lengthy field trips? If so, it is always useful to discuss safety in the field.

13. To whom do you expect to go to if you have questions about your research project?

14. There are many types of mentoring that can help us in our careers, and your graduate advisor is unlikely to be able to personally fill all those needs. What other mentoring would you like, and have you found mentors to fill those other roles?

15. What role would you prefer your advisor play in the development of your writing skills? Would you like feedback and guidance throughout the process of writing a first complete draft, or would you prefer to start the feedback process with a completed draft? How many rounds of revision do you expect are needed to produce a finalized manuscript?

16. Do you know the institutional safety or ethics training that is required to work in your research project? Discuss the required training with your mentor and establish a deadline by which you should complete it.

17. If you have previous research experience, what skills do you bring to your new research group?

RESEARCH MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

1. Why do you want to mentor a graduate student?

2. How can this mentor–mentee relationship help you achieve your research and advising goals?

3. What would success for your mentee look like to you? What would you like your mentee to achieve?

a. by the end of their 1st year?

b. by the end of their 2nd year (MS program) or 3rd year (PhD programs)?

c. by the time they complete their degree?

4. How long do you expect it will take for your mentee to complete their degree?

5. How many hours per week and at what times/days do you expect your mentee to be engaged in research?

6. Amidst all our other responsibilities, both professional and personal, mentoring represents a substantial time commitment. How do you prefer to provide that time – through regularly scheduled meetings, as needed, both?

7. What, if any, specific technical or communication skills do you expect your mentee to learn?

8. How do you prefer to give instruction and feedback, written, verbally, through other lab members?

9. What is your mentoring approach? More hands on or hands off?

10. How will your mentee document research results? If through publication of peer-reviewed papers, how many and what are some examples of journals you might target?

11. Is there a specific protocol for keeping a laboratory notebook or archiving data in your research group? To whom do the data belong?

12. What are your expectations for your mentee’s level of comfort with the methods used in the lab? Does your work involve lengthy field trips? If so, it is always useful to discuss safety in the field.

13. To whom should your mentee go if they have questions about your research project?

14. As an advisor, you are unlikely to be able to personally fill all the different kinds of mentoring needs a student might have. What areas are you most prepared to contribute to, and for what areas should students seek other or additional mentors?

15. What role will you play in the development of your student’s writing skills? Will you provide feedback and guidance throughout the process of writing a first complete draft, or do you prefer to first see a completed draft? Are there other lab members or collaborators who will provide feedback on drafts? How many rounds of revision are typically needed to produce a finalized manuscript?

16. Discuss the institutional safety or ethics training that is required for your mentee to work on their research project and establish a deadline by which they should complete it.

17. If a mentee has previous research experience, is there anything that you need to share about this research group that is unique and that the mentee should be aware of?