

West Virginia University School of Pharmacy
Department of Pharmaceutical Systems and Policy (PSP)
Mentoring Agreement

Health Services Outcomes and Research Program (HSOR) Team Mentoring Expectations

THE BROAD GOALS OF OUR RESEARCH PROGRAM

As part of a job as a professor, we are expected to initiate research, and write grants that will make tangible contributions to science, the academic community, and to society. You will be working with the faculty to carry out this research. It is imperative that we carry out good scientific methods and conduct ourselves in an ethical way. We must always keep in mind that the goal of our research is to publish in scientific journals and renowned national and international conferences. Dissemination of the knowledge we gain is critical to the advancement of our field. Also, we must value outreach and information science education, both in the classroom and while engaging with the public. It is expected that you must participate in this component of our research mission while you are part of the PSP group.

WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM YOU

Another part of the job as a faculty member is to train and advise students. We must contribute to your professional development and progress in your degree. We will help you set goals and hopefully achieve them. However, we cannot do the work for you. In conjunction with your advisor, we expect you to:

- Learn how to plan, design, and conduct high quality scientific research
- Enroll in the relevant methodological courses which are beneficial to your training
- Learn how to present and document your scientific findings
- Be honest, committed, ethical, and enthusiastic
- Be engaged within our research group, health science center (HSC) and related training programs (e.g., both teaching and research) as a part of your training on campus
- Treat your peers, research funds, working space, and material/equipment with respect
- Take advantage of professional development opportunities
- Accomplish your degree
- Work hard-don't give up!

You will take ownership over your education experience

- ✓ **Acknowledge that you have the primary responsibility for successful completion of your degree.** This includes commitment to your work in classrooms and on research. You should maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards.
- ✓ **Ensure that you meet monthly with your interim advisor/major advisor (or as mutually agreed) and provide updates on the progress and results of your activities and research.** Make sure that you also use this time to communicate new ideas that you have about your work and challenges that you are facing. *Remember:* We cannot address or advise about issues that you do not bring to our attention.
- ✓ **Be knowledgeable of the policies, deadlines, and requirements of the HSOR Graduate Program, the Graduate School, and the University.** Comply with all institutional policies,

including academic program milestones, research BEST practices and rules related to data handling and storage, privacy and confidentiality, appropriate permissions, and checks for completeness and accuracy.

- ✓ **Actively cultivate your professional development.** WVU-SoP has outstanding resources in place to support professional development for students. We expect you to take full advantage of these resources, since part of becoming a successful scientist involves more than just doing academic research, you are expected to make continued progress in your development as a teacher, as an ambassador to the general public representing the University and your discipline, with respect to your networking skills, and as an engaged member of broader professional organizations. The HSC Graduate School Office has a regular seminar series related to professional development. The HSOR Program offers formalized training in the integration of research, teaching, and learning (<https://pharmacy.hsc.wvu.edu/pharmaceutical-systems-and-policy/phd-program-in-health-services-and-outcomes-research/information-for-current-students/research-integrity/>) and also expects to work with your interim or major advisor to complete and review an individual development plan (<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>).
- ✓ All graduate degree programs require attendance at a weekly seminar. Various organizations on campus engage in science outreach and informal education activities. Attendance at conferences and workshops will also provide professional development opportunities. When you attend a conference, we expect you to seek out those opportunities to make the most of your attendance. You should become a member of one or more professional societies such as the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR), Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP), Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM), Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM), International Society for Pharmacoepidemiology, etc.

You will be a team player

- ✓ **Attend and actively participate in all PSP group meetings including seminars, proposal defense, and final dissertation defense, that are part of your educational program.** Participation in group meetings does not mean only presenting your own work but providing support to others in the program through shared insight. You should refrain from using your computer or other electronics during research meetings. Even if you are using the device to augment the discussion, it is disrespectful to the larger group to have your attention distracted by the device. Do your part to create a climate of engagement and mutual respect. *Remember:* Treat others as you want to be treated.
- ✓ **Strive to be the very best departmental citizen.** Take part in shared responsibilities and use research resources carefully and frugally. Maintain a safe and clean environment where data and research participant confidentiality are protected. Be respectful, tolerant of, and work collegially with all colleagues: respect individual differences in values, personalities, work styles, and theoretical perspectives.
- ✓ **Be a good collaborator.** Engage in collaborations within and beyond our research group. Collaborations are more than just publishing scientific manuscripts together. They demand effective and frequent communication, mutual respect, trust, and shared goals. Effective collaborations are an extremely important component of the mission for our research. Acknowledge the efforts of collaborators.

- ✓ **Be responsible.** As part of our collaborations with different research groups and also as teaching assistants for different instructors, you will often be using equipment that does not belong to our department. We ask that you respect this equipment and treat it even more carefully than our own equipment. Always return it as soon as possible in the same condition you found it. If something breaks, tell someone right away so that we can arrange to fix or replace it. Don't panic over broken equipment. Mistakes happen. But it is not acceptable to return something broken or damaged without taking the steps necessary to fix it.

You will develop strong research skills

- ✓ **Take advantage of your opportunity to work at a world-class University by developing and refining stellar research skills.** We expect that you will learn how to plan, design, and conduct high quality scientific research.
- ✓ **Challenge yourself by presenting your work at scientific meetings and seminars as early as you can and by preparing scientific articles that effectively present your work to others in the field.** The 'currency' in science is published papers, they drive a lot of what we do and because our program is supported by state funds and/or by study sponsors, we have an obligation to complete and disseminate our findings. You will need to publish your research as you move through your training program, not only at the end. Students pursuing a doctoral degree will be expected to publish (or have been accepted for publication) at least three manuscripts (unrelated to their dissertation research) in reputable peer-reviewed journals prior to graduation. The three publications must come from work done at WVU, be a mix of manuscripts using primary data and secondary data, and at least two of these three publications must be first authored. In addition, three manuscripts are expected from their dissertation research.
- ✓ **Keep up with the literature so that you can have a hand in guiding your own research.** Block at least ONE hour per week to peruse current tables of contents for journals or do literature searches. Participate in journal clubs. Better yet, organize one!
- ✓ **Maintain detailed, organized, and accurate records.** Good record-keeping is central to the scientific process. Good research records encompass much more than just research data. They include but are not limited to planning and protocol descriptions, data manipulations and analysis procedures, personal and group interpretations of the results, and important communications and group decisions among collaborators. Be aware that your notes, records, and all tangible research data are property of the department and the University. Be sure to regularly backup your computer data. Your advisor and your collaborators need to be provided a copy of all your research data and research work in a timely manner including the access to the data and codes.
- ✓ **Be responsive to advise and constructive criticism.** The feedback you get from faculty, your colleagues, your committee members, and your course instructors is intended to improve your scientific work.

You will work to meet deadlines

- ✓ **Strive to meet deadlines.** This is the only way to manage your progress. Deadlines can be managed in several ways, and you are expected to do your best to maintain these goals. We will establish mutually agreed upon deadlines for each phase of your work during one-on-one meetings at the beginning of each term. For graduate students, there needs to be a balance

between time spent in class and time spent on research and perhaps on outreach or teaching. As long as you are meeting expectations, you can largely set your own schedule. It is your responsibility to talk with your interim/major advisor if you are having difficulty completing your work on a mutually agreed timeline. If you do not inform your advisor or the faculty needs to follow-up with you often about completion of your research or coursework, your progress will be considered unsatisfactory.

- ✓ **Be mindful of the constraints on interim/advisor time.** When we set deadlines, time will be blocked off to read and respond to your work. If your work is not received, your project will be moved to the end of the queue. Allow a minimum of one week prior to submission deadlines for a response to short materials such as conference abstracts and three weeks for work on manuscripts or grant proposals. Please do not assume materials can be read within a day or two. Responses from the faculty members may take 48 hours or more depending on traveling and holidays.

You will communicate clearly

- ✓ **Remember that all of us are “new” at various points in our careers.** If you feel uncertain, overwhelmed, or want additional support, please overtly ask for it. We welcome these conversations and view them as necessary.
- ✓ **Know the style of communication or schedule of meetings that you prefer.** If you are having difficulty understanding the directions given by the mentor, please let a faculty member know and discuss an approach that works for you. Do not cancel meetings even if you feel you have not made adequate progress on your research; these might be the most critical times to meet with a mentor.
- ✓ **Be prompt.** Respond to emails within a 48-hour time frame, unless traveling or holidays interfere, from anyone in the department and show up on time and prepared for meetings. If you need time to gather information in response to an email, please acknowledge receipt of the message and indicate when you will be able to provide the requested information. All of your travels should be pre-approved and if any emergencies come, notify your interim/major advisor that it may take some time to respond and accomplish the requested work.
- ✓ **Discuss policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with mentor directly.** Consult with your interim or major advisor and notify fellow researchers in advance of any planned absences (Please refer to HSOR Handbook for policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation). Depending on where the graduate students are in the program, they can expect to work an average of 40 hours or more per week on research. Also, graduate students are expected to maintain office hours similar to faculty and staff so that course materials, teaching or research assistantship work, research interests or other related interests can be discussed in a timely manner.
- ✓ **Discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings before beginning any projects to ensure that everyone agrees.** You are expected to submit relevant research results in a timely manner. Barring unusual circumstances, it is policy that students are first author on all work which they took the lead on data collection and preparation of the initial draft of the manuscript. Students should finalize the order of authorship in consultation with their major advisor prior to undertaking any research work or discussing with other members of their team.
- ✓ **Help other students with their projects and mentor/train other students.** This is a valuable experience! Junior students should be encouraged to contribute to the writing of manuscripts. If

you wish to add other individuals as authors to your papers, please discuss this early on with the faculty and before discussing the situation with the potential co-authors.

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR MENTOR

- ✓ **Your advisor will work tirelessly** for the good of the department; the success of the graduate students is their top priority.
- ✓ **Your advisor will be available for regular meetings and informal conversations.** The busy schedule of all involved requires that we plan for meetings to discuss your research and any professional or personal concerns you have. Although we will try to be available as much as possible for “drop in business”, keep in mind that we are often running to teach a class or to a faculty meeting and will have limited time.
- ✓ **Your advisor will help you navigate your graduate program of study.** As stated above, you are responsible for keeping up with deadlines and being knowledgeable about requirements for your specific program. However, we are available to help interpret these requirements, select appropriate coursework, and select committee members for your oral exams and dissertation project.
- ✓ **Your advisor will discuss data ownership and authorship policies regarding papers with you.** These can create unnecessary conflict within the department and among collaborators. It is important that we communicate openly and regularly about them. Do not hesitate to voice concerns when you have them.
- ✓ **Your advisor will be your advocate.** If you have a problem, see your mentor and they will do their best to help you solve it.
- ✓ **Your advisor is committed to mentoring you, even after you leave the department.** We are committed to your education and training while you are here, and to advising and guiding your career development-to the degree you wish-long after you leave. The advisors will provide honest letters of evaluation for you when you request them.
- ✓ **Your advisor will lead by example and facilitate your training in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as oral and written communication skills, grant writing, research management, mentoring, and scientific professionalism.** We will encourage you to seek opportunities in teaching, as required for your degree program. We will also strongly encourage you to gain practice in mentoring junior students.
- ✓ **Your advisor will encourage you to attend scientific/professional meetings and will try to fund such activities.** The department will not be able to cover all requests, but you can generally expect to attend at least one major conference per year, when you have material to present. Please use conferences as an opportunity to further your education, and not as a vacation. If you register for a conference, we expect you to attend the scientific sessions and participate in conference activities during the time you are there. Upon return from the conference, you are encouraged to share your experiences about the conferences with fellow classmates. It is important to know that the provided travel fund may not cover the total expenses of a conference. Travel funds are available through the School of Pharmacy Office of Admissions and Student Affairs and also through some professional organizations (e.g., ISPOR).
- ✓ **Your advisor will strive to be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful. We will try our best to understand your unique situation, and mentor you accordingly.** The advisors are mindful that each student comes from a different background and has different

professional goals. It will help if you keep updating about your experiences and remember that graduate school is a job with very high expectations. We view our role as fostering your professional confidence and encouraging your critical thinking, skepticism, and creativity. If our attempts to do this are not effective for you, we are open to talking with you about other ways to achieve these goals.

- ✓ **Commitment and responsibilities to the Graduate Research Assistant Work.** If you are hired as graduate research assistant (GRA), you need to commit to the research work, meet the relevant project-related deadlines. Remember, it is always a great opportunity to work as a GRA, as most of the cases this work translates into scientific publications. While working as a GRA, maintain great communication, be professional in all communication to the collaborators, understand the need of the project, and be ready to work hard to achieve the project goals. You need to work with the project Principal Investigator until all the manuscripts and project reports are submitted and published, even if you have graduated at the time of submission. It is a part of your professionalism and commitment to accomplish the valuable research.

ADVISOR/ADVISEE CHALLENGES AND ADVISOR CHANGES

Like any relationship, the advisor/advisee relationship will go through times of productivity and thriving and times of challenge and tension. This is expected in a setting of personal and professional investment. People and processes, outlined below, are in place to support the advisor and advisee during resolution of conflicts or major concerns. Occasionally students need to change advisors while completing their dissertation research for a variety of reasons and may be initiated by the student or the advisor. The procedure regarding changing advisors if 1) an advisor is leaving or has left the University or is no longer able to serve as the primary advisor (due to job change, retirement, long-term illness, or death) or if 2) there is an unresolvable conflict or mismatch between the advisor and advisee. The HSOR Graduate Program Director should be notified, and you should immediately meet with your graduate program director and advisor together to discuss whether it is an option for you to continue with the current project. If this is a possibility, you should expect to have another PSP faculty member as an on-site advisor. If you are not able to continue with the current project, you will need to work with the graduate program director (or designee) and the Assistant Vice President (AVP) for Graduate Education to identify a new dissertation advisor who is a current PSP faculty member. Students should plan to complete a 2-week full-time rotation with any potential faculty member prior to joining their research group. At the 2-week point, the graduate program director will check-in with both the new advisor and student to see if more time is needed or if it is a match. Students are encouraged to take their time and be thoughtful in choosing their next advisor.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRUCTURE FOR ADVISOR/ADVISEE CHALLENGES THAT INVOLVE COMPLAINTS THAT ARE NOT A VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY POLICY

When handling advisor conflicts, you must use the following schematic. You do not have to speak to anyone you are not comfortable with or you can ask another faculty member to be present, but this represents the recommended pathway in solving advisor/advisee issues occurring at the Health Sciences Center. At any time, the student can reach out to the WVU Graduate Student Ombudsperson (GSO) for guidance during the process. Please know that GSO

is a resource when you encounter situations where you would benefit from a neutral party who can help you identify strategies and resources. The GSO can a) provide information about university policies, procedures and resources, b) coach students through tough conversations and circumstances, and c) listen and serve as a resource as students evaluate options and make decisions. The services are confidential, independent, informal, and neutral (<https://gradombudsperson.wvu.edu/home>).

1. Student → Speak with advisor. Allow reasonable time for implementation of changes and adjustments. Keep an open conversation during this process. If not resolved
2. Student → Speak with Dissertation Committee Member from PSP (or bring up at committee meeting), if not resolved
3. Student → Speak with HSOR Graduate Program Director (if they are not the current advisor), if not resolved
4. Student → Speak with PSP Department Chair associated with graduate program (with or without HSOR Graduate Program Director), if not resolved
5. Student (with or without the PSP Department Chair or HSOR Graduate Program Director) → School of Pharmacy Senior Associate Dean for Research and Strategic Initiatives or Dean, School of Pharmacy
6. Student (with or without the PSP Department Chair or HSOR Graduate Program Director) → Health Science Center (HSC) Assistant Vice President (AVP) for Graduate Education, if not resolved
7. HSC AVP for Graduate Education → will work with the HSC Sr. Associate VP for Research and Graduate Education to identify any additional options and next steps. The Associate Provost for Graduate Education may also be consulted.

BI-ANNUAL EVALUATION

Each year the interim/major advisor will sit down to discuss progress and goals. At that time, you should remember to tell us any aspect of your experience as a graduate student here. Remember that we advocate for you, as well as your advisor. We can help with any problems you might have with other students, professors, or staff.

Similarly, we should discuss any concerns that you have with respect to our role as your advisor/mentor. If you feel that you need more guidance, tell us. If you would like to meet more often, tell us. At the same time, we will tell you if we are satisfied with your progress, and if we think you are on track to graduate by your target date. It will be our responsibility to explain to you any deficiencies, so that you can take steps to fix them. This will be a good time for us to take care of any issues before they become major problems.

A review of the bi-annual evaluation form needs to be conducted with your interim/major advisor prior to submission to the Graduate Program Director. You should submit a copy of your current CV with the bi-annual evaluation form.