

Mentoring Guidelines for Mentors

The Doctoral Program in Social Welfare assumes that an effective mentoring relationship is a shared responsibility of both the mentor and mentee. These guidelines aim to ensure that students experience maximum benefit from a faculty that is ranked #1 in the nation in terms of their research productivity and that faculty, in turn, benefit from working with our outstanding doctoral students

Definitions:

Mentoring is different from advising, which is typically an assigned relationship for first year students for a relatively short finite time. Although such assignments often take into account mutual areas of scholarly interest, the first year advising role is primarily a starting point to connect students with programmatic information and faculty resources and to address policy and procedural matters and questions. This means a substantive match is less important than a willingness to help guide the student during the transition to graduate school in Year 1 and preparation for Year 2. One central task that advisors perform in Year 1, however, is to work with their advisee on writing their *Individual Development Plan (IDP)*. The IDP is a process through which students reflect on, plan and discuss their academic and professional goals; it is to be submitted annually to the Doctoral Program Office (<https://socialwork.uw.edu/phdacademics/individual-development-plan-idp>). The advisor also initiates the student's use of *e-Portfolios*, which are to be used throughout the program (<https://socialwork.uw.edu/portfolio-development>).

When a student establishes a supervisory committee, typically in the second year, the Committee Chair (who may or may not have been the Year 1 advisor) becomes the primary mentor for the remainder of the students' time in the program.

In contrast to first year advising, mentoring is longer term and characterized by:

- A collaborative learning relationship between individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping the mentee work toward the fulfillment of clear and mutually defined learning goals – and to achieve professional excellence.
- Shared scholarly interests as identified by both the mentee and mentor,
- Attention to building trust as central to an effective mentoring relationship,
- A focus on the students' progress through the program's *Academic Milestones*, (<https://socialwork.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sswfiles/PhD%20Program%20Milestones.pdf>) particularly the Qualify Paper (QP) and the Dissertation
- Updating the IDP to reflect changing needs and goals
- Assisting mentees at specific stages of professional development and career transition

- Helping the mentee establish a research community within and outside the School of Social Work.

The suggestions for effective mentoring in this document are a synthesis of best practices from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, San Francisco State University, University of Michigan and the University of Washington Center for Clinical and Translational Science, Institute of Translational Health Sciences and the Graduate School. It can also be helpful for faculty to think back on what kind of mentoring they have found effective, both as a student and as junior faculty member and how those experiences might apply to our students, program context and the current broader academic environment in social work. How might your past experiences apply to what you are looking for in a mentee and what you will bring to the mentoring experience?

Ways in which mentors provide guidance

Areas or topics where mentors often help, directly or by finding other people or opportunities to meet their mentee’s needs, are listed below. Some of these are primarily oriented toward success in the program, others to scholarly/professional and career development, but these often overlap. The importance of these topics will vary with your mentee’s different stage of development as an independent scholar:

Oriented toward Programmatic Success

Oriented toward scholarly/professional development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing appropriate courses outside the School, based on program requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating networking with others in their substantive area and introducing mentees to key scholars at professional meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervising or assisting to set up independent studies, if appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning students’ research into publications – developing and submitting manuscripts, responding to reviewers, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating a QP topic, outline, timeline and communicating with the committee members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with mentee to create a structure for timely completion of the QP.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a dissertation topic, proposal, and timeline and communicating with the committee members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing presentations and/or posters for professional meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on IDP and e-portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing research presentation and professional planning skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing <i>Academic Program Milestones</i> on a quarterly basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role modeling in professional situations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing your mentee of appropriate TA and RA opportunities (in addition to those identified by the Doctoral Program Director and Deans Office) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing job options, preparing for the job market and negotiating an offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for grant and fellowship funding, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that mentees aware of major trends and issues in the field, such as the Grand Challenges for Social Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding other mentors to help with topics that are not your strengths as primary mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing protocols for the IRB for mentee's research, as needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering advice on teaching opportunities and strategies for improving teaching, where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping students develop attainable career goals and a plan for reaching them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategizing on building an effective mentoring team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting peer review of research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demystifying the graduate school and faculty experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominating your mentee for awards and fellowships (local and national) if they meet the criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socializing students to doctoral program productivity expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socializing students to productivity expectations of academia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting students' questioning, curiosity and innovative creative work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering transdisciplinary opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring timeline completion of the program and advising mentees regarding career opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing reference letters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming ideas for time management and maintaining work/life balance

Getting Started with a Mentoring/Mentee Relationship

The responsibility to identify a mentor (or mentors) rests with the student, although first year advisors and the Doctoral Program Director can assist with identifying a roster of potential mentors for students. One strategy for getting to know possible mentors is for students to take a one (or more) credit independent study with faculty members they are considering mentoring. Although the primary mentor must be a Social Welfare Doctoral faculty member, students typically develop mentoring teams that include faculty from other departments, particularly for their Supervisory Committees. This allows for complementarity of mentor skills and rank, and can foster transdisciplinary skill development.

An **introductory meeting** with a potential mentee might cover the following:

- Find commonalities in terms of scholarly (substantive and methodological) interests
- Share professional backgrounds and goals
- Learn about students' research goals and priorities, while recognizing that these may change over time depending upon year in the program
- Acknowledge the potential mentee's skills and professional experiences that they bring to graduate studies
- Discuss both a student's strengths as well as concerns and areas that need development
- Identify and begin to align expectations to assess if working together is realistic and mutually beneficial. Will you have the time, energy and ability to support this students' professional development? Will you be available to provide assistance when this student is most likely to need it?
- Discuss what each of you perceives as the boundaries of the mentoring relationship
- Agree on a timeline for when a decision will be made whether you will work together
- Address any other issues/topics that will help clarify if this is likely to be an effective mentor/mentee relationship.

Strategies for sustaining a positive mentoring relationship: A mutual responsibility of mentee and mentor

These are derived from the documents of other social work programs nationally as well as the Institute of Translational Health Sciences and the Graduate School.

- Be knowledgeable about policies, deadlines and requirements of the doctoral program – all of which are in the Student Manual on the website (insert link) - so that you can help your mentee navigate his/her way through the program and in a timely manner per the *Academic Program Milestones*.
- Commit to making time for your mentee (e.g., being available to meet and provide feedback as needed on a timely basis) while also communicating what you can and can't do regarding the timing of meetings and of feedback
- Recognize that it is your responsibility to facilitate your mentee's transdisciplinary training and professional development, including working with other committee members/co-mentors. Consider the pros and cons of a mentoring team for the student.
- Use your abilities as well as the assistance of other faculty and departmental resources to ensure that your mentee has sufficient opportunity to meet their goals and become an expert in the agreed upon area of social welfare research
- Strive to engage in active listening, ask probing questions, actively promote constructive feedback, effectively manage disagreements, and take into consideration perspectives different than your own
- Address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; recognize that gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, socioeconomic status, international student status, and functional ability influence but do not determine the graduate experience.
- Foster a sense of belonging and trust; effectively negotiate dialogue across differences and cultures
- Be willing to advocate for your mentee as useful and appropriate
- Encourage your mentees' interaction with other faculty on campus as well as at professional meetings to network and present research findings; actively promote your mentee within the field
- Maintain a relationship with your mentee based on trust and mutual respect; open communication and periodic reviews of a mentoring agreement will help ensure that the expectations of both parties are met
- Give your mentee permission to raise difficult topics, such as pursuing a career outside of academia, changing mentors, personal or family issues that are impacting progress, or whether to continue in the program,

- Discuss how a mentor's role and level of responsibility change over time as mentees' needs shift, and as a mentee moves toward greater independence as a researcher
- Demonstrate positive leadership skills such as how to build an effective research team
- Promote ethical standards for conducting research and engaging in other scholarly activity. This includes compliance with all institutional and federal regulations for human subjects' research as well as responsibility for copyright, permissions and plagiarism.
- Be a supportive colleague as the PhD graduate transitions to the next stage in their career and to the extent possible throughout their professional life since the role of mentor continues after formal training ends.
- Turn to the Director or Assistant Director of the Doctoral Program if there are questions or issues that you cannot address

Developing a written agreement between you and your mentor

Many doctoral programs have found that relatively simple agreement can help promote clear communication and prevent misunderstandings. Moreover, many federal training grants now require that mentors and trainees develop a written agreement. It is important that you and your mentor develop this agreement together so that expectations are aligned and the needs of both of you are met; what do you expect from your mentor and what does your mentor expect from you? Mentoring should be an active, engaging, and mutually beneficial experience for both of you.

These are *suggested* components of such an agreement, which will vary with each mentor/mentee. We recommend that you and your mentor first discuss how to go about completing the form: if you meet and complete the form together, or if you do so separately and then meet to discuss areas of agreement and reconcile differences. Regardless of how you approach completing the form, what is most important is to develop one written document that works for both of you and that you both sign.

Goals: What do you hope to achieve as a result of this relationship?

(e.g., gain perspective relative to skills necessary for success in academia, explore new career opportunities/alternatives, obtain knowledge of organizational culture, networking, leadership skill development, etc.)?

1. *Expectations and Responsibilities:* What general expectations do the mentors have of the mentee? What general expectations does the mentee have of the mentors?

Mentee expectations: _____

Mentor expectations: _____

2. *Frequency of mentoring meeting:* How often will you meet?

(which will vary with your year in the program (e.g., if working on your Qualifying Paper or Dissertation, you will need to meet more frequently than if it is early in your second year and you are meeting to operationalize IDP)

Bi-weekly

Once or twice a month

Once or twice a quarter

Other

3. *Location and length of mentoring meeting:* Where will you meet and for how long?

Location: _____

Length of meeting:

20 minutes

30 minutes

45 minutes

1 hour

4. *Clarify:* Who will be responsible for scheduling the meetings, setting the meeting agendas and agreeing on general topics for discussion at meetings?

Meeting Scheduler: _____

Agenda Setter: _____

Three agreed upon topics:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

5. *Agree on expectations for timeliness of feedback on written documents:* How much lead time does the faculty member need to review materials prior to discussion/feedback and what are your expectations about when you will receive feedback? One of the greatest needs expressed by our doctoral students is for clarity on expectations, roles and responsibilities.

(A realistic expectation is within 1 to 2 weeks).

1-2 weeks

2-3 weeks

6. *Communication*: Agree on how best to communicate between meetings (email, phone calls, use of cell phone, text messages and social media; timeliness of response to emails).

Preferred ways of communicating:

- Email
- Cell phone
- Office phone
- Text Messages
- Social Media
- Other _____

Response time:

- 1-2 business days
- 2-4 business days
- 1-2 weeks
- Other _____

7. *Set ground rules for how to meet expectations*: what do you expect your mentee to do independently versus when to work closely with you? Be clear about your expectations in terms of your mentee's professionalism, self-motivation and engagement. Be equally clear and consistent in meeting mentor expectations.

8. *Make explicit* working styles of both of you:

Mentor: _____

Mentee: _____

9. *Communicating across differences:* Discuss how to communicate effectively across varied backgrounds: race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, social class and positions of power.

10. *Feedback:* Clarify how you view the giving of feedback and ways to try to handle disagreements.

Giving of feedback: _____

How you handle disagreements: _____

11. *Make explicit* institutional and discipline-specific norms, standards and expectations, including those related to intellectual property.

12. *Clarify expectations/policies* for manuscript authorship, conference presentations, accessing data, and related scholarly issues. See Doctoral Student Writing for Publication: Year in Program Guideposts: <https://socialwork.uw.edu/writing-publication-guideposts>.

13. *Milestones*: Agree on quarterly and annual plans to monitor and evaluate.

Timeline

	<i>IDP</i>	<i>e-Portfolio</i>	<i>Forming Supervisory Committee</i>	<i>QP Outline</i>	<i>QP</i>	<i>Dissertation Prospectus</i>	<i>Dissertation</i>
Monthly							
Quarterly							

14. *Agree in advance* how well developed a draft submission of a document (Qualifying Paper outline, QP product, dissertation) should be before submitting a draft to the total committee.

Qualifying Paper Outline:

- APA formatted
- See link: <http://socialwork.uw.edu/phd/policies/general-examination-guidelines-qualifying-scholarly-paper>

Qualifying Paper:

- APA formatted
- See link: <http://socialwork.uw.edu/phd/policies/general-examination-guidelines-qualifying-scholarly-paper>

Dissertation Prospectus:

- APA formatted
- See link: <http://socialwork.uw.edu/phd/dissertation-prospectus>

Dissertation:

- APA formatted

See link: <http://socialwork.uw.edu/phd/dissertation-instructions>

Sample Meeting agenda:

Prior to a meeting, clarify who is responsible for setting the agenda and what the primary focus will be.

- General check in
- Review progress on near-term goals, e.g., completion of the IDP
- Review progress on long-term goals, e.g., completion of the QP and dissertation
- Adjust IDP and timelines if needed
- Go over product review, such as papers, presentations or grants and their inclusion in your e-portfolio
- Obtain feedback on any written documents and agree on timeline for any additional written feedback
- Schedule the next meeting and what its primary focus will be

(Signature mentor) (Date)

(Signature mentee) (Date)