

## **Wayne State University Cancer Biology Graduate Program Dissertation Mentor Agreement**

The student/mentor relationship is one of the most important elements of a successful graduate program. The purpose of this agreement is to establish expectations from the onset, thereby fostering a successful and rewarding relationship. The following expectations should be discussed at length between mentor and student before entering into an agreement.

### **Faculty Mentor**

By accepting a student in to your laboratory, you are taking lead responsibility for supervising the research portion of his/her PhD program. Your lead role will be supported by the student's dissertation committee, and the Cancer Biology Graduate Program (CBGP). Acceptance of this agreement ensures that you will adhere to the guidelines of the CBGP set forth by the Steering Committee and the Director, and will follow the guidelines of the Graduate School, the Office of Graduate Scholars, and the Office of the Vice President for Research.

### **Graduate Student**

The graduate student shall agree to be a self-directed scholar, and to take ownership of the dissertation project, and of his/her overall development. The student will conduct himself/herself professionally, and responsibly, and will view the mentor's role as collaborative. The student will comply with the rules of the CBGP and Wayne State University, and will assume responsibility for his/her actions.

Adherence to the following guidelines will ensure successful progression toward the PhD. Agreement with these guidelines is a stipulation of the CBGP:

The **student** will:

1. Work closely with the dissertation mentor early to choose a meaningful dissertation project
2. Respect the mentor's time and efforts, and communicate issues effectively
3. Request the mentor's feedback throughout the program
4. Respect the lab culture, and participate actively to achieve the goals of the laboratory
5. Maintain accurate data notebooks
6. Acknowledge others' contributions to your research in presentations and publications
7. Adhere to professional research and ethical guidelines
8. Respect confidentiality of unpublished work
9. Communicate with the mentor by discussing problems, or concerns as they come up
10. Respect the mentor's expectations for punctuality, hours worked, and time off
11. Discuss time off requests well in advance, and compromise if necessary
12. Communicate immediately with the mentor if unable to work due to illness, or emergency
13. Commit full time activity toward the attainment of the degree, and to conducting research
14. Learn independently, and seek guidance when needed
15. Maintain acceptable progress toward the achievement of degree program requirements
16. Prepare a minimum of one first-author research manuscript before defending the dissertation
17. Consult university guidelines for dissertation preparation, and research proper format well in advance of writing the document
18. Complete additional training as requested by the mentor, or as required by the university
19. Adhere to outside funding requirements if applicable
20. Order a bound copy of the dissertation for the CB office upon completion of the program

The **mentor** will:

1. Work closely with the student to establish a meaningful dissertation project plan early in the student's program by providing an outline or abstract of the proposed dissertation project, and access to reference articles to support the plan's merits
2. Evaluate the progress of the project on an ongoing basis
3. Help the student select a robust dissertation committee
4. Be available to the student at appropriate intervals
5. Provide consistent feedback about bench techniques, writing, and presentations
6. Foster open communication through the duration of the program
7. Prepare the student for the future by discussing future plans, and ways of achieving them
8. Communicate expectations with regard to punctuality, hours worked, time off request procedures, and overall lab expectations, early in the relationship
9. Promote a successful dissertation project by providing a supportive work environment
10. Model ethical behavior, and discuss ethical implications with the student
11. Acknowledge student contributions
12. Expose the student to research methodologies, laboratory skills, and protocols that will enhance student growth and research skills
13. Help the student gain necessary skills to publish research results
14. Encourage the student to present research results during at least one professional conference (e.g., AACR), annually at the Cancer Biology Research Symposium, and University Graduate Exhibitions (e.g., Graduate Student Research Day)
15. Submit a minimum of one student-as-first-author research manuscript, in advance of student's dissertation defense
16. Support student's applications for outside funding beginning in year 2 of PhD study. This includes, but is not limited to, nomination for support by the T32 training grant, student fellowship applications to through NIH or DOD, and internal fellowships secured by the CBGP (if available)
17. Vigorously pursue university support for the student when available through the Office of Vice President of Research
18. Provide financial support to the student when no university, or outside funding mechanisms are available. Financial support includes living allowance at the current school of medicine rate, insurances including medical and dental, and tuition. Most students are guaranteed 2 ½ years of financial support from the graduate school upon admission (Rumble and MISD stipend recipients may only receive one full year of support at admission). After guaranteed support is exhausted, the mentor is responsible to find funding for the student. There are many support mechanisms available, and it is the mentor's responsibility to secure them. If no support mechanism can be found, the mentor is financially responsible for the student. Financial support includes living allowance equal to the current School of Medicine rate, or approximately \$22,000, insurances valued at approximately \$5,000, and tuition of approximately \$13,000. The costs of each student will differ based on year in the program, and mechanism of support at admission to the program.
19. Provide career advice, and direction that will help the student attain a postdoctoral fellowship or other suitable position after graduation
20. Support the student's career advancement in future years as requested by the student

We voluntarily enter into a mentoring agreement, which we expect to benefit both of us. In order to minimize misunderstanding, we agree to the guidelines above.

**Print**

**Sign**

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

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Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Faculty Mentor

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Faculty Mentor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**The Cancer Biology Graduate Program supports this agreement.**

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CBGP Director

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CBGP Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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CBGP Graduate Officer

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CBGP Graduate Officer

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Date

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Associate Dean of Graduate  
Scholars

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Associate Dean of Graduate  
Scholars

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Date