

Introduction

Science is the joy and passion of being the first to discover something about our natural world that has existed for hundreds of thousands to millions of years. It is one of the few professions left with this privilege of discovery, and you will be able to work as a team with the brightest and most innovative people in the world. A key aspect of your success will be your relationship with your mentor and lab. Below are expectations to help guide these relationships, making your time in Cell Biology an outstanding training and scientific discovery experience.

Commitments of Trainee Appointees

- **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for developing my scientific career.** I recognize that I need to explore career training opportunities and follow a path that matches my individual skills, values, and interests. I understand that there are tools such as the individual development plan that I should use to help me define my career goals and develop my training plan.
- **I recognize that I have embarked on a career requiring lifelong learning.** To meet this obligation, I must stay abreast of the latest developments in science, especially in my specialized field. I will do this by engaging in activities such as reading the literature, regularly participating in relevant seminar series, attending scientific meetings, and interacting with leaders in my field and collaborators. In addition, if I am eligible, I will seek opportunities for appropriate fellowships and awards that support my transition to independence.
- **I will develop a mutually agreed-upon research plan with my mentor that includes well-defined goals and timelines.** Ideally, this plan should be developed early in the appointment period and reviewed at least annually.
- **I will develop a mutually agreed upon mentorship committee with my mentor, which will provide feedback on my research progress and help me reach my career goals.** Ideally, this committee will be formed within six months of joining the lab, and they will meet at least annually.
- **I will seek regular feedback on my performance and career planning and ask for a formal evaluation at least annually.** I will use this feedback to seek development opportunities and build on my strengths.
- **I will perform my research activities conscientiously, maintain complete and accurate research records using electronic notebooks, and catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project, in accordance with lab standard operating procedures (SOPs).**
- **I will respect all ethical standards—including compliance with all institutional, state, and federal regulations—as they relate to responsible conduct in research, possible conflicts of interest, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, and data ownership, reporting, and sharing.** I recognize that this commitment includes asking for guidance when presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties and reporting on breaches of ethical or compliance standards by me and/or others. To report concerns, I understand I can find links to do so on the departmental [website](#).

Cell Biology Expectations Between Trainee Appointees and Their Mentors. Modified from the Association of American Medical Colleges

- **I will show respect for and will work collegially with mentors, faculty, trainees, staff, and other individuals with whom I interact. I will contribute to an environment that is anti-racist, safe, equitable, and free of harassment.** I will be an active, contributing member to all team efforts and collaborations and will respect individual contributions. I am also committed to communicating the value of biomedical research to advancing the public good.
- **I will endeavor to assume progressive responsibility and management of my research project(s) as it matures.** I recognize that taking responsibility for the conduct of research projects is critical to my career path.
- **I will have candid and timely discussions with my mentor concerning disseminating research findings and distributing research materials such as publications, presentations, and manuscript preprints to third parties. I will also work with my mentor to disseminate research results in a timely manner.**
- **Upon completing my appointment, I will leave the original notebooks, digital files, and tangible research materials with my mentor as these belong to Duke and must remain in the lab when my appointment is finished.** I will discuss with my mentor and reach mutual agreements regarding copies of my notebooks and digital files and future access to tangible research materials and ideas, all in accordance with Duke policies.
- **In agreement with my mentor, I will actively seek opportunities for professional development such as seminars and workshops and scientific writing to develop the full set of professional skills necessary for success in my chosen career.**
- **I am willing to collaborate, work with, and mentor other trainees and technical staff. I will provide support intellectually and technically to other projects in the lab.**
- **I will discuss lab and Duke policies on work hours, medical leave, and vacation with my mentor. According to these policies, I will provide written requests for vacation and medical leave.**

Commitments of Mentors

- **I acknowledge that the trainee period is devoted to advanced training intended to develop skills needed to promote the trainee's career.** I will ensure that the trainee has sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to become an expert in an area of research investigation. I will work with the trainee to create a documented individual career development plan, which I will use as the basis for periodic discussions. I will respect and support the trainee's personal career goals even when these goals are different than mine.
- **I will ensure that a mutually agreed-upon research plan with well-defined expectations and goals is established early in the trainee training period.** I will work with the mentee to regularly review the plan's progress and evolve the plan as needed. I will also provide progress improvement plans if required.

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- **I will be committed to meeting one-on-one with the trainee on a regular basis to discuss research design, troubleshooting, ideas, and current developments in the trainee's research area.**
- **I will provide regular feedback on performance and career planning and provide a formal evaluation at least annually.** I will be accessible to give advice and feedback on career planning and the trainee's individual development plan to help define career goals and identify training milestones.
- **I will strive to maintain a relationship with the trainee based on trust, mutual respect, shared values, and common goals.** I will provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, equitable, and free of harassment. I realize trainees may have other non-work commitments outside the laboratory, such as family. I also realize trainees may have health issues during their training. I will support balancing these needs with research progress and provide access to Duke resources for these challenges. I realize balancing life and work is an issue throughout one's career that can be dynamic based on situational needs. I acknowledge that open communication is essential.
- **I will demonstrate respect for all trainees as individuals without regard to gender identity, race, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. I will also cultivate a culture that values diversity, promotes empathy and tolerance, and celebrates differences amongst the laboratory personnel.**
- **I will promote all ethical standards for conducting research—including compliance with all institutional, state, and federal regulations—as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, and data reporting, ownership, and sharing.** I will clearly define expectations for the responsible conduct of research in my lab and make myself available to discuss ethical, safety, and any related concerns as they arise.
- **I will provide the trainee with guidance and mentoring and will seek the assistance of other faculty and departmental/institutional resources when necessary. I will also encourage the trainee to seek input from multiple mentors.** I recognize that I must serve as a role model for the trainee and provide access to formal opportunities/programs in complementary areas necessary for a successful career.
- **I will provide a supportive training environment to facilitate the trainee's personal and professional growth.** I will encourage the trainee to progressively increase levels of responsibility and independence to ensure a successful transition to an independent career. I will help the trainee to find opportunities and assist them in preparing to present their work as papers, posters, and talks.
- **I will ensure that the research performed by the trainee is submitted for publication in a timely manner that supports the trainee's career goals and that appropriate credit is given to the trainee for work done. I will acknowledge the trainee's contribution to developing any intellectual property in publications, public presentations, and patents.**
- **I will clearly define future access to tangible research materials according to Duke policy and will**

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discuss this with the trainee and reach mutual agreements that support the trainee's transition to independence.

- **To foster career development, I will encourage and assist the trainee in applying for appropriate fellowships and awards that support the transition to independence. I will encourage and facilitate (including providing funds when feasible) the trainee's interaction with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally, including the trainee's attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.**
- **I recognize that there are multiple career options available for trainees and will provide assistance in exploring appropriate options.** I acknowledge that not all trainee appointees will become academic faculty. To prepare trainee appointees for various career paths, I will direct them to the resources that will allow for exploring multiple careers, and I will be available to discuss these options.
- **I will commit to being a supportive colleague to trainee appointees as they transition to the next stage of their careers and, to the extent possible, throughout their professional lives.** I will submit recommendation and support letters for the trainee in a timely manner. I also recognize that the role of a mentor continues after the formal training period.

Conflict Resolution and Reporting

Occasionally, disagreements and conflicts can arise, even in the best laboratory environments. In Cell Biology, we take these seriously and have defined procedures to help you. First, unless there are issues such as harassment or intimidation, disagreements should ideally be addressed between the parties before outside help is requested. If this is not feasible or tenable, there are many avenues available within and outside of the department:

Departmental: Trainees may reach out to the DGS (students) or their mentoring committee faculty members (students and postdocs). Trainees may also reach out to the Departmental Mediator, Dr. Blanche Capel, or the Chair, Dr. Scott Soderling. Incidents can also be reported via the anonymous reporting form at: <https://www.cellbio.duke.edu/anonymous-form>. Faculty can report issues to their faculty mentoring committee or the Chair.

External of Department: Issues related to protected status can be reported to the Duke Office of Institutional Equity. Issues pertaining to research misconduct can be reported to the Duke Office of Scientific Integrity (1-800-826-8109). Students and postdocs may also report to their Ombuds: <https://oie.duke.edu/ombuds>.

In some cases, resolution may involve Duke HR Employment or Institutional Corrective Action Plans.

Date Reviewed and Discussed Together: _____

Name of Trainee Scholar

Name of PI/Faculty Advisor

Signature of Trainee Scholar

Signature of PI/Faculty Advisor