

RESEARCH OFFICE PROPOSAL GUIDE SAMPLE POSTDOC MENTORING STATEMENT

Consistent with institutional tradition and federal government requirements and recommendations, postdoc mentoring activities at the University of Delaware (UD) are designed to enable postdocs to gain knowledge and skills of value in preparation for careers as independent researchers; including careers as faculty members in research-intensive university environments. The mentoring activities are developed specifically for individuals by lead researchers and are tailored as appropriate for their fields. The UD Research Office (RO) is available to provide supporting materials and or instruction to assist lead researchers. Typically, individual postdoc mentoring activities incorporate the guidelines that are suggested in the National Science Foundation Proposal and Award Policies & Procedures:

1. Career counseling,
2. Training in the preparation of grant proposals,
3. Publications and presentation,
4. Guidance on ways to improve teaching and mentoring skills,
5. Guidance on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas, and
6. Training in responsible professional practices.

Lead researchers typically conduct several activities that comprise a substantial portion of the mentoring experience for postdocs. The incorporation of regular laboratory meetings and seminars, regular individual meetings, and manuscript and proposal writing are frequently seen elements.

Additionally, in an era of cross-disciplinary investigation, particular attention is given to mentoring activities that help ensure that all researchers have grasped the specific technical knowledge and skills needed to safely and competently work across an involved spectrum of disciplines.

“Traditional” mentoring activities can be enriched by postdoc participation in UD RO sponsored workshops that address 1) the basics of proposal writing, 2) the Responsible Conduct of Research (expanded to address mentor/trainee responsibilities), and 3) quantitative and qualitative assessment of University activities.

Lead researchers are encouraged to work with the RO and other UD support units to broaden the impact of their postdoc mentoring activities in two areas. First, UD promotes the broadening via the identification and facilitation of opportunities for postdocs to

mentor inspiring undergraduate-scholar researchers who are part of groups such as the UD Undergraduate Research Program or minority-scholar research-groups like the McNair Scholars. Second, where applicable, the broadening of the impact is further enhanced at times by the University's encouragement and facilitation of the application of postdoc-research "by-products" to outreach activities such as the consideration (or improvement) of current societal issues.

Although possibly aided by University research infrastructure (such as the RO), it is important to note that the mentoring of postdocs is individualized (including those activities aimed at broadening impact) and is developed, conducted and overseen by the postdocs' lead researchers.