**Graduate Student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Advisor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Introduction**

This Agreement between Biomedical Graduate Students and their Research Advisors at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine is intended to support the development of a positive, professional, and effective mentoring relationship between graduate students and their faculty research advisors. A successful relationship requires commitment from the student, advisor, graduate program, and the institution, and this document provides the underlying principles towards the establishment and maintenance of such relationships. This Agreement outlines what the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine’s Office of Graduate Education expects with regards to the relationship, agreements**,** and expectations between advisors and graduate students and the behaviors that the advisors and graduate students agree to.

**The Agreement**

Graduate training involves both formal education in a speciﬁc discipline and research experience in which the graduate student trains under the supervision of a faculty research advisor who will mentor the student through graduate school. A positive mentoring relationship between the graduate student and the research advisor is a vital component of the student’s training, completion of their studies, defense of their thesis/dissertation, and preparation for future careers.

Students who pursue graduate education are embarking on a path of lifelong learning and are expected to take responsibility for their scientiﬁc and professional learning and development from the outset, and throughout their training in the program. This means seeking guidance on, and accumulating knowledge about, all course and program requirements, policies, and procedures. Students must also commit to working on an individual development plan that they update on an annual basis during their training.

Faculty members who advise students are expected to fulﬁll the role of mentor, which includes providing scientiﬁc training, guidance, instruction in the responsible conduct of research and research ethics, and ﬁnancial support. The faculty advisor also serves as a scientiﬁc and professional role model for the graduate student. Additionally, the advisor oﬀers support, advice, and encouragement as the graduate student prepares an individual development plan and facilitates the experiences and professional skills development essential for a broad set of career paths in the biomedical workforce.

**Effective Mentoring/Advising**

Eﬀective mentoring/advising is crucial for graduate students as they train for a scientiﬁc career. Faculty advisors must commit to dedicating significant time to the scientiﬁc, professional, and personal development of the graduate student. Whether a faculty member acts as the primary research advisor or is on a student’s thesis/dissertation committee, a relationship of mutual trust and respect between advisor and graduate student is essential for healthy interactions and to encourage individual growth and training. Eﬀective mentoring should include **the following: a)** teaching the scientiﬁc method**, b)** regularly providing feedback in the form of both positive comments/support and constructive criticism to address the student’s advancement and individual growth**, c)** teaching the scientiﬁc enterprise**,** and; **d)** promoting careers by providing and directing students to appropriate opportunities, **e)** encouraging the Mental Health and Wellbeing of the student and providing information to resources when necessary. Effective advisors are active listeners who are deeply committed to appreciating and promoting diversity and addressing any internal or external challenges that the student encounters during training.

Advisors should also demonstrate and consistently maintain high ethical standards and acknowledge/ recognize the contributions of students—in publications and intellectual property, for example—and have a record of research

accomplishments and ﬁnancial support. Finally, it should be recognized that mentoring by an advisor does not end with a student’s completion of the graduate program but is a reciprocal relationship that continues throughout the student’s professional life.

This Agreement should be reviewed at least annually by the Graduate Student and the Faculty Advisor to ensure that adequate progress is being made toward program completion. In the case of emergency or other circumstantial events, the faculty advisor can allow flexibility as it relates to the execution of this document. Finally, in the event that there are issues between the Graduate Student and the Faculty Advisor that they are unable to resolve, the Graduate Student and/or Faculty Advisor should follow the appropriate escalation pathway both within their program and at the Office of Graduate Education to obtain assistance with reaching a resolution.

Student’s Initials: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor’s Initials: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Graduate Student Commitments:**

* **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my training and degree.** I will be committed to my graduate education and will demonstrate this by my efforts in the classroom, the research laboratory, and all other related academic and professional activities. I will maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, initiative, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards, including complying with institutional and research group standards for contributing to a respectful, inclusive research environment. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will meet regularly with my research advisor to provide updates on the progress and results of my course work, research, and professional and career development activities.** This will include taking the lead on scheduling regular meetings, being punctual, preparing agendas, and following-up with my research advisor on tasks and action items as appropriate. The mutually agreed upon expectations developed by both the Student and Faculty Adviser are outlined below.

Student’s Initials: \_\_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Advisor’s Initials: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* **I will work with my research advisor to develop a thesis/dissertation project.** This will include establishing a timeline for each phase of my work. I will strive to maintain engagement with the work, discuss experimental findings and any pitfalls, and meet the established goals and deadlines. In the event that I experience obstacles that impede my ability to meet the aforementioned expectations, I will schedule a meeting right away to discuss the challenges with my research advisor and develop a plan to get back on track. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will work with my research advisor to select a thesis/dissertation committee.** I will commit to meeting with my **thesis/dissertation** committee at least annually (or more frequently, according to program guidelines). I will discuss my progress to date and be responsive to the advice and constructive criticism from my committee members. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will be a good lab citizen.** I agree to take part in shared laboratory responsibilities and will use laboratory resources carefully and frugally. I will maintain a safe and clean laboratory space. I will be respectful of, accepting of, and work collegially with all laboratory personnel. I will be an active contributing member to all team efforts and collaborations and will respect the individual contributions of others. I will also contribute to an environment that is physically and psychologically safe, equitable, and free of racism, sexism, bias, and harassment of any kind. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will maintain detailed, organized, and accurate research records. With respect to data ownership, I acknowledge that original notebooks, digital files, and tangible research materials belong to the institution and will remain in the lab upon completion of my thesis/dissertation so that other individuals can reproduce and carry on related research, in accordance with institutional policy.** Only with the explicit approval from my research advisor and in accordance with institutional policy may I make copies of my notebooks and digital files and have access to tangible research materials that I helped to generate during my graduate training. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will discuss policies on work hours, medical leave, and vacation with my graduate program and research advisor.** I will consult and receive approval from my advisor well in advance of any planned absences. I will promptly inform my advisor of any unexpected absences due to illness or other issues. The work-hours expectation as agreed upon by both the Student and Faculty Advisor is outlined below.

Student’s Initials: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Advisor’s Initials: \_\_\_\_\_\_

* **I will discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my research advisor.** I will work with my advisor to disseminate all relevant research results in a timely manner prior to the completion of all degree requirements. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will openly communicate the policies and requirements of my graduate program, graduate school, and institution to my mentor.** I will commit to meeting these requirements in the appropriate time frame and will abide by all institutional policies and procedures. There will be a discussion with the relevant program leaders in case of confusion and conflicts between policies within the graduate program, graduate school, and institution. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will regularly attend and actively participate in laboratory meetings, seminars, and journal clubs that are part of my educational training and program.** To enhance research, leadership, and additional professional skills, I will seek out other enrichment opportunities, such as participation in professional organizations and meetings, student representation on institutional committees, and coordination of departmental events. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I will be knowledgeable of all institutional research policies.** I will comply with all institutional laboratory safety practices and animal-use and human-research policies. I will participate in my institution’s Responsible Conduct of Research Training Program and practice the guidelines presented therein while conducting my research. I will also seek input on and comply with institutional policies regarding thesis/dissertation preparation, my research design, data analysis, and scientific integrity. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career goals/objectives.** I recognize that I need to explore career opportunities and paths that match and develop my individual skills, values, and interests to achieve my desired career goals. I understand that there are tools, such as the individual development plan, that I should use regularly to help me define my career goals, determine areas in need of work, and create my own personalized training plan. I will seek guidance throughout my graduate education from my research advisor, career counseling services, thesis/dissertation committee, other mentors, and any other resources that can offer advice on career planning and the wide range of opportunities available in the biomedical workforce. Student’s initials:\_\_\_\_\_\_

Graduate student’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Graduate student’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Advisor Commitments:**

* **Throughout the graduate student’s time in my laboratory, I will be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful.** I will foster the graduate student’s training, professional development, confidence, as well as their Mental Health and Wellbeing. I will encourage accountability, intellectual development, critical thinking, curiosity, and creativity. I will continue my interest and involvement as the student moves forward into a career. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will be committed to meeting one-on-one with the student on a regular basis (minimum 1 meeting/month) as mutually agreed upon by the Student and Faculty Advisor. I will regularly review the student’s progress and provide timely feedback and goal-setting advice. I will communicate delays in response due to internal and external factors.** Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will be committed to the graduate student’s research project.** I will work with the student to help plan and guide the research project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for execution of the project in conjunction with the graduate student’s Individual Development Plan (IDP), if available**.** Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will help the graduate student select a thesis/dissertation committee.** I will ensure that this committee meets at least annually (or more frequently, according to program guidelines) to review and discuss the graduate student’s progress and future directions. I understand that the function of this committee is to help the student complete the doctoral research, and I will respect the ideas and suggestions of faculty on the committee. I will work with the thesis/dissertation committee and student to develop expectations and an appropriate research plan derived from their recommendations and suggestions. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will foster an environment that is intellectually stimulating, physically and psychologically safe/supportive, equitable, and free of racism, bias, and harassment of any kind. I will ensure that staff in my laboratory and with whom the student interacts are respectful of the student and do not subject the student to any racism, sexism, bias, or harassment.** Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will demonstrate respect for all graduate students as individuals without bias relative to race, ethnicity, age, ancestry, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, status as a parent, veteran's status, medical status (including HIV status), mental health status, characteristics of communication (including non-Native English usage, accent, dialect, usage of non-English languages, and usage of alternative modes of communication such as sign language), national origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation.** I will also cultivate a laboratory climate that respects, values, and leverages diverse perspectives, identities, and experiences and promotes well-being, inclusion/belonging, and connectedness. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will be committed to providing financial resources, as appropriate and according to institutional and program guidelines, for the graduate student to conduct thesis/dissertation research.** I will inform the student as soon as possible about any changes in funding/support.I will not require the graduate student to perform tasks that are unrelated to the training program and professional development. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will expect the graduate student to share common laboratory responsibilities and use resources carefully and frugally.** I will also regularly meet with the graduate student to review study design, data management, storage, and record keeping. I will be responsible for ensuring that the student is provided training on equipment and practices to promote a safe work environment. I will discuss with the student intellectual property matters regarding disclosure, patent rights, and publishing research discoveries. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **As soon as the student officially joins the laboratory, I will discuss authorship policies and guidelines as they relate to manuscripts and funding opportunities.** I will acknowledge the graduate student’s scientific contributions and discuss the order of authorship based on contribution to the work in my laboratory, and I will provide assistance in getting the student’s work published in a timely manner. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will be knowledgeable of and guide the graduate student through the requirements and deadlines of the graduate program and the institution, teaching requirements (if applicable), and human resources-related requirements. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_**
* **I will encourage the graduate student to attend and present their research at scientific/professional meetings and make an effort to secure and facilitate funding for such activities. In addition, I will provide opportunities for the student to discuss relevant science and research findings with colleagues and fellow scientists within the institution and broader scientific community—for example, at laboratory meetings, research days, and seminars. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_**
* **I will promote the training of the graduate student in professional skills needed for success in a wide variety of biomedical careers.** **These skills include, but are not limited to, oral and written communication, grant writing, management and leadership skills, collaborative research, responsible conduct of research, teaching, and mentoring.** I will encourage the student to seek opportunities to develop skills in other areas, even if not specifically required by the student’s program, including diversity and inclusion. I will also encourage the graduate student to seek input from multiple mentors. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I will create an environment in which the student can discuss and explore career opportunities and paths that match their skills, values, and interests and be supportive of their career path choices.** I will regularly be accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals. I will work with the student on an individual development plan to help define career goals and identify training expectations and milestones. I will provide letters of recommendation for the student’s next phase of professional development. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_
* **I recognize that if my advising is effective it will have a major impact on the training of the graduate student and their future career.** Hence, I agree to devote significant time and support to my graduate student to help them onto a solid trajectory and ensure that they have the best training outcome possible. I understand that I may need to put the student’s best interests ahead of my own at times. Advisor’s initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Graduate student’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Program Director’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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