

Contracts and Compacts

A Tool For Facilitating Effective Communication
and Expectation-Setting in Mentoring

Dr. Florastina Payton-Stewart, Ph.D. (Chemistry)

Dr. Tiera S. Coston, J.D., Ph.D. (CAT+FD)



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Workshop Objectives

- Establish the need for good communication and expectation-setting in the mentor-mentee relationship
- Introduce the mentoring contract/compact as a tool to assist in facilitating good mentor-mentee communication and setting and aligning expectations
- Provide mentors a hands-on experience in designing their own contract/compact



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Contract Compact Agreement

- Synonymous words that describe an instrument used to create clear communication and expectations between mentor and mentee
- Not legally binding
- Can be individualized to your particular mentoring relationship



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Importance of Communication

Table 3

Themes and Illustrative Quotes That Characterize Failed Mentoring Relationships From a Qualitative Study on Successful and Failed Mentoring Relationships Through the Departments of Medicine at the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine and the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine, 2010

Theme	Illustrative quotes
Poor communication: including lack of open communication, failure to communicate tactfully, and inability to listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If there's a lack of communication for, you know, what the mentor expects and what the mentee expects, that's a recipe for disaster.• If you can't talk to them, so for example if you're too intimidated by them to really talk honestly or openly or to really brainstorm about science with them then it's not a good mentoring relationship.• I know mentors get frustrated if their mentees don't do what they ... don't follow any of their advice. I mean, you give advice and of course sometimes the person for whatever reason chooses not to, can't follow it, forgot or who knows what but if on a regular basis you're providing advice and the mentee is not listening and not taking it, I would think that at a certain point the mentor would feel like I'm not being helpful because I'm suggesting these things and you're not following my advice.

Straus, S. E., Johnson, M. O., Marquez, C., & Feldman, M. D. (2013). Characteristics of Successful and Failed Mentoring Relationships: A Qualitative Study Across Two Academic Health Centers. *Academic Medicine : Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, 88(1), 82-89. <http://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0b013e31827647a0>.



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Importance of Clear Expectations

Clear expectations: expectations of the relationship are outlined at the onset and revisited over time; both mentor and mentee are held accountable to these expectations

- It's helpful to set up sort of those guidelines in the beginning, sort of what the mentee can expect from the relationship but also what the mentor expects you know, like "if you're working with me and you're going to be working on my data, you should publish something off it" or "we're going to be working on grant proposals together" or that kind of thing.
- Mutual accountability that the mentor has expectations of the mentee but the mentee also has expectations of the mentor.

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Mentor-Mentee Contracts

MENTOR/MENTEE AGREEMENT

(Dr. Florastina Payton-Stewart – Xavier University of Louisiana Research Mentor)

A successful mentee/mentor relationship requires a commitment on the part of both partners. The following agreement is intended to provide a starting framework for the partnership. Either party should understand that they might withdraw from the relationship at any time. Each party should keep a copy of this agreement and make every effort to fulfill the terms of the agreement.

Mentor _____

Employed by: _____

Expectations for Undergraduate Mentees

(Ashley Shade, UW–Madison research mentor)

1. **Send me weekly email updates on Fridays by 5 pm**, describing briefly what you've been working on, what you plan to do the following week, and any questions or troubles you had. Important things to include: project you've worked on, broken equipment, storage/equip conflicts, if your data look weird.

Graduate Mentee Contract

(Professor Trina McMahon, University of Wisconsin–Madison)

The broad goals of my research program

As part of my job as a professor, I am expected to write grants and initiate research that will make tangible contributions to science, the academic community, and society. You will be helping me carry out this research. It is imperative that we carry out good scientific method, and conduct ourselves in an ethical way. We must always keep in mind that the ultimate goal of our research is publication in

week to discuss our research. Materials in advance. You should e discussion



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What Will Be in Your Contract?



Checklist for Mentoring the Undergraduate Research Student

Laying the Foundation

- Are you (or a proxy) available to the student on a regular and consistent basis?
- Have you developed a rapport with the student beyond the subject of your research?
- Do you ask enough questions of the student to fully understand his/her perspective?
- Have you created an environment where the student can freely ask questions without fear or embarrassment?



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It Seemed So Clear When You Explained It

You have recently explained a complicated technique to your mentee. While you were explaining, she nodded the entire time as if she understood every word you were saying. When you were finished with your explanation, you asked her if she had any questions. She said no. Just to make sure, you asked her if everything was clear. She said yes. Three days later you asked the mentee how her work using this technique was going, and she told you she hadn't started because she did not understand the technique.

- *What can you do in the future to make sure your mentee understands what you are saying?*
- *Think about these strategies as you design your mentoring contract.*



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What Will Be in Your Contract?

- What were your initial thoughts about using a mentor-mentee contract?
- Choose three contract provisions that you would incorporate into your mentoring agreement.
- What other topics are important to you?



Resources and Materials

- Straus, S. E., Johnson, M. O., Marquez, C., & Feldman, M. D. (2013). Characteristics of Successful and Failed Mentoring Relationships: A Qualitative Study Across Two Academic Health Centers. *Academic Medicine : Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, 88(1), 82-89. <http://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0b013e31827647a0>
- Branchaw, J.L., Pfund, C., and Rediske, R. (2010) *Entering Research Facilitator's Manual: Workshops for Students Beginning Research in Science*, Freeman & Company.
- Pfund, C., Branchaw, J. L., and Handelsman, J. (2014), *Entering Mentoring: A Seminar to Train a New Generation of Scientists*, 2nd ed., W.H. Freeman & Company.
- Payton-Stewart Mentor-Mentee Agreement



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