



SfRBM Mentorship Program Guidelines

Mentee Benefits:

- Provides invaluable contacts in the field of Redox Biology and beyond – networking is an important aspect of a scientific career
- Establishes a professional relationship with a leader in the field who can be a judge of your character and science
- Provides an invaluable reference for job and grant applications, and constructive criticism on manuscripts and grant applications
- Establishment of a new research collaboration
- Provides you with an alternate Mentor to discuss career and research challenges

Mentor Benefits:

- Fosters the development of the next generation of Researchers/Collaborators in the field
- Allows you to apply your knowledge and experience to impact someone's life and career
- With small gestures (writing a reference letter, providing feedback on research proposals etc.) you can make big differences in the career path of your Mentee and aid in their success

Develop a Relationship of Trust

Relationships need to be built before any effective mentoring can take place. An environment of trust and mutuality must be established. It is important for the Mentor and Mentee to become acquainted with each other. Begin the relationship with a getting-to-know-you session. The Mentor should help the Mentee identify his or her professional needs and goals. The Mentor should learn about the Mentee's educational background and experience, and share information about his or her own background and experience. The Mentor can then continue to build upon the Mentee's strengths, needs, and goals throughout the mentoring period.

Concerns

Occasionally, the mentoring relationship doesn't work out. This can be a result of bad fit, a Mentor or Mentee who doesn't actively participate in the relationship, or communication issues. If this happens, the best way to approach it is to first address the issue with the Mentor/Mentee. If you feel your relationship with your Mentor or Mentee is not fulfilling your needs, contact SfRBM at info@sfrbm.org, so you can be paired with another mentor or mentee.

Mentee Roles & Responsibilities

- **Take responsibility to “own” the relationship.** Discuss and prioritize professional needs and goals. You can request help in clarifying goals, finding resources and identifying new directions.
 - SUGGESTION: An individual development plan (IDP, <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>) can help establish your priorities and goals prior to discussing these with your Mentor.
 - Other resources for training and career development include:
 - <http://faseb.org/Science-Policy--Advocacy-and-Communications/Science-Policy-and-Research-Issues/Training-and-Career-Opportunities-for-Scientists.aspx>
 - http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/career-advice
- **Have a clear understanding of your expectations** for your Mentor. Clearly communicate those expectations. Stay flexible in changing expectations or plans.
- **Have realistic goals** for your mentored relationship. Your Mentor will probably not be an expert in your exact research field. Use your Mentor for broader advice on topics; i.e., career goals, job advice, networking, managing lab issues, balance between career and family, etc.
 - SUGGESTION: Periodically provide the Mentor with an updated CV or Biosketch to help discuss your progress and goals. When you plan to attend a scientific meeting or when one of your papers has been accepted, let your Mentor know. It will help them stay up to date with the major events in your scientific career.
- **Maintain contact.** Be polite and courteous. Keep up with your emails and ask questions. Schedule mutually agreeable times and modes of communication with your Mentor and respond promptly to each other.
 - SUGGESTION: Be aware that scheduling of this communication is often left to the Mentee, so be proactive about it. **Set up a regular email/call schedule to facilitate continued communication.**
- **Listen and contribute to the conversation.** Understand that your Mentor will not have all the answers. Accept constructive feedback.
- **Respect the Mentor’s time commitment** by identifying, planning, and preparing issues for discussion. Ask questions so your Mentor understands how he/she can best support you.
- **Be honest.** Let your Mentor know if you don’t understand something or have a differing opinion.
- **Keep the content of your conversations confidential** between the two of you.

Mentor Roles & Responsibilities

- **Make a commitment of time and energy.** Take on the role of Mentor only if you want to do it, you believe in its value and are willing and able to commit sufficient time to it.
- **Bring enthusiasm, optimism, sensitivity, unselfishness, and respect** to the relationship.

- **Invest time early on** in the relationship to establish rapport and get to know the Mentee.
- **Have a clear understanding of your expectations** for your Mentee. Clearly communicate those expectations. Stay flexible in changing expectations or plans. Adapt your feedback to your Mentee's learning style.
- **Take initiative in the relationship.** Suggest topics to discuss, ask if you can offer advice. Raise questions such as, "Where are you going?" and "What are you doing next?" Or, ask "What are you spending your time on?" and "Are you writing manuscripts/proposals?"
 - SUGGESTION: Start by reviewing the Mentee's CV and ask for periodic updates to monitor their professional progress.
 - SUGGESTION: Reviewing the Mentee's individual development plan (IDP, <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>) may also help.
- **Advise, don't dictate.** Be willing to guide on what you know and admit the things you don't know. Recognize your Mentee's weaknesses and build on his/her strengths. Offer constructive feedback.
 - Be explicit that you are only offering suggestions that should be weighed along with advice and ideas received from other Mentors.
- **Devote time to interact with your Mentee.** This means answering emails in a timely fashion and taking time to talk on the phone when your Mentee needs your advice.
- **Support the Mentee in producing realistic development plans and goals.** Be honest and don't support unrealistic expectations. If the Mentee's plans and/or career aspirations are impractical or unreasonable then challenge them.
- **Recognize your own strengths and weaknesses** in relation to the Mentee's development needs and be prepared to guide them to other sources of help if appropriate. You are not expected to be an expert on every subject.
 - SUGGESTION: The SfRBM Professional Development website provides links to a number of resources on how to be an effective Mentor.
- **Keep the relationship on a professional level.** Be aware of and sensitive to potential misinterpretation in language and behavior particularly where there are differences in gender or culture.
- **Be aware that you are a role model.** How the Mentee perceives the way in which you manage yourself and others will impact your relationship with them.
- **Avoid making judgments** or issuing evaluative statements.
- **Introduce and expose your Mentee within your own professional circle**, as relevant.
- **Maintain the strictest confidence** about anything that your Mentee says to you.