

Sample Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan for an NSF Proposal (1 page limit)¹

[Note: The following mentoring plan is provided as an example; however, the mentoring plan should fit the proposed project, the School's goals, and the needs of the postdoctoral researcher. Please use this template as a guide to create your own plan; you should tailor this plan so that it describes the activities that you choose to provide].

One postdoctoral researcher will be funded on this project. The postdoctoral researcher's development will be enhanced through a program of structured mentoring activities. The goal of the mentoring program will be to provide the skills, knowledge and experience to prepare the postdoctoral researcher to excel in his/her career path. To accomplish this goal, the mentoring plan will enhance the postdoctoral experience by providing a structured mentoring plan, career planning assistance, and opportunities to learn a number of career skills such as writing grant proposals, teaching students, writing articles for publication and communication skills.

Specific elements of the mentoring plan will include:

- Orientation will include in-depth conversations between advisor and the postdoctoral researcher to establish and implement an Individual Development Plan. Orientation topics will include (a) the amount of independence the Postdoctoral Researcher requires, (b) interaction with coworkers, (c) productivity including the importance of scientific publications, (d) work habits and laboratory safety, and (e) documentation of research methodologies and experimental details so that the work can be continued by other researchers in the future.
- Career Counseling will be directed at providing the postdoctoral researcher with the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to excel in his/her chosen career path. Topics ranging from setting and achieving career goals, CV preparation, to how to apply for a faculty position, career paths outside of academia, tips for negotiating salary and start-up funds, and more.
- Opportunities to experience with preparation of grant proposals will be gained by direct involvement of the postdoctoral researcher in proposals prepared. The postdoctoral researcher will have an opportunity to learn best practices in proposal preparation including identification of key research questions, definition of objectives, description of approach and rationale, and construction of a work plan, time-line, and budget.
- Publications and presentations are expected to result to form the work supported by the grant. These will be prepared under the direction of postdoctoral researcher. The Postdoctoral Researcher will receive guidance and training in the preparation of manuscripts for scientific journals and presentations at conferences.
- Potential to obtain travel support to attend regional, national, and/or international scientific meetings or conferences to advance their scientific knowledge and provide professional networking opportunities.
- Formal interaction with mentors, including [faculty can add or delete from this list as needed]:
 - Lab meeting presentations
 - Regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings to review progress, gather feedback, and seek advice on the job market
 - Learning new techniques
 - Giving practice job talks
 - Introducing postdoc to visiting scholars in the field
 - Visits to other labs
- Professional skill development programs focused on building skills in the communication of research, effective presentation skills, scientific publishing, English language skills (as needed), effective mentorship of undergraduates, and searching for funding
- Training on the Responsible Conduct of Research through CITI courses, covering:
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Data acquisition, management, and ownership
 - Research misconduct
 - Laboratory safety
 - Human and animal research regulations
- Success of this mentoring plan will be assessed by tracking the progress of the postdoctoral fellow through her/his Individual Development Plan, interviews with the postdoctoral fellow to assess satisfaction with the mentoring program, and tracking of the postdoctoral fellow's progress toward his/her career goals after finishing the postdoc.

¹ To review the NSF guidance on postdoctoral mentoring plans, please see the NSF PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.j: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg17_1/index.jsp