

Additional Information for MD Fellows

Course Registration - Graduate Students are responsible for enrolling for the appropriate courses and required number of credits each semester including research credits with their research advisor. Access to the online enrollment system is gained from your UW NetID and password. It is highly recommended by UW-Madison campus computing policy that you **NOT** share your NetID and password with others as this will allow others access to your educational records, email, earning statements etc.

Full-time graduate students must enroll for 8-12 credits per fall and spring semester. However, you are also an employee of SMPH and as such, **MD Fellows must register for a minimum of 2 credits each semester** to meet Graduate School policy on minimum enrollment requirements. Failure to register on time or for the appropriate number of credits will result in late fees being assessed as well as a "HOLD" being placed on your student record to prevent you from future registration or obtaining an academic transcript. The Program Coordinator will review all student enrollments at the start of the academic semester and contact you by email if you have not met the enrollment requirement as well as inform you of the applicable deadline to do so.

Drop/Add Period – Each semester there is a published schedule of deadlines for dropping and adding courses without academic or financial penalty. As a Graduate Student it is your responsibility to meet these deadlines or face the consequences of additional fees imposed or academic penalty. Only under exceptional circumstances are appeals considered by the Graduate School Dean's Office.

Degree Committees - The benefit of a degree from the ERP Program is that MD Fellows must complete degree requirements to the same standard of excellence as all UW-Madison graduate students. The composition of a MD Fellow's degree committee will be determined in consultation with the Fellowship Director and the ERP Program Director to meet both the scientific and professional development needs of the Fellow, however Graduate School policies apply to the faculty members who will sign degree documents including the preliminary exam and final oral exam warrants. For a five member degree committee for the PhD, at least four faculty must be tenured or tenure track status (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor). A fifth member may be a non-tenure track appointment such as a CHS clinical faculty member or appropriate Academic Staff title.

Once the degree committee has been formally approved by the ERP Program Director and recorded with the ERP Program Office, changes to the committee composition on record must be handled directly with the ERP Program Director in advance of any scheduled meeting. Students or faculty advisors **may not** alter the degree committee without prior approval from the Program Director and appropriate justification.

It is to all graduate students' advantage to utilize the talent and expertise of their degree committee throughout the training period for both scientific and professional development support. At a minimum ERP students are required to meet with their degree committee on an annual basis to discuss scientific progress on the thesis project, however additional meetings are very valuable when technical problems arise or when determining when a change of direction is needed. Be advised this is the group of faculty who will assess your thesis work to determine if you have met the standard of the degree you seek. Do not keep them in the dark about your project, career plans or expect them to tacitly approve your thesis on the day of defense.

ERP Seminar - All ERP graduate students are required to enroll in the ERP Seminar each semester that meets at 3:00 PM on Thursday afternoons during the academic year. The weekly seminar serves several important purposes for both the students and the ERP Program as a whole. The seminar provides the ERP Program a venue to come together to discuss research that transcends our individual laboratories. Second, the seminar is the one hour of the week the faculty and students have to connect with other program members in an informal setting and to have access to both the Program Director and Program Coordinator. Third, the seminar is our opportunity to evaluate your progress through presentations and audience participation with the speaker.

All students are allowed up to three absences per semester with no questions asked. Additional absences require justification to receive a satisfactory grade for attendance and participation. As an MD Fellow we understand that events in the clinic or operating room from time to time may conflict with the seminar and you may not be able to contact us in advance of the absence, however it is your responsibility to contact us as soon as possible when an absence occurs beyond the initial three. Timely arrival at the seminar is also expected of all audience members. Late arrivals are disruptive to the invited speaker and audience members. Please allow adequate time to travel between your location and the Biotech Center.

Communicating Information

MD Fellows are in a unique position where they have access to support staff to handle scheduling and administrative matters so time can be spent on patient care. The duality of roles as MD Fellow within the clinical department, and at the same time being registered as a Graduate Student present some communication challenges that must be navigated carefully to ensure that procedures of the ERP Program and Graduate School are followed.

We have developed the following list to help you quickly navigate the appropriate person/office to communicate with. These lists are not all inclusive and will evolve over time, but cover routine areas of jurisdiction between the Fellowship and ERP Program. If you have question, please ask; we are happy to make a referral.

Clinical Fellowship Program Office

- Initial application to the clinical fellowship
- Fellowship interview
- Payroll and Benefits
- Clinical practice credentials
- Clinic schedule
- Specific requirements of the Fellowship
- Room reservations for internal meetings
- Meeting and travel reservations
- Selection of laboratory rotations (Fellowship Director & ERP Program Director)
- Rotation placement in a research laboratory (Fellowship Director & ERP Program Director)
- Completion of clinical fellowship requirements
- Career development

ERP Program Office

- Application for admission to the degree program
- Selection of laboratory rotations (Fellowship Director & ERP Program Director)

- Rotation placement in a research laboratory (Fellowship Director & ERP Program Director)
- ERP Course selection / course waivers relevant to degree
- Enrollment verification
- Degree Advisory Committee selection or changes to the degree committee
- Seminar attendance and absences
- Questions pertaining to the degree program or process
- Satisfactory degree progress
- Queries on thesis formatting and requirements
- Request for warrant documents from the Graduate School
- Circulation of degree documents including the certification document, preliminary exam (PhD) and final oral exam warrants
- Formal Exit / defense seminar announcements must come from ERP itself
- Thesis Exam tracking and guidance (Program Director, Advisor and Advisory Committee)
- Commencement and degree deadlines
- Career development

How to identify a research advisor and laboratory for your graduate degree training

Obtaining a graduate degree in the Endocrinology and Reproductive Physiology Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison requires each student to identify and work with a faculty research advisor to carry out a laboratory based research project that results in a thesis or dissertation appropriate to the standard of the degree to be awarded. The ERP Program currently has 31 faculty members in thirteen departments recognized by the Graduate School as eligible to serve as the research advisor and major professor. One frequently asked question by first year students is “how do I identify a research advisor?” Over the course of eight years of advising new graduate students, we offer the following strategy.

Step 1: Consider your career goals in relation to the type of research training you seek.

Bench research is a significant investment of both time and financial resources. Start by thinking broadly about what career direction you want to pursue. Some questions to consider...

- Are you interested in being a tenured faculty member at a University?
- What are your clinical practice expectations?
- Are you interested in being an independent investigator with your own research group or a collaborator with another investigator?
- Are you interested in basic molecular research or population health studies?

Once you have considered these questions, you will be able to use your time effectively in step 2.

Step 2: Meet with the ERP Program Director and Director of the Fellowship to discuss the requirements of both training experiences and be prepared to discuss your research interests, prior laboratory experience etc.

This critical step cannot be overlooked and will have an impact on your progress to degree in a timely manner. Early discussions about requirements, interests and expectations and identifying suitable faculty members for rotation will get you off to a good start on meeting both the Fellowship and ERP Program requirements. It is important to keep in mind the Fellowship

and ERP Program are two distinct training and professional development activities and each entity has a responsibility to ensure its goals are fulfilled. The ERP Program is committed to retaining its flexibility within the standards and guidelines of the Graduate School. Early discussion about career goals, previous laboratory experience, and research interests provide the most opportunities.

Step 3: Contact potential faculty to schedule a laboratory rotation.

Once you have identified who you will rotate with and timing of each rotation, this information must be sent to ERP Program Coordinator to keep in your student file. The purpose of the laboratory rotation is two fold: first to determine if the laboratory is working on a question / project of interest to you; second, to determine if the laboratory environment is a “good fit” for you. The ERP Program has developed a rotation evaluation form for both you and the rotating faculty member to complete at the end rotation period. Forms must be returned to the ERP Program office before a final placement is made. We emphasize that the rotation period is not designed for you to collect significant data, rather it is a time for you and the faculty member to critically assess the potential for a long term relationship to complete a degree.

During the rotation, consider and evaluate the following questions...

- What stage of development is the potential project in?
- What funds and resources are available to support this work?
- Is the faculty member available when I have questions or concerns?
- Who do I contact or work with in the faculty member’s absence?
- What is his/her management style of the lab?
- What are the faculty member’s expectations in the lab? How are these communicated?
- How do I fit in with the existing laboratory staff and students?

Step 4: Review the completed rotation evaluation forms with the Program Director and Fellowship Director and discuss placement.

We caution all first year students not to accept or commit to a permanent laboratory placement until the rotation period is complete. This is your time to make a critical assessment of both the project and laboratory environment before making a long term commitment. The best laboratories will allow you a reasonable amount of time to make an informed decision and ask questions for clarification without undue pressure.

Our best advice when evaluating laboratories is to look for an environment that offers the best training in techniques and methods. While the project itself is important, training in techniques and methods are transferable and can sustain a career even if your research area changes.

Step 5: Negotiate the placement and discuss the project.

Once you have worked with the Fellowship Director and ERP Program Director on assessing your placement options, get the new relationship off with the research advisor to a good start by discussing your clinical workload, times available to be in laboratory (dedicated blocks of time are best), training needed including animal care and use, biological safety and human subjects certification. Schedule a time to get orientated to the laboratory and staff. Finally, schedule a time to develop a plan with your new advisor to establish your project and meet ERP milestones including establishing your degree committee and certification.

Step 6: Relationship Maintenance.

As you settle into the laboratory, keep building and maintaining the relationship with your research advisor, laboratory colleagues, Fellowship Director and ERP Program Director. Celebrate your successes and learn from setbacks. Keep in mind that students make scientific progress at different rates depending on multiple variables that are not always in your direct control. The best advice is to work from a solid plan and reassess your plan on a regular basis with your research advisor, degree committee, Fellowship Director and ERP Program Director.

The research advisor versus a mentor: Is there a difference?

Your research advisor will be responsible for the technical training of your bench work by providing you with the appropriate tools and resources needed to carry out the planned experiments needed to satisfy degree requirements. This relationship is generally thought of as a “master- apprentice” model. The concept of mentoring takes the advisor relationship beyond simply imparting technical knowledge and skills to a less experienced scientist; it involves “whatever is needed to develop a trainee’s professional development” (Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Making the Right Moves, Chapter 5, p. 99).

The ERP Program has multiple layers of professional development and mentoring built in to its structure. While we hope and encourage you to have a mentor relationship with your research advisor, however it is possible this doesn’t mature into this type of relationship and you will rely on the other structures. The second structure is your degree advisory committee. This committee will be comprised of individuals who can not only provide you with scientific expertise related to your research, but also be a source of professional development opportunities, collaborations, and networking. Do give careful consideration to the composition of the advisory committee and look for members who can and are willing to be mentors.

As an MD Fellow, you will also have access to professional development opportunities within your department including Grand Rounds, retreats, and hospital sponsored events etc. Don’t overlook these resources as potential mentoring opportunities. Finally, professional organizations provide a rich resource of professional development and formal mentoring programs. ERP will provide \$300 in travel money to any student with an abstract accepted for an oral or poster presentation at a regional or national meeting.

Several organizations including the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) have developed a mentoring compact between mentors and mentees. This document provides some valuable guidance on developing a mentoring relationship and expectations for this relationship. We encourage you to share this document with your mentor(s) and use it as a conversation starter.



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Compact Between Postdoctoral Appointees and Their Mentors

December 2006

www.aamc.org/postdoccompact

The *Compact Between Postdoctoral Appointees and Their Mentors* is intended to initiate discussions at the local and national levels about the postdoctoral appointee-mentor relationship and the commitments necessary for a high quality postdoctoral training experience.

The Compact was drafted by the AAMC Group on Graduate, Research, Education, and Training (GREAT) and its Postdoctorate Committee. It is modeled on the AAMC *Compact Between Resident Physicians and Their Teachers*, available at www.aamc.org/residentcompact. Input on the document was received from the GREAT Group Representatives, members of the AAMC governance, and other members of the postdoctoral community, including the National Postdoctoral Association. At its October 8, 2006, annual business meeting, the GREAT Group unanimously endorsed the document. The document was subsequently endorsed by the AAMC Executive Committee on October 20, 2006.

Compact Between Postdoctoral Appointees and Their Mentors

Postdoctoral training is an integral component of the preparation of scientists for career advancement as scientific professionals. Postdoctoral appointees typically join an institution to further their training in a chosen discipline after recently obtaining their terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., D.V.M.). This training is conducted in an apprenticeship mode where she/he works under the supervision of an investigator who is qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. The postdoctoral appointee may undertake scholarship, research, service, and teaching activities that together provide a training experience essential for career advancement.

Core Tenets of Postdoctoral Training

Institutional Commitment

Institutions that train postdoctoral appointees must be committed to maintaining the highest standards of training and to providing a program sufficient to ensure, that when completed, the trainee can function independently as a scientific professional. Institutional oversight must be provided for terms of appointment, salary, benefits, grievance procedures, and other matters relevant to the support of postdoctoral appointees. A responsible institutional official must be designated to provide this oversight, and a suitable office should be available for the administrative support of postdoctoral affairs.

Quality Postdoctoral Training

Individuals should be trained to independently formulate meaningful hypotheses, design and conduct interpretable experiments, adhere to good laboratory practices, analyze results critically, understand the broad significance of their research findings, and uphold the highest ethical standards in research. The development of additional skills—including oral and written communication, grant writing, and laboratory management—are considered integral to this training.

Importance of Mentoring in Postdoctoral Training

Effective mentoring is critical for postdoctoral training and requires that the primary mentor dedicate substantial time to ensure personal and professional development. A good mentor builds a relationship with the trainee that is characterized by mutual respect and understanding. Attributes of a good mentor include being approachable, available, and willing to share his/her knowledge; listening effectively; providing encouragement and constructive criticism; and offering expertise and guidance.

Foster Breadth and Flexibility in Career Choices

Postdoctoral appointees must have training experiences of sufficient breadth to ensure that they are prepared to pursue a wide range of professional career options. Effective and regular career guidance is essential and should be provided by the mentor and the institution.

Commitments of Postdoctoral Appointees

- **I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career.** I recognize that I must take a realistic look at career opportunities and follow a path that matches my individual skills, values, and interests.
- **I will develop a mutually defined research project with my mentor that includes well-defined goals and timelines.** Ideally, this project should be outlined and agreed upon at the time of the initial appointment.
- **I will perform my research activities conscientiously, maintain good research records, and catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project.**
- **I will respect all ethical standards when conducting my research including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes.** I recognize that this commitment includes asking for guidance when presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties and reporting on breeches of ethical or compliance standards by me and/or others.
- **I will show respect for and will work collegially with my coworkers, support staff, and other individuals with whom I interact.**
- **I will endeavor to assume progressive responsibility and management of my research project(s) as it matures.** I recognize that assuming responsibility for the conduct of research projects is a critical step on the path to independence.
- **I will seek regular feedback on my performance and ask for a formal evaluation at least annually.**

- **I will have open and timely discussions with my mentor concerning the dissemination of research findings and the distribution of research materials to third parties.**
- **I recognize that I have embarked on a career requiring “lifelong learning.”** To meet this obligation I must stay abreast of the latest developments in my specialized field through reading the literature, regular attendance at relevant seminar series, and attendance at scientific meetings.
- **I will actively seek opportunities outside the laboratory (e.g. professional development seminars and workshops in oral communication, scientific writing, and teaching) to develop the full set of professional skills necessary to be successful for my chosen career.**
- **At the end of my appointment, in accordance with institutional policy, I will leave behind all original notebooks, computerized files, and tangible research materials so that other individuals can carry on related research. I will also work with my mentor to submit the research results for publication in a timely manner.** I can make copies of my notebooks and computerized files, and have access to tangible research materials which I helped to generate during my postdoctoral appointment according to institutional policy.

Commitments of Mentors

- **I acknowledge that the postdoctoral period is a time of advanced training intended to develop the skills needed to promote the career of the postdoctoral appointee.**
- **I will ensure that a mutually agreed upon set of expectations and goals are in place at the outset of the postdoctoral training period, and I will work with the postdoctoral appointee to create an individual career development plan.**
- **I will strive to maintain a relationship with the postdoctoral appointee that is based on trust and mutual respect.** I acknowledge that open communication and periodic formal performance reviews, conducted at least annually, will help ensure that the expectations of both parties are met.
- **I will promote all ethical standards for conducting research including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes.** I will clearly define expectations for conduct of research in my lab and make myself available to discuss ethical concerns as they arise.

- **I will ensure that the postdoctoral appointee has sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to become an expert in an agreed upon area of investigation.**
- **I will provide the appointee with the required guidance and mentoring, and will seek the assistance of other faculty and departmental/institutional resources when necessary.** Although I am expected to provide guidance and education in technical areas, I recognize that I must also educate the postdoctoral appointee by example and by providing access to formal opportunities/programs in complementary areas necessary for a successful career.
- **I will provide a training environment that is suited to the individual needs of the postdoctoral appointee in order to ensure his/her personal and professional growth.** I will encourage a progressive increase in the level of responsibility and independence to facilitate the transition to a fully independent career.
- **I will encourage the interaction of the postdoctoral appointee with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally and encourage the appointee's attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.**
- **I will ensure that the research performed by a postdoctoral appointee is submitted for publication in a timely manner and that she/he receives appropriate credit for the work she/he performs. I will acknowledge her/his contribution to the development of any intellectual property and will clearly define future access to tangible research materials according to institutional policy.**
- **I recognize that there are multiple career options available for a postdoctoral appointee and will provide assistance in exploring appropriate options.** I recognize that not all postdoctoral appointees will become academic faculty. To prepare a postdoctoral appointee for other career paths, I will direct her/him to the resources that explore non-academic careers, and discuss these options.
- **I will commit to being a supportive colleague to postdoctoral appointees as they transition the next stage of their career and to the extent possible, throughout their professional life.** I recognize that the role of a mentor continues after the formal training period.

This compact serves both as a pledge and a reminder to mentors and their postdoctoral appointees that their conduct in fulfilling their commitments to one another should reflect the highest professional standards and mutual respect.

Useful links

- American Association of Medical Colleges: www.aamc.org
- National Postdoctoral Association:
<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/site/c.eoJMIWOBIrH/b.1388059/>
- The Graduate School Academic Guidelines:
<http://www.wisc.edu/grad/education/acadpolicy/introduction.html>
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute, *Making the Right Moves*:
<http://www.hhmi.org/resources/labmanagement/moves.html>
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute, *Entering Mentoring*:
http://www.hhmi.org/resources/labmanagement/downloads/entering_mentoring.pdf