

Statement of Expectations for Graduate Student Mentoring

Master of Chemical & Life Sciences Program

The mission of the graduate program in the Master of Chemical & Life Sciences program is to provide students with an excellent, content-based education to better prepare them for careers in higher education. Effective student mentoring, especially related to the required practical experience and scholarly paper, is essential to the mission of the MCLFS program. In the following we outline the mentoring policies and goals for the MCLFS program. These are divided into four basic areas of mentoring; general values, for the practical experience, for the scholarly paper and by the program director.

General Mentoring Values

Faculty in the MCLFS program will...

1. maintain a collegial and professional environment. Such an environment is critical for a student's professional development and provides a model for future behavior and success.
2. provide clear and open communication between the program, other faculty and students so as to minimize misunderstandings, confusion, and frustration among these individuals. Students should feel free to state opinions and discuss ideas and develop the maturity to tolerate professional disagreement.
3. recognize that everyone should be valued as an individual, with unique values, goals, identities and personalities. Since communication, negotiation and compromise are essential to mentoring, faculty should make reasonable efforts to acknowledge and respect individual differences in both students and other faculty members.
4. offer expert advice on navigating academic policies, formulating research questions, setting goals, and receiving objective and constructive evaluation and feedback.

Practical Experience Mentoring by MCLFS Faculty

Practical experience mentors in the MCLFS program will ...

1. establish a research environment that is intellectually stimulating, supportive, safe, and free of harassment.
2. know the practical experience policies, standards and deadlines of the MCLFS program and will assist students in following these requirements.

3. work with students to develop and execute a practical experience project that will both satisfy the requirements of the MCLFS program and can be completed in a reasonable timeframe. Mentors will work with their student to ensure continuing progress.
4. seek to have the student actively engaged in research activities, rather than simply performing custodial tasks (e.g., washing glassware, maintaining lab or field equipment).
5. instruct their student on proper lab and safety procedures, and documenting of their work (e.g., lab notebook, data analysis).
6. discuss expectations of a student's work hours, sick leave, and vacation. The mentor will inform their student in advance of any planned absences.
7. meet regularly with their student to review results and provide constructive feedback. These meetings provide an opportunity to ask questions, discuss expectations, receive feedback, and set or revise goals. Progress meetings should occur at least monthly, while mentors should provide feedback on specific assignments within ten calendar days. As an online program, contacts will typically occur by email or videoconferencing.
8. discuss acknowledgement of intellectual contributions to and authorship of presentations, publications, and other publicly disseminated work with their student.
9. encourage their student to attend professional meetings or workshops, and promote attendance at seminars and journal clubs that are beneficial to their student's professional development. Students should develop a working relationship with their instructors in the MCLFS program to provide a broader mentoring network that would facilitate their professional development.

Scholarly Paper Mentoring by MCLFS Faculty

Scholarly paper mentors in the MCLFS program will ...

1. work with their student to select an appropriate topic for their scholarly paper. This will include providing advice in determining the appropriate scope and focus of the paper so it can be completed in an appropriate period of time.
2. assist the student in producing a scholarly paper that conforms to the professional standards as recommended by the MCLFS program.
3. arranging regular reviews of a student's progress on their paper on mutually-acceptable dates. In general, reviews should occur at least monthly, while feedback from the mentor on scholarly paper drafts should be provided within ten calendar days.
4. provide timely feedback and constructive comments on a student's written documents.

5. encourage their student to attend professional meetings or workshops, and promote attendance at seminars and journal clubs that are beneficial to their student's professional development. Students should seek to build a broader mentoring network within the MCLFS program by developing a working relationship with their course instructors. Such a network can provide a number of opportunities for students to enhance their professional development.

Mentoring by the MCLFS Program Director

In addition to providing the overall organization of the MCLFS program, the Program Director mentors students at all stages of their engagement with the program.

The MCLFS program director will ...

1. foster a welcoming environment of inclusiveness for all students through all stages of their involvement with the MCLFS program.
2. work with prospective students to help them understand the goals and values of the MCLFS program.
3. advise MCLFS students on possible course offerings, ways to tailor the coursework to match their individual needs, and how to complete graduation requirements in a timely manner
4. work with the Office of Extended Studies (OES) to be certain students appreciate both their responsibilities as graduate students and the obligations of the MCLFS program to their success.
5. mentor MCLFS faculty on the values of scholarship, professionalism and inclusivity that are the core values of the program.
6. pair students with a scholarly paper mentor that is knowledgeable in the topic of their paper, but is also sensitive to the unique background of each student.
7. actively encourage students to mentor each other on the skills needed to succeed as a graduate student. This 'cooperative learning' model is a fundamental component of the MCLFS program and promotes inclusivity and a sense of community.
8. conduct exit interviews to determine if there are aspects of the MCLFS program that can be improved, or otherwise changed, to enhance the student experience.