

## Expectations of the research training environment

Every member of the research community has the right to a work and training environment free from mistreatment or inappropriate behavior and that is conducive to professional and scientific growth.

Mistreatment can occur in person or by email/online and includes – but is not limited to - sexual harassment, discrimination based on race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression; purposeful humiliation, verbal abuse, threats, or other forms of psychological mistreatment; and physical harassment, physical endangerment and/or physical harm.

The following list of examples is not comprehensive. No one should...

- speak insultingly or unjustifiably harshly to or about a person
- ask for sexual favors
- verbally abuse, shout at, belittle, or humiliate another
- threaten with physical harm, overtly or implied
- physically attack (e.g., shove, hit, slap, kick)
- use threatening or obscene gestures or jokes
- divulge sensitive information without consent
- require another to perform personal services (e.g., shopping, babysitting)
- deliberately and repeatedly exclude from learning experiences that are available to peers
- threaten to disrupt another's career, immigration/visa status, or professional opportunities
- disparage another's capabilities based on their origins
- retaliate for making an allegation of mistreatment
- make a person uncomfortable with respect to age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, appearance, or any other personal attribute

Responsibility for ensuring a professional and respectful environment falls on each research community member, but leaders of research groups (faculty principal investigators), and heads of training programs, departments, and research centers are especially responsible for the environments they lead. Leaders should be familiar with resources for training and education on campus and online.

More information about mistreatment and reporting options can be found [here](#).

## Student expectations of BBSP-affiliated faculty advisors in basic science research

Faculty who mentor graduate students should commit the following to each PhD student in their group. Students and advisors should discuss these points and come to a mutual understanding of their expectations.

- **Take responsibility for understanding and creating a safe and respectful work environment**
  - Professional and respectful interactions
  - Student concerns taken seriously and addressed promptly
  - Adhere to applicable HR and University workplace policies (e.g. reporting)
  - Be an example of responsible and rigorous pursuit of research
  - Be familiar with professionalism standards and reasonably accommodate personal expression and culture
  - Monitor the group climate and provide educational and training resources for each member
- **Have reasonable and flexible expectations for research time vs. personal time**
  - Avoid demands for consistently excessive hours/day or days/week (incl. after-hours communication)
  - Typical schedules have reduced hours nights and weekends, with some work off-site
  - Reasonable vacation days (12 days/year minimum with flexibility), sick days (12 days/year min with accommodation for serious health issues), and holidays appropriate to the individual (e.g. religious holidays, major US holidays) each year
  - Accommodation for external demands on time (e.g. family care, life events) and for any unforeseen or unique needs of the trainee (e.g. disability)
- **Meet regularly with the student to discuss research and training progress**
  - Frequency determined for each advisor-student pair; avoid frequent cancellations
  - Avoid mandatory meetings outside standard work hours of 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri
- **Be responsive to student requests for assistance, feedback, or information**
  - Reasonable turnaround times for manuscript drafts, posters, or talk feedback
  - Facilitate access to training and resources necessary for the project
  - Responsive to email queries in reasonable time during normal work hours
  - Invite feedback from mentee
- **Provide opportunities for professional growth and visibility**
  - Speaking at departmental events, presenting at conferences, authorship opportunities, etc.
  - Opportunities are identified by the advisor and provided equitably
  - Accommodate trainee time for long-term career development and professional skill building
  - Accommodate trainee time for service, leadership, and community engagement
- **Accommodate degree requirements and schedules**
  - Coursework, comprehensive exams, and other milestone requirements
- **Keep students adequately and accurately informed of their standing**
  - Any serious performance issues raised promptly with opportunity and guidance to correct them
  - Risks to student funding shared far in advance of any significant impacts
  - No termination from the lab without early notice and opportunity to address concerns

Students who feel that one or more of these expectations are routinely disregarded in a way that negatively impacts their research and academic progress or well-being can seek assistance and advice from program leaders. Those leaders include members of their dissertation committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, the relevant Department Chair, Directors in the Office of Graduate Education, the Graduate School, and others.

## Faculty expectations of BBSP-affiliated students

Faculty in BBSP affiliated programs can reasonably expect the following from their PhD students. Students and advisors should discuss these points and come to a mutual understanding of their expectations.

- **Contribute to a safe and respectful work environment**
  - Professional and respectful interactions
  - Work to resolve interpersonal issues that impact work
  - Be familiar with and follow applicable university workplace policies
  
- **Manage time effectively and be considerate of other lab members' time**
  - Attend meetings prepared to actively participate in discussions
  - Give sufficient time to read and provide feedback on student work (abstracts/posters/papers)
  - Meet deadlines agreed to with colleagues and communicate unexpected delays promptly
  - Respect the need for others' personal time
  - Respect that the advisor has multiple responsibilities, deadlines, and constraints that necessitate consideration and flexibility for responding to trainee requests
  
- **Keep the advisor informed of hurdles, concerns, attendance, or issues that impact performance**
  - Proactively communicate about routine attendance issues such as vacations or missed meetings
  - Communicate about roadblocks in the lab that impact progress
  - Share concerns about the work environment which require the advisor's attention
  
- **Actively engage in their own training and in their long-term career development**
  - Identify gaps in their expertise, troubleshoot experiments, analyze data, develop scientific writing skills, and think about their project with increasing independence each year
  - Read the literature and apply it to their project
  - Be the principal driver of their own career development
  - Balance career development activities with research responsibilities in consultation with the advisor
  
- **Keep the advisor updated about degree requirements and progress**
  - Students should be familiar with the requirements of their graduate program and keep their advisor informed of degree requirements and of the next steps for each milestone.
  
- **Regular attendance at scheduled lab and research meetings**
  - Minimize avoidable conflicts and missed meetings
  
- **Be responsive to advisor requests for feedback or information**
  - Check email on work days and respond to queries and requests in a reasonable time.
  
- **Consistently prioritize integrity and honesty**
  - Conduct experiments with rigor and report the results honestly
  - Adhere to principles of responsible research conduct
  - Follow recordkeeping practices established by the lab
  - Adhere to all established lab and safety protocols

Faculty who feel that one or more of these expectations are routinely disregarded in a way that negatively impacts research and academic progress or the well-being of the research group can seek assistance and advice

from program leaders. Those leaders include members of dissertation committees, the Director of Graduate Studies, the relevant Department Chair, Directors in the Office of Graduate Education, the Graduate School, and others.

## Expectations of bench mentors

In addition to a faculty advisor, many students are also mentored by postdoctoral scholars, fixed-term faculty, research staff, or other graduate students, a role often called a “bench mentor.” Bench mentors who mentor graduate students should commit to the following ideals. Bench mentors and their advisors should discuss these points and come to a mutual understanding of their expectations.

- **Take responsibility for understanding and creating a safe and respectful work environment**
  - Professional and respectful interactions
  - Encourage student engagement and connection with other members of the research group
  - Student concerns taken seriously and addressed promptly
  - Adhere to applicable HR and University workplace policies (e.g. reporting, safety, ethics, accommodating disabilities, etc.)
  - Be an example of responsible and rigorous pursuit of research
  - Be familiar with professionalism standards and reasonably accommodate personal expression and culture
  
- **Have realistic and flexible expectations for research time vs. personal time**
  - Avoid demands for consistently excessive hours/day or days/week (incl. after-hours communication)
  - Typical schedules have reduced hours nights and weekends, with some work off-site
  - Reasonable vacation days (12 days/year minimum with flexibility), sick days (12 days/year min with accommodation for serious health issues), and holidays appropriate to the individual (e.g. religious holidays, major US holidays) each year
  - Accommodation for external demands on time (e.g. family care, life events) and for any unforeseen or unique needs of the trainee (e.g. disability)
  
- **Meet regularly with the trainee to discuss research and training progress**
  - Frequency determined for each bench mentor-student pair; avoid frequent cancellations
  - Be available to mentees, physically or via electronic communication channels, to answer questions, provide feedback, and help with troubleshooting
  - Facilitate communication between student and research advisor
  - Coordinate meetings between student, bench mentor, and research advisor as needed for clear communication
  - Avoid mandatory meetings outside standard work hours of 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri
  
- **Be responsive to requests for assistance, feedback, or information**
  - Reasonable turnaround times for manuscript drafts, posters, or talk feedback
  - Facilitate access to training and resources essential for the project (expertise, equipment, space, etc.)
  - Responsive to email queries in reasonable time during normal work hours
  - Invite feedback from mentee
  
- **Provide equitable opportunities for professional growth and visibility**
  - Speaking at departmental events, presenting at conferences, authorship opportunities, etc.
  - Opportunities are provided without favoritism and with transparent criteria
  - Accommodate trainee time for long-term career development and professional skill building
  - Accommodate trainee time for service, leadership, and community engagement

- **Engage in their trainee's short- and long-term career development**
  - Identify gaps in the trainee's expertise and recommend resources and activities to address those gaps
  - Provide opportunities for the trainee to grow professionally and achieve their career goals
  - Help the trainee balance their career development/leadership activities with research responsibilities
  - Cooperatively develop clear and reasonable training and long-term career goals
  
- **Accommodate degree/program requirements and schedules**
  - Coursework, comprehensive exams, and other milestone requirements
  
- **Keep trainees adequately and accurately informed of their standing**
  - Any serious performance issues raised promptly with opportunity and guidance to correct them

Students who feel that one or more of these expectations are routinely disregarded in a way that negatively impacts their research and academic progress or well-being can seek assistance and advice from program leaders. Those leaders include members of their dissertation committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, the relevant Department Chair or Center Director, Directors in the Office of Graduate Education, the Graduate School, and others.