Compact Between Postdoctoral Appointees and Their Mentors

Commitments of Postdoctoral Appointees

• I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my 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 UW 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 his/her contribution to the development of any intellectual property and will clearly define future access to tangible research materials according to UW 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.