Graduate school is about training you to **ask and address new questions and discover your passion**. Having honest and open discussions with your advisor is an important part of your training.

As a grad student, you own your education. That means not only being responsible for your dissertation, but also actively getting the training you need and seeking guidance from your mentors, who will support you as partners in your training. Fill out this form and (ideally) share it with your advisor ahead of your first annual mentoring meeting, using the questions to clarify approaches to your student/mentor relationship.

**Keys to a good mentoring relationship**

1. Think intentionally about your training: You will find it helpful to think through what you want to get out of your training and how your advisors and other sources of support can help you achieve your goals.
2. Have open and direct dialogue: Starting off with strong, supportive communication is a fundamental part of getting continual advise that will help guide you throughout your life.
3. Establish clear expectations/steps: The IDP covers topics that students have found essential to discuss with their mentors. If you have additional questions or objectives related to your training, these meetings are a great time to bring them up and set action steps.

**Training/Mentoring**

1. What are your primary goals in your academic training?
2. What Home Program requirements and timeline do you need to complete your PhD degree, and what is your plan to fulfill them?
3. What fellowships are you applying to and have you been able to get the guidance you need?
4. What resources or support will most help with your transition to graduate school?
5. What actions can be taken to make sure these needs are met?
6. What is important to you in a mentoring relationship?
7. What features of the lab group and your relationships with colleagues are most helpful and supportive to your wellbeing?
8. Are there any factors that you are concerned about may negatively affect your progress?

1. What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide regarding professional development and graduate training?

One of the most important parts of your PhD training is to develop a skill set transferrable beyond graduation. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses below relative to the where you think a student at your stage should be, checking the boxes for skills that you would like to target in the coming year. Ask your advisor how s/he agrees or disagrees with this assessment. An honest self-assessment and discussion will help you set goals for your training.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Research skills & scientific thinking** | **Mark your perceived current ability level**  **1 (weak) 3 (strong)** | | |
| Broad-based knowledge of science |  |  |  |
| Critical reading of scientific literature |  |  |  |
| Experimental design |  |  |  |
| Statistical analysis and interpretation of data |  |  |  |
| Creativity and innovative thinking |  |  |  |
| Understanding of submission/peer review process |  |  |  |
| Identifying and seeking advice and help |  |  |  |
| Time management |  |  |  |
| **Communications** |  |  |  |
| Writing for a research proposal or publication |  |  |  |
| Writing with appropriate grammar and structure |  |  |  |
| Speaking to a specific audience |  |  |  |
| Communicating one-on-one |  |  |  |
| English fluency |  |  |  |
| Working with constructive criticism |  |  |  |

1. Target skills of improvement for research skills & scientific thinking:
2. Action items for the target skills for research skills & scientific thinking:
3. Target skills of improvement for communication:
4. Action items for the target skills for communication:
5. Financial support: if you know what will be your financial support for next year?