

MTR MENTORING

An essential component of the MTR degree program is the mentoring program. Effective mentoring is critical not only for research training but also to allow the trainee to develop into an independent investigator. Mentoring 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. We recognize the importance of these attributes and the significant time required to mentor effectively. For this reason we have in place the MTR mentoring program.

The program requires the establishment of specific milestones and the definition as to when these milestones should be accomplished within the training period. Examples of such milestones are 1) data acquisition and analysis; 2) preparation and submission of manuscript(s); 3) grant submission; 4) conditions regarding authorship; 5) mentor expectations of the mentee and; 6) mentee expectations of the mentor.

The Mentoring Committee

All students enrolled in the MTR degree program have a Mentoring Committee. This is composed of the lead (primary) mentor, a biostatistics mentor and a programmatic mentor. In addition the student may elect to have a secondary mentor to be part of the committee. This mentoring committee functions as an ongoing monitoring group for the candidate's progress. Its members are faculty with expertise relevant to both the basic and clinical aspects of the candidate's research, and each is expected to contribute their expertise to fostering the candidate's research progress.

The primary mentor typically provides the direction for the research project and basic science components of training. S/he will also guide and instruct the student through the science writing and grantsmanship courses and towards independence and self-sufficiency in publication and in funding. The biostatistics mentor provides guidance in the development of the analysis plan at study inception and during the data analysis period in manuscript and thesis development. The programmatic mentor is responsible for the overall transition of the student through the program for both the completion of the curricular elements as well as the research project.

The student identifies the primary mentor prior to enrollment. The programmatic mentor and the biostatistics mentor are assigned to the student by the program director. The mentorship committee meets with the student at the commencement of the program, at the end of year one, and in advance of thesis defense. The primary mentor discusses the mentoring compact with the student and sets expectations, and meets with the student on a weekly to biweekly basis. Additionally, the student meets with the programmatic mentor at the end of the fall semester of the first year to ensure ongoing progress through the program. Additional *ad hoc* meetings may occur as required. The mentoring committee will also hold a pre-graduation meeting two to four months prior to the student's thesis defense.