

Fox Lab PhD Student Mentoring Agreement

Welcome to graduate school and the University of Denver! I am so excited to welcome you to our team. Within this document, I outline what you can expect from me as your advisor, and what I expect from you as a student. Ideally, this will be a living document that we update as you progress through the program, and as our relationship grows and changes.

What you can expect from me as your research mentor/supervisor

As your graduate mentor, I see my role as scaffolding your growth across domains (e.g., academic, professional, research, personal domains). I will do my best to provide you with the tools to become a strong researcher who understands and contributes to the research that our lab is conducting and to become a strong clinical psychologist who contributes to the field more broadly. Toward these aims, I will try to tailor opportunities, tasks, and experiences to you to help you reach your longer-term goals. I will be responsive, provide constructive feedback, and will be an advocate for you.

More concretely, you can expect the following from me:

- **Thoughtful and individualized mentorship.** I recognize that not all graduate students will have the same short- and long-term goals. I will plan to meet with you at the start of each academic year to discuss your **current** vision for your long-term goals. During this meeting, we'll also talk through shorter-term goals to help you achieve your longer-term vision.

I do not expect that your long-term goals will stay the same as you progress through the program! It's normal and expected that they will shift and change across time. For this reason, I'll check in about your current long-term goals yearly so we can adjust accordingly.

- **Responsivity.** I strongly value and prioritize responsivity. When you send me lab-related questions, drafts, tasks, etc. I will get them back to you with feedback (edits, comments) as quickly as possible. I know you will have spent significant time and energy on these projects, and I want to keep the ball rolling. You can expect me to respond to you (email, call, text, Teams channel) within 48 business hours, provided I am not out of town. **If you don't hear back from me in 48 hours, PLEASE ping me again.** I do not perceive this as rude, annoying, or anything other than you caring about the work. I might have just overlooked your note and need a reminder!
- **Provide critical feedback.** I will do my best to provide critical and constructive feedback on all projects sent to me with a single goal: *to improve the quality of the work*. I care deeply about the work you and our lab produce. Sometimes that means I'll provide

critical feedback. I know that this may sometimes feel discouraging, but that is never my goal. Please remember, feedback is in direct service of improving your work (and believe me: I am still constantly incorporating collaborator's edits, feedback, thoughts into my work!). I will (respectfully) challenge ideas (what we read, what other people talk about, my own, and yours) with an effort to make yours and our work better.

An essential skill to succeeding in the lab is the ability to constructively respond to feedback. But this is a skill, meaning I expect it will take time for you to build and grow in that regard.

- **Grant Feedback.** Please send me a draft of any grants you plan to submit **at least 2 weeks before they are due.** I will do my very best to get initial feedback to you within one week. Having two weeks will ensure we have time for at least 2 rounds of edits before submission.
 - **Manuscript Feedback.** I will do my best to get manuscript feedback to you within 1 week. However, please be patient with me, and allow for 2 weeks for revisions.
 - **Lab Citizen/Researcher Feedback.** I will do my best to provide you with feedback regularly throughout the year about your participation in lab as it relates to the below expectations.
- **Respond constructively to feedback.** I will work to respond constructively to any and all of your feedback. I will think about and respond to any/all feedback you give me. Feedback you give to me will not impact our relationship in the short- or long-term, the degree to which I advocate for you, or the quality of future recommendations that I write for you. *(Related note: I want and need your feedback! I care a lot about mentorship, and I want to help you learn, grow, and contribute to our research team. If I'm doing something that gets in the way of those goals, please tell me.)*
 - **Work with integrity and honesty.** I will be transparent, open, and honest with you.
 - **Accessibility + Meetings.** I am here to support you. Aside from holidays, I will meet with you once/week. If you'd prefer to meet less, that's ok too! Just let me know and we will plan an alternative meeting frequency.
 - **Advocate & Recommend.** Students often feel like they have little career/institutional power in their classes, departments, universities, jobs, and so on. I will advocate for you.

I will write recommendations for you. To make sure that these are as strong as possible, I ask that you:

- Provide me with specific deadlines and instructions for submitting relevant rec. materials.
- Do your best to ask for a rec letter **3 weeks** in advance of the due date. I know this isn't always possible, but it is my preference, and recs will be strongest when I have this time.

- Send me reminders a few days before a deadline if you haven't yet received notice that the rec was submitted.
- Send me relevant materials (e.g., statement of purpose, key content you'd like to make sure I include in my letter, research plan) so I can make the recommendation as strong as possible.

Expectations for YOU (written from your perspective)

- 1) Research.** It is my responsibility to identify a focus for my research. My mentor will provide guidance and help me gain clarity, but I recognize that if I am to have a satisfying research career, I must choose a focus driven by my own passions and interests.

To that end, I will be proactive to get involved in existing research projects within and outside of the Fox Lab, and I will work with my mentor, my lab team, and others as needed to design and execute my own independent projects.

There will be a lot of responsibilities competing for my time. I will work on time management skills, and I will plan to spend ~20 hours on research each week. There may be times when I work a lighter schedule and others when it is "crunch time" and I am working overtime to meet a big deadline. I understand that things will even out over time.

If I'm being paid on a grant or through a GRA-ship, I will spend most of those paid hours working on that particular grant or project (GRA of 50% time = 20 hours; 25% time = 10 hours).

Because my grants/GRA-ships on lab projects may not help me to reach research independence, when relevant to my goals I will pursue fellowships with the help of my mentor (e.g., NIH NRSA, NSF GRFP, Ford Fellowship).

- 2) Meetings with mentor.** I will meet with my mentor regularly. I will take notes during these meetings that will be shared via Teams or Google Drive. This will help both of us to keep track of the things I am working on, upcoming tasks/goals, etc., and this will provide a 'transcript' of the tasks I'm working on.

- 3) Graduate and lab citizen.** I will be an engaged and active participant in the Fox Lab, Clinical Area, and Department of Psychology throughout my doctoral training. I will commit to being a good lab, area, and department member through service commitments, TA/RA responsibilities, active engagement, and practicing kindness and respect.

If I am asked to complete a task (e.g., reading an article before lab meeting, presenting

to lab, sharing an idea with my advisor), I will come prepared with it completed. When I agree to complete a task, I will get it done. I will ask for help and/or an extension when I need it, after I've already tried to problem-solve on my own (everyone needs help sometimes!).

I will be honest and respect all ethical standards when I conduct my research and engage in scholarly activity. This includes compliance with all institutional and federal regulations for human subjects research as well as responsibility for copyright, permissions, and plagiarism.

I will strive to create a collaborative, inclusive, and welcoming environment in my interactions with lab members, DU students, and faculty.

I will take interest in the future generation of scientists via my engagement with student mentees.

- 4) **Professional development.** It is primarily my responsibility to guide my development as a clinical psychologist. This means that I will guide my own education and path to learn the content and skills I need. For example, I will regularly read scientific articles that are published in my area of research, I will actively seek out opportunities to learn outside of the classroom (e.g., attend relevant seminars/brown-bags/workshops; attend scientific meetings), and I will volunteer to help on projects using techniques that I want to learn.

I will be resourceful and attempt to learn independently and/or consult with other faculty in instances in which my advisor lacks relevant experience.

I will strive to become independent in my training activities including writing for publication, designing and conducting research, mentoring undergraduate and less experienced doctoral students, etc. At the same time, I do not expect to be independent from day 1! I will ask for help and support as I need it to help me to develop these competencies.

I will be knowledgeable of the policies, deadlines, and requirements of the PhD program. It is **my responsibility**, not my advisors, that I meet program requirements.

- 5) **Communication.** My advisors' expectations are based on her understanding of how I'm doing mentally, physically, and academically (in that order), and based on her understanding of my longer-term career goals. I will strive to keep open communication with my advisor regarding my well-being and my career goals.

I will seek regular feedback on my performance, including any challenges that I am facing, through open and timely discussions with my mentor. I will be responsive to advice and constructive criticism. I acknowledge that feedback is intended to improve my scientific work.

I will give honest and constructive feedback to all members of the research team, including my mentor.

I will admit when I make mistakes, and I will learn from them. It is my responsibility to acknowledge and communicate my mistake as quickly as possible to all team members that need to know about the mistake to course-correct.

- 6) Mental and Physical Illness.** Graduate school is hard and can be very isolating, confidence crushing, and emotionally difficult at times (it can also be *great*, but that's for another conversation...). Our lab also studies emotionally difficult topics, that may be personally relevant and/or relevant to my friends/family.

I will do my best to take care of my mental and physical health by planning time off, taking vacations, and engaging in other self-care activities (e.g., attend regular physicals/doctor visits, exercise, regular sleep, cooking, therapy when needed). I will communicate with my advisor when I am struggling with my mental/physical health (I am welcome to share as much as I am comfortable with. I do not have to share in what ways I am struggling explicitly if I do not want to; however, I will let her know in a broad sense what is going on, especially if it may impact how I show up to the lab).

I will also stay home and take care of myself when I'm sick. If I'm scheduled to run a participant or have something on my plate that day, I will find a replacement and notify the folks who need to know ASAP (preferably the night before when possible).

Note: all students are eligible to receive services at the DU Health & Counseling Center (<https://www.du.edu/health-and-counseling-center/>). To schedule an appointment, call (303) 871-2205. Please also review the lab CO resources document if you'd prefer to see someone outside of DU!

And now, onto the fun stuff...

Mentee current career goals and plan for the academic year.

Describe your long-term career goals in the space below.

Think through and write a plan for the upcoming academic year. Plan to add to this when you meet with your advisor, including personalized agreements and concrete expectations that you discuss.

WINTER 2023 AMMENDMENT

As you know, I will be on family leave during the winter quarter, likely starting during winter break (due date Dec 17 but exact date TBD) and continuing until the start of the spring term, March 27th).

This amendment discusses expectations for this fall AND winter. The goal of this planning is to set ourselves up for success and for minimal disruption!

Fall Expectations:

By October 31st:

- Choose potential interim DU advisors for winter.
- If desired, you can also select a non-DU researcher as an additional potential mentor/advisor.
 - After discussing together, email interim advisors to ask if they are open to this role. [We can write this email together, too, depending on your preference.]
- Make a list of deadlines ****that cannot be easily moved**** and that will arise between December 1st and March 31st. These should include grant deadlines, conference submissions, research presentations, and related content (pretty much anything you'd want my feedback on!).
 - Following this list, I will prepare, and if possible submit, any/all recommendations before my leave begins
 - Together, consider whether anything can be completed *before* December 1st.
- Create list of remaining support that will be needed during this leave (e.g., review of manuscript draft). Consider who else could be a support person for this project (e.g., interim mentor!). Craft preliminary timeline together for when you'll need support directly from me.
- Make a list of courses planned for the winter quarter, as well as research papers/projects/grants you'll be working on.
 - Together, discuss potential sticking points & when to reach out to interim mentor versus to me directly.
- Bring all potential questions/concerns so that we can best prepare for this reduction in contact.

Winter Expectations:

- IF during winter quarter you realize that there is a new opportunity with a deadline over the winter quarter that will require my support, please reach out to me as soon as possible (at least 3 weeks in advance) so that we can flexibly find a time to discuss and plan.
- IF you run into a problem related to research, courses, DU, or otherwise, consider what type of help is needed. For example: could this be problem solved with Nehal, another student, your interim advisor, your professor, Lauren (DCT), or Sarah (chair)? If not, or if you do not feel comfortable going to other people, please reach out to me.
- **I will not check email regularly, so if you email me, please expect ~2 weeks for a response. If a time-sensitive situation comes up, please text me: 3015202715. Even in the case of text, expect that it may take me a few days to reply so that we can schedule something. The sooner you contact me with an important issue, the better!**

Big take-away: I'm hoping that with some planning in advance, we can reduce any major setbacks due to my family leave. I want to be available to you as needed during the winter, while also prioritizing and protecting this brief but critical time.