



Michigan State University Postdoctoral Compact

This compact is designed to serve both as a pledge and a reminder to supervising faculty and postdocs that their conduct in fulfilling their commitments to one another should reflect the highest professional standards and mutual responsibility. This document should be a starting point for open communication.

Core Tenets of Postdoctoral Advancement

Institutional Commitment

Michigan State University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of education and to provide a period of training ensuring that, when completed, a postdoc can function independently as a scientific professional. Institutional oversight is provided for terms of appointment, salary, benefits, grievance procedures and other matters relevant to the support of postdoctoral appointees. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is available for the administrative support of postdoctoral matters in all areas of research and training.

Quality Postdoctoral Advancement

Individuals should be guided to the expected practices of their discipline as measured by their peers. Research should be conducted with rigor and clear understanding of bias. Design of hypotheses and methods, proper use of materials and subjects, execution of techniques, results and analysis should all be recorded and communicated with appropriately high standards. They should understand the broad significance and impact of research findings. Developing additional skills—including oral and written communication, grant writing and project/personnel management—are considered integral to this education.

Importance of Mentoring in Postdoctoral Advancement

Effective mentoring is critical for postdoctoral advancement and requires that the primary mentor dedicate substantial time to ensure personal and professional development. A good mentor builds a relationship with a mentee 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.

Fostering Breadth and Flexibility in Career Choices

Postdoctoral appointees must have educational experiences of sufficient breadth to ensure that they are prepared to pursue a wide range of professional career options. Effective and regular career guidance is essential and should be provided by the mentor and the institution. Additionally, mentors understand the importance of career and professional development at this time in a postdoc's career and agree to allow their postdocs to leave the research space and regularly attend career and professional development classes, seminars, and/or workshops.

Postdoctoral Appointees

Own the development of their careers

- Complete an Individual Development Plan and review annually with supervising faculty member.
- Seek regular feedback on performance and ask for formal evaluation at least annually.
- Show respect for and work collegially with coworkers, support staff, and other individuals.
- Develop research project with well-defined goals and timelines.
- Conscientiously perform research, maintaining good records, cataloging and maintaining all tangible research materials that result from project(s).
- Respect all ethical standards when conducting research; comply with all institutional and federal regulations. This 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.
- Endeavor to assume progressive responsibility and management of research project(s) as it matures—a critical step on the path to independence.
- Have open and timely discussions with supervisor concerning the dissemination of research findings and the distribution of research materials to third parties.
- Stay abreast of the latest developments in specialized field through reading literature and attending relevant seminars and scientific meetings.
- Seek opportunities outside the research space to develop the full set of professional skills.

Signature of Postdoc

Date

Supervisors and Principal Investigators

Support development of independence

- Ensure that a mutually agreed upon set of expectations and goals are in place at the outset of the postdoctoral training period.
- Provide regular feedback on performance.
- Support postdoctoral appointee to create an Individual Development Plan & review annually together.
- Strive to maintain a relationship with the postdoctoral appointee that is based on trust and mutual respect.
- Promote all ethical research standards.
- Provide opportunities to become an expert in agreed upon area of investigation.
- Provide guidance, mentoring, and access to opportunities/programs in areas complementary to the research space.
- Acknowledge individual training needs, with a progressive increase in the level of responsibility and independence.
- Encourage interactions with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally and encourage the appointee's attendance at professional meetings.
- Ensure that research is submitted for publication in timely manner and ensure appropriate credit for work performed.
- Provide assistance in exploring appropriate options for career development. Allow regular attendance at career and professional development classes, seminars, and/or workshops offered both on campus and elsewhere.
- Be a supportive colleague to postdoctoral appointees as they transition the next stage of their career and, as possible, throughout their professional life.

Signature of Supervisor

Date