## Public Health Compact between Ph.D. Student and Faculty Mentor:

## Expectations and Objectives

Doctoral training entails both formal education in a specific discipline and research experience in which the graduate student trains under the supervision of one or more faculty members who will mentor the student throughout graduate school. **A positive mentoring relationship between the graduate student and faculty advisor is a vital component of the student’s preparation for a future career.** A relationship of mutual trust and respect between mentor and graduate student is essential for healthy interactions and to encourage personal and professional growth.

Graduate students who pursue a public health graduate degree are embarking on a path of lifelong learning and are expected to take responsibility for their scientific and professional learning and development from the onset. This means:

* seeking guidance on and knowledge about course requirements,
* understanding program requirements, policies, and procedures,
* maintaining a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, collegiality, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards,
* maintaining complete, detailed, organized, and accurate research records,
* collaborating with their advisor and committee,
* establishing a feasible timeline for each phase of their work,
* managing the paperwork and deadlines related to program milestones,
* discussing policies on work hours, approved leave, and vacation with their graduate program and research advisor, and
* committing to working on an individual development plan.

Faculty members who advise students—with the backing of the graduate program and institution—are expected to fulfill the role of mentor, which includes:

* providing specialized academic and scientific training and guidance,
* fostering the graduate student’s professional confidence,
* encouraging intellectual development, critical thinking, curiosity, and creativity,
* discussing authorship policies regarding papers,
* providing regular feedback in the form of both positive support and constructive criticism,
* working with the student to help plan and guide their research project(s), setting reasonable and attainable goals, and establishing a timeline for completion of the project,
* encouraging the graduate student to attend and present their research at professional meetings and making an effort to help them identify and secure funding for such activities,
* supporting the graduate student to publish their work in academic journals,
* providing financial support, as appropriate/possible and according to institutional guidelines and policies,
* promoting the training of the graduate student in professional skills needed for a successful career,
* providing or identifying opportunities in which the student can discuss and explore career opportunities and paths that match their skills, values, and interests and be supportive of their career path choices, and
* serving as a scientific and professional role model for the graduate student.

**For the grad student: Questions to consider for the first meeting with a new faculty advisor**

1. How much time should I be spending in the research group/working with the advisor/in the lab each week?
2. How does the research group communicate and interact? (group meetings, weekly or monthly one-on-one meetings with the advisor, etc.). Does the advisor prefer to communicate via email, phone, or in-person meetings?
3. Are there opportunities for a Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) position in the near future? How about summer funding?
4. What are your expectations about the types of data that I will have access to and work with? Use of quantitative vs. qualitative methods?
5. What are your expectations around your students publishing? What is your past experience publishing with your students? How does your mentoring approach help to develop students’ writing skills?
6. What are your expectations for me about presenting at conferences or other professional meetings?
7. Do you ever provide funding for your students to attend and present at conferences?
8. What are your expectations for me with respect to applying for funding?
9. I have specific career goals (e.g., academic or non-academic positions) and wanted to share those goals with you [the advisor], and ask about specific activities (e.g., serving as a teaching assistant) that could support me in that activity in the future.

**For the faculty mentor -- consider the following list of questions and think about discussing these during your initial meeting with your new student.**

1. What mode and frequency of communication is expected from your trainees? E.g., do you expect that they meet with you once every 1-2 weeks (*strongly* *recommended; the department norm*), or less frequently than that? Will you meet as a lab group or individually? Do you have expectations about how frequently they respond to your emails?
2. What are your goals/objectives for your trainee by the end of their:
   1. 1st year? 3rd year? Completion of his/her degree?
3. How many hours per week and at what times/days do you expect your trainee to work on your research? How do you think about the balance between coursework, GSR/TA work, and research? Are there differences during the academic year vs. over the summer?
4. What, if any, specific technical or communication skills do you expect your trainee to learn as part of the research experience?
5. What level of independence do you expect your trainee to achieve, once basic techniques are learned? What can your trainee do to gain independence in research? How long do you expect this transition to take?
6. What is your mentoring approach? Once your trainee has learned the techniques and procedures used in your lab, do you prefer to watch your trainee closely, walking them through all the steps, or do you prefer a more hands-off approach?
7. How will your trainee document research results? Is there a specific protocol for keeping a laboratory notebook (or similar) in your research group?
8. To whom should your trainee go if they have questions about your research project? Do you expect them to come to you solely (or first), or should they feel free to ask others in the research group? If others, who would be good resource people for your project?
9. What are your expectations for your trainee’s level of comfort with the methodologies used in the lab?
10. What role will you play in the development of your trainee’s writing skills? Will you provide feedback and guidance on numerous drafts or do you only want to provide feedback on the final draft? If you are only willing to read final drafts of writing, are there others in the lab who are willing to provide feedback on earlier drafts?
11. If a student has previous research experience, is there anything that you need to share about your research group that is unique and that the student should be aware of?

This document represents an agreement reached between the graduate student and the faculty mentor/advisor regarding the structure of the working relationship during the student’s working relationship with the professor. It should be developed collaboratively between the two parties at the start of a new mentoring relationship and should be revised as needed (and is recommended to be reviewed at least once per year).

1. **Regular one-on-one meetings.** We plan to meet *(department norm that is strongly recommended: scheduled weekly or biweekly in-person meetings. Specify who should develop the agenda and how long the meetings will be)*:
2. **Outside of one-on-one meetings, our communications will primarily be through (*email/Slack/etc.)* and the expected timeframe for a response is:**
3. **Participation in group meetings (if relevant).** Student will participate in the following ongoing research or other group meetings:
4. **Tentative topics for papers over the next year on which student will be an author:** *(list topics and likely order of student’s authorship, e.g., first, second, etc.)*

**A) Student’s role on project:** (*describe their primary area(s) of responsibility)*

**B) Expectations for feedback:** *(describe around how much time* *is needed* *by the mentor to provide feedback on written work*)

1. **Professional meeting(s) that the student will aim to attend over the next year, if any, and relevant** **dates:**
2. **Funding.** What funding model will be in place for the next year? What are plans for future funding (internal/external fellowships, GSR, TA positions, etc.)? What are contingency plans, given any funding uncertainties? Academic year vs. summer?
3. **Academic Milestones**

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| **Academic Milestones** | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | | Year 4 | | | Year 5 | | |
|  | F | Sp | Su | F | Sp | Su | F | Sp | Su | F | Sp | Su | F | Sp | Su |
| **Program Milestones:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Second-Year Paper*  *(optional)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Qualifying Exam* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Dissertation Proposal* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Dissertation Defense* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| ***Other Milestones:*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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Place an X in terms designated for milestones. F=Fall, Sp = Spring, Su = Summer.

1. **Other areas:** *(list here any other areas of understanding between the student and mentor regarding working relationship or any other information about professional development plans. This might include what days the student will be where; any long absences agreed to in advance, unusual arrangements regarding use of computer equipment, space, or other resources; etc.)*

Student Date Mentor Date