Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between an experienced professional (mentor) who shares their knowledge, skills and experience with a less experienced professional (mentee) to support their academic and career progression. At Northwestern, faculty mentors play a crucial role in the success of graduate students, other faculty, and post-doctoral fellows. In addition, pre- and post-docs learn from their mentors how to mentor others, and participate in a “mentoring chain” that incorporates undergraduates, master’s students, and earlier-career doctoral students.

Mentors advise, guide and positively influence their mentees through:

- Have an honest interest in your mentor’s chosen career path.
- Jointly set goals and clear expectations.
- Guide, encourage and support your mentor in their academic and personal life.
- Be a role model, share experiences and demonstrate personal integrity.
- Teach mentors how to learn from their mistakes.
- Make relevant introductions and create opportunities for collaboration and professional development.

While mentoring is a one-on-one relationship, it is also a partnership. Strong mentoring partnerships are forged — and benefits accrue to each partner — when attention is paid to mutual roles and responsibilities.

### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

**Mentor:**
- Commit to and meet with your mentee regularly.
- Listen and learn. Discover who your mentee is as a person and what his/her goals are.
- Have an honest interest in your mentor’s chosen career path.
- Jointly set goals and clear expectations.
- Guide, encourage and support your mentor in their academic and personal life.
- Be a role model, share experiences and demonstrate personal integrity.
- Teach mentors how to learn from their mistakes.
- Make relevant introductions and create opportunities for collaboration and professional development.

**Mentee:**
- Choose your mentor wisely. Ensure he/she is compatible with you in the areas of your research interest and personality.
- Initiate and schedule discussions with your mentor regularly.
- Be honest and share a true self-assessment of who you are and what your goals are.
- Make a commitment to prepare, attend meetings and take action after meetings.
- Listen. Consider all suggestions without being defensive.
- Follow through on suggestions that make sense.
- Participate. Take full advantage of the introductions, services and assistance offered.
- Give back. Share how you’ve used your mentor’s advice.

### THE BENEFITS

**Mentor:**
- Satisfaction that comes from giving back, guiding others toward their own self-discovery.
- Cultivating collaborators for current and future projects.
- Sharing competencies across cohorts.
- Enhanced lab productivity and efficiency.
- Optimizing preparation for tenure and promotion.
- Learning from peers and mentor’s experiences.
- Supporting the Provost’s initiatives on undergraduate research.
- Sharing successes with the goals and experiences met by your mentee.
- Recognizing your own expertise.

**Mentee:**
- Understanding more about the support offered by your advisor.
- Increased clarity on career path.
- Growing knowledge and experience under expert guidance.
- Research experiences guided to a higher level.
- Developing and strengthening more connections at Northwestern and beyond.
- Building a stronger professional skill set.
- Reflecting with others on growing competencies and challenges.
- Building stronger networking contacts.

### TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

**Training Opportunities for Mentors:**
- “Mentor Your Summer Student”
- “Mentor Your Undergraduate Student”
- Specific school-based programming.
- PSM departmental training.
- “Mentor Your Undergraduate Student”
- Workshop on mentoring writing.
- Mentoring workshops for mentors of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

**Tools for Mentors:**
- Planning the first meeting with your new mentee.
- Research compacts.
- Tips for T32-funded postdocs and others.
- Best practices for mentors of PhD students.

**Tools for Mentees:**
- What Kind of Mentee Are You?
- “Mentee Expectations” self-questionnaire.
- Cultivating relationships with mentors.
- Optimizing relationships with advisors.

At the end of the mentoring process, the mentee should feel:
- Strengthened by the experience
- Able to see things with greater clarity
- Have a defined career path
- The professional skill set to move forward independently

The mentor should experience the satisfaction that comes from:
- Giving back
- Knowing they’ve positively guided another towards their own self-discovery
- Knowing they’ve actively participated in the chain of knowledge