



PROGRAM IN NEUROSCIENCE & COGNITIVE SCIENCE

NACS is an interdepartmental Ph.D. program at UMD that has provided a strong balance between basic and translational neuroscience research since 1996. NACS mentors have trained more than 100 Ph.D. students who have pursued successful professional careers nationwide and all over the world. NACS faculty mentors continue to impart their expertise and knowledge to their mentees, and provide the most unique training experience to all NACS students. NACS takes pride in supporting and encouraging successful mentor-mentee relationships.

Meetings and Milestones by Year

Year One

Committee Meetings (Oct and Feb)
All Student Meetings (Dec and May)

Year Two

Oral Presentation of Research Project (Oct)
All Student Meetings (Dec and May)
Begin Qualifying Exam (Feb)
Complete NACS Core Courses (May)

Year Three

Qualifying Exam Written Paper (Aug)
Qualifying Exam Oral Presentation (Nov)
All Student Meetings (Dec and May)
Possibly Advance to Candidacy (Jan)

Year Four

Committee meeting (Dec)
All Student Meetings (Dec and May)
Complete Supplemental Courses (May)
Dissertation Proposal Meeting (May)
Advance to Candidacy (June)

Year Five

All Student Meetings (Dec and May)
Dissertation Defense
Graduation

NACS strongly recommends that students present at national conferences, publish, and apply for NSF Fellowships (year one or two) and NIH Fellowships (year three or four).

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Mentoring Statement: www.nacs.umd.edu/students/forms-and-resources



Neuroscience & Cognitive Science (NACS) Ph.D. Program

GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTOR- MENTEE RELATIONSHIPS

This brochure provides general advice to NACS faculty and students to make the most rewarding mentor-mentee experiences.



Mentoring is a bi-directional exchange of ideas and knowledge.

MENTOR

Emotional Intelligence

- Be personable, open-minded and honest
- Learn about your mentee's culture
- Respect your mentee's differences; adapt to your mentee's needs
- Have your mentee's best interests at heart

Communication

- Be and remain available
- Set up regular meetings
- Listen attentively to your mentee; problem solve through asking questions
- Make your mentee aware of your lab environment and work ethic
- Understand your mentee's time demands outside the lab

Skill Development

- Determine the training expectations
- Build upon your mentee's qualifications
- Establish, update and follow a training plan for your mentee; set clear and reachable milestones
- Challenge your mentee more as they gains more confidence

Building Bridges

- Introduce your mentee to your scientific network
- Discuss career goals with your mentee
- Be open to learning about a career path of interest to your mentee and to discussing it
- Encourage your mentee to actively seek opportunities to develop/improve their skills or learn about different career paths
- Encourage training that enhances your mentee's competitiveness on the job market

Transition to the Next Level

- Work with your mentee to identify job opportunities
- Review your mentee's job search material and/or refer them to your colleagues
- Help your mentee connect with alumni
- Consider your mentee as a colleague

MENTEE

Emotional Intelligence

- Understand your mentor's expectations
- Understand the lab dynamics and your mentor's leadership style
- Seek multiple mentors for different aspects of your training and career goals

Communication

- Communicate clearly and openly with your mentor; come prepared to your meetings
- Discuss your responsibility and time demands outside the lab
- Welcome new challenges
- Listen carefully to your mentor's suggestions
- Discuss regularly with your mentor about the next steps/milestones in your training
- Understand NACS requirements for graduation and discuss them with your mentor
- Open up to your mentor about your career aspirations

Skill Development

- Manage your time effectively
- Attend career development workshops
- Identify your research training needs with your mentor
- Set clear and realistic milestones for your career development
- Understand the different job sectors (Academia, Industry, Government etc.)

Exploration

- Explore career options and meet with professionals to discuss their career path
- Share career goals with your mentor
- Develop a career development plan and ask your mentor for help

Transition to the Next Level

- Learn how to tailor application materials to specific jobs
- After graduation, continue to update your mentor on your career trajectory
- Be prepared to support the next generations of students in reaching their career goals
- Become a colleague to your mentor