**MARC Mentoring Compact Information**

MARC & MARC-2 Faculty Mentors to Undergraduates,

MARC Mentors are expected to make a Mentoring Pact/Plan/Compact/Contract (whichever you want to call it) with their undergraduate trainees. They will also complete CIMER-sponsored training in mentoring, submit a Mentor Agreement with MARC, and work with the student to refine their Individual Development Plan (these will be found in the Mentor area of the MARC website.

Several faculty research mentors have requested an example/template of a Mentoring Compact.

Below you will find a comprehensive 4-Part Mentoring Compact.

1. Introduction
2. Laboratory Quick Facts
3. Comprehensive Mentor Expectations for Student
4. Comprehensive Mentor Commitment to Student
5. “First Steps” Mentoring Questionnaire to get to know the trainee

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FAQ for Faculty:

Do we have to use this exact document for MARC students?

No. You can use your existing compact, this compact, or develop one using others you find. Please review your compact considering the topics presented below and revise as desired.

Does my Mentoring Compact need to follow this format?

No. In fact, some faculty have a much shorter Compact because they already have a Laboratory Policies document that is given to all students who enter their lab, which covers much of this material. Find what works best for you.

Do I need a Mentoring Compact if the undergraduate’s primary trainer develops one?

Yes, you need one. However, the student’s trainer will benefit from making one of their own, which aligns with yours.

Do I need to give a copy of this Compact to the MARC program?

Yes, please. It is a component of our grant. Please provide it by the end of August 2024 for all your existing MARC & MARC-2 trainees. In the future, please provide it within a month of accepting a new MARC or MARC-2 trainee into your lab.

**Example Undergraduate Mentoring Compact – Aligning Mentor and Trainee Expectations**

(Feel free to modify and use components as desired. I have added many topics and changed sentences sufficiently such that it does not plagiarize the example Compacts on which I based this (ref below) – GPT)

**Introduction:**

(**Include a statement about the relationship between faculty mentor and undergraduate researchers)**.   
**Example:** Undergraduates who enter a research laboratory have the potential to grow dramatically, from insecure novices to skilled young researchers who make important contributions to their laboratory and field. By graduation, undergraduates who connect with a mature faculty research mentor and fully engage with their project and professional development opportunities, are often able to enter doctoral programs immediately following their undergraduate studies. I enjoy helping undergraduates grow into scientists and recognize the importance of a successful mentoring relationship and intellectual exchange between myself and my trainees. For mentor/mentee relationships to be strong and successful, it is important that both the mentor and mentee have a clear understanding of one another’s expectations for the relationship. This document lays out these expectations between me and an undergraduate researcher. In agreement with me, the student may also work with me to modify this document to better fit our desired mentor/mentee relationship.

**Laboratory Quick Facts:**

**Principal Investigator (PI) and Research Mentor:** You Here

**How to Address Me**: Dr. XXX or name?

**How and when to Contact me:** Routine: XXXXX; Emergency: XXXXXX.

**Expected communication response time:** Within one business day

**Laboratory Supervisor:** Doctoral Student First Last. Contact Info

**Time Commitment:** 10+ hours/week; MARC 15+ hours/week, MWTRF 3 hours, 1 PM – 4 PM

**Laboratory Group Meetings:** Required- Weekly: Thursdays 1:00 PM BSB 3.03.10

**Individual meetings with me:** Twice Monthly, XX:00 PM on Wednesdays

**How to Set up additional meetings with me:** Please do this by email and an Outlook invitation, ??

**Laboratory Access Policy & Hours:** XXXX (can they be unsupervised?)

**Lead Time Required**: Recommendation Request, Abstract Development, Poster Review, etc.

**Laboratory Break, Holiday, and Summer Policies: What** do you expect of them?

**What I Expect from My Mentees:**

1. *I expect that we will both work to communicate our expectations of each other*, to build and grow a strong working relationship. This includes being honest about strengths, weaknesses, and personal circumstances that may influence how we approach our responsibilities.
2. *I expect you to work within the “apprenticeship” model used in laboratories.* I will not be your direct day-to-day research supervisor. This role will be held by **XXX (an experienced graduate, doctoral or postdoctoral researcher).** I will absolutely support your development and meet with you regularly. Do not worry about a letter of recommendation; if you are performing well, usually a research supervisor drafts parts of it and I flesh it out and submit it. **[Some faculty may include the student characteristics often conveyed in letters, such as independence, teamwork, collegiality, critical thinking, readiness for doctoral training, mentoring/training others, reliability, etc].**
3. *I expect you to take notes when I or others in the lab are training you.* In labs, you are expected to learn and carry out techniques very quickly, even immediately after training with a little additional assistance and supervision. Taking notes helps you to remember and indicates to your trainer that you care about learning and honor their time.
4. *I expect you to ask lots of questions.* Research itself is designed to answer questions, and you will only grow if you ask questions of yourself, your trainer and myself. In my laboratory, there are no stupid questions except for the ones that aren’t asked and result in failed experiments, or those that arise if you don’t take notes during training.
5. *I expect that your commitment to the laboratory will be sufficient to allow you to grow as a researcher.* For an undergraduate to succeed in my laboratory, during the Fall and Spring semesters they should devote **XX hours in the lab and an additional XX reading and studying outside of lab. In the summer, I expect XXXX.** If you overload yourself with courses, excessive extracurriculars, an unneeded job, or other time-consuming activities, this will prevent you from advancing in your laboratory work and meeting your developmental milestones. Please communicate with me about necessary jobs or changes in financial circumstances or responsibilities and we will adjust expectations. *At the end of the day, it is important to commit only to what you can* *actually do and put your best foot forward when training as a researcher in my laboratory.*
6. *I expect that you will be primarily responsible for driving your own development*, although I will assist you to reach your desired milestones and goals. Advocate for yourself. Set up regular meetings with me to show me your progress, or additional meetings if you need help now. Ask about presenting at conferences that you desire to attend. Find additional professional workshops and attend them. Ask me if you can present your work at our laboratory meeting. Tell me when you have a conflicting training session with your training program and request a different time. Begin making a list of potential doctoral programs and ask for feedback. Have me review your CV. Loop me into assisting with personal statements and applications for summer programs, graduate programs, and NSF GRFP (National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program). Overall, take charge of your training, knowing that I will have your back and have the experience to make valuable contributions to your efforts.
7. *I expect* ***sufficient notification (See Quick Facts above)*** *if you need something from me, particularly proof-reading or recommendations.* I am eager to assist you but realize that my workload is heavy, I have multiple students to support, or I may be out of town. Please notify me early about deadlines for abstracts, scholarships, applications, and recommendation requests. If asked at the last minute, I likely will not be able to accommodate.
8. *I expect the following, regarding vacations, absences, and time away from campus****: [What are your policies? Do they need to be in town over the holidays? Winter Break? Summer if not at a summer program?]***
9. *I expect you to take steps to promote your well-being.* While your time in the laboratory must be sufficient for you to grow, you should examine all your activities and seek a sustainable lab-school-life balance. You will be developing as a scientist for many years, and you should make sure to have fun and develop relationships along the way. Let me know if you are having a concern about your well-being, and we will seek the best pathways to help you to improve it.
10. *I expect you to keep track of your experiments in a laboratory notebook.* In my lab, we use **XXXX** and I will provide you with **XXXX**. Instructions on keeping a lab notebook can be found here: <https://www.calliechappell.com/blog/2020/3/19/lab-notebook>. Please enter any concerns or missteps that occur while you do your experiments. Results from your experiments should be entered into the notebook within **a day** of them being completed.
11. *I expect you to attend and present at laboratory group meetings.* **These take place XXXXX.** At these meetings, students (including you) present their data and practice presentations. Please plan your classes so that you can attend these meetings. If you are in a training program with repeating conflicting meeting times, please bring this to my attention ASAP.
12. *I expect you will first work on your research supervisor's project, with the potential for maturing into your own project or a sub-section of a larger project in the future.* This progression is an established practice in science, and we will work things out so that you are still able to make presentations and submit an abstract to a student conference, early on. If you desire to complete a thesis, a**t least two semesters** before graduation, we will identify a thesis project that you can complete using the foundational skills you have developed.
13. *I expect that you will see yourself as a valued member of my laboratory*. You are encouraged to attend all laboratory-associated activities that are allowable for your age.
14. *I expect you to be a “good lab citizen.”* It is your and everyone’s responsibility to notify me or your trainer if you see something unsafe, illegal, or unethical occurring.It is also important for you to keep your stations clean and shared desks uncluttered, to respond to a laboratory alarm and notify your supervisor or me about them, to dispose of your waste properly, to clean dirty glassware or equipment, and to say something if you see a reagent or solution running low or poorly cared for.
15. *I expect you will accept constructive criticism of your work and presentations*, knowing that my intention and that of your direct supervisor is to benefit and help you grow. If any advice is unclear to you, please press me to clarify.
16. *I expect that you, not AI (Artificial Intelligence), will do the writing that you need to complete for your presentations and publications*. A solid foundation is important, and science writing is a skill that will benefit you throughout your career. Please work to understand the foundations of scientific writing.
17. *I expect that you will interact respectfully, collegially, responsibly, politely, and safely with your labmates and myself.* My laboratory is not a place for drama. Let me, or your primary trainer, know when you must miss a meeting. Be kind and respectful to all others in the lab. Thank the people who assist you with your research or provide training. Offer to assist others. Grow into a kind and respectful trainer of others.
18. *I expect you to carry out your laboratory activities with honesty.* Honesty and integrity are critical to reliable “good” science, which my laboratory strives to perform. Even if you feel that you will disappoint me if an experiment fails, I would much rather be slightly disappointed (I am used to experiments failing) than learn later that you fabricated or falsified data. Also, please be exceptionally careful not to cut and paste un-changed sentences from someone’s publication into your writing; even with a reference, it is still plagiarism if the wording is unchanged.
19. *I expect you to respectfully disagree with me, particularly as you mature as a researcher*. This is your life, career, training. If you disagree with a comment or suggestion I make, please feel free to communicate with me and be your own advocate. I have a lot of experience but am willing to learn. Also please understand that at the undergraduate level, you will observe practices in scientific culture that may be confusing, and I will be happy to discuss things with you.
20. *I expect you to call it to my attention if I say or do something that is insensitive to you or to others*. I am committed to treating all people with respect and dignity, but if I fail, commit a micro-aggression, or sound impatient or intolerant, please let me know. Similarly, please gently notify me of ways to improve my mentorship and training. Overall, I am not perfect, but wish to become a better person and mentor every day.
21. *I expect and encourage you to seek out additional mentors and mentoring experiences*, with trusted individuals who will help you navigate the sometimes-complex pathway of developing as a young scientist. If any of the advice contradicts mine, concerns you, or discourages you, please come and we can talk about it.
22. *I expect that if something is happening in your life that may get in the way of your research work*, you will tell me so that we can strategize a solution. You can decide how much to share with me, but I will need to know the extent to which your life and your time for laboratory work is being impacted.
23. *I expect that if you choose to leave my laboratory or decide that the PhD is not your chosen pathway, you will speak to me face to face*. I may have a viewpoint that casts additional light on your circumstances or may have ideas about changes in your project or development plan that may improve your experience. More on this below.
24. *I expect you to speak up if you feel unsafe due to people in or near my laboratory.* If someone physically threatens or assaults you, please get to a safe space and call the UTSA police (Emergency x4911 or Nonemergency x4242) and notify me and your training supervisor immediately. In the case of very obvious sexual harassment, no matter who they are, let me and your supervisor know immediately and file a complaint with the Title IX Office (<https://www.utsa.edu/eos/title-ix/>). If someone’s behavior disturbs you but is not obviously sexual but violates your personal space and makes you feel uncomfortable, please firmly but politely define your boundaries with them, if you are comfortable doing so, and document the occurrence. If it happens again after notification, or if you are uncomfortable with speaking with them, please notify me and we will take steps to resolve the issue and make official reports as needed.

**What my mentees can expect from me**

1. *I commit to helping you to grow as a young scientist,* to develop the products of science, and to navigate the path towards a doctoral training program. I will work with you to refine your Individual Development Plan (IDP) and create a research plan that leads to conference presentations and an undergraduate thesis. Although research outcomes are unpredictable and timing is uncertain, I hope you will have at least one co-authorship from the projects you completed in my laboratory. I will also assist you with doctoral applications and grants such as the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship if you involve me early in the writing process.
2. *I commit to spending time with you.* I am busy with a range of duties, but my mentees are a priority to me. In fact, I limit the number of students I have for that very reason. While you will have a day-to-day research supervisor, I commit to meeting with you **twice per month** to check in on your progress and touch base. You may also set up an appointment if one is needed earlier.
3. *I commit to responding to text messages/Slack/our preferred mode of communication* ***within 24 hours****, and to an email by the end of the following business day.* I seldom look at email on the weekends. My work phone forwards to my cell phone, but I prefer not to receive phone calls unless it is an emergency- you will be missing a meeting that is starting, you are in danger or injured, or there is trouble in the laboratory or similar.
4. *I unfortunately cannot commit to funding your conferences or you as a research assistant, now or after you graduate*. I will, however, guide you towards sources of funding and provide recommendations. Do inquire however; I might unexpectedly have some funds or a mechanism for obtaining some.
5. *I commit to evolving my expectations and treatment of you as you mature in the laboratory.* I will work with you to make any needed changes to your IDP and research plan. I will also provide you with additional responsibilities, opportunities to mentor and teach, and greater autonomy as you grow as a young scientist. Please ask about these things if I do not bring them up myself.
6. *I commit to helping you to develop into the best scientist that you can be.* I do not expect you to be just like me and recognize that you may have very different strengths and motivations. I will be pleased whatever career path you choose in the future.
7. *I commit to being honest about my impressions of the strengths and weaknesses about your work, project, or growth as a researcher.* Though painful, honest, and direct feedback prevents surprises when recommendations are needed and can also spur growth.
8. *I commit to helping you to develop a laboratory/classwork balance*. I will assist you during midterms and finals by working with you to temporarily change your hours / time in the laboratory as needed. I also need you to let me know if you are experiencing academic difficulties, since schoolwork is critical for doctoral program admission.
9. *I commit to a mutually beneficial relationship but recognize that sometimes someone must follow a different pathway.* After speaking with me face-to-face, if you desire to enter another UTSA laboratory or cease training, my existing recommendation of you will not be reduced, you may inquire about presenting the work from my lab at a conference until you have gathered data elsewhere, and you will receive any authorship that you had previously been promised if the project goes well and your work is included. I will also be pleased to continue to provide you with advice and guidance towards your eventual goal.
10. *I commit to continuing as a mentor after graduation.* Although our formal mentoring compact will end at graduation, I fully hope to remain in your life. Please stay connected and let me know how graduate school is going and how your career is developing. I will also be pleased to provide advice, and even make recommendations during your graduate years and beyond.
11. *Professional Development:* Below is a list of stage-dependent topics that I can help you with, although there are others; feel free to ask. On most I can provide personal guidance or have people in my network to whom I can refer you.

* Identifying compatible graduate programs
* Writing an abstract
* Developing a solid research idea for the GRFP
* My advice on personal statements
* Various career paths in academia, industry, government
* How to improve your CV
* Developing a thesis
* How to improve your presentation skills
* What are solid graduate schools in your field?
* **Etc.**

I have read the above expectations and commitments and agree to operate within them in the **XXX** laboratory: :

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**First Steps Mentoring Questionnaire**

**To my Mentee:**

To help open communication between us and ensure quality mentorship, please answer the following questions. Both I and your day-to-day laboratory supervisor will read this. If you want separate discussions for us or to not reveal certain things to one or the other, please tell me, and you can submit separate sheets to each of us.

**How I would like to be Mentored in the XXXX XXXX Laboratory:**

1. Why have you decided to work in a laboratory?
2. Are you a member of any research training programs at UTSA? Which one(s)?
3. What is your favored way of communicating through technology?
4. In one or two words, what do you need most from me as a coach/mentor?

Explain:

1. Many things motivate me, but my personal top three are:
2. I try to be easy to get along with, but like most people I have a few “triggers” – If they get pushed, I tend to push back. Very briefly, what are your top three triggers?
3. The following personal/professional goals are important to me:
   1. This semester:
   2. This year
   3. 3-year
   4. Career
4. I (do / do not) desire to grow towards a thesis project and a final Honors or MARC Thesis
5. I have the following personal/strengths that will help me to reach my goals:
6. I could use mentorship to improve the following personal/professional skills that will help me to achieve my goals:
7. Coaches (and teammates) can support my work performance as well as my progress towards my personal/professional goals in the following ways:
8. If one thing could be improved in my work environment, it would be:
9. If I could have a second mentor, I would like to have someone with these specific skills:
10. Lastly, I think that you ought to know that….

**I, (You, Dr. XXX XXX) have read and value the above insights and agree to use them to provide a quality training and mentorship experience for you as a member of the XXX XXXX Lab:**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory Research Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Inspired by the Mentoring Agreements by Dr. Stephanie Roberts, University of Washington, <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/gerardolab/files/2022/09/Stephanie-Roberts-mentor-mentee-agreement-sample-2021.pdf>. Also adapted from a mentoring agreement from Serge McGraw and Lacy Barton.

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