

Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan

Postdocs on the project, and in the Gilbertson group in general, will participate in the following activities designed to prepare them for the next stage of their career.

Tracking Research Progress.

There are weekly research group meetings, where the progress of each researcher's project is reported. Additionally, there are individual weekly meetings between researchers and the mentor, where future experiments are outlined and longer-term research goals are plotted.

Development of Communication Skills.

All postdocs will attend at least one meeting during their stay in the group where they will give an oral presentation (ideally a seminar not a poster). Whenever possible this will be a national meeting such as the National ACS meeting or, depending on the nature of their work, possibly a more biological meeting, such as ASPET. When there are sufficient funds, they will attend such a meeting annually. Prior to job interview, the entire group, and Professor Gilbertson, review the slides for the research talk and then the presentation itself.

The first drafts of papers are prepared by postdocs responsible for the work. Revision of manuscripts is carried out in close consultation between the postdoc and the mentor. In the past, when necessary, postdocs have taken English and composition courses to improve their writing skills.

Collaborative and Team Building Skills.

Our group is highly collaborative both within the group and with other groups. Postdocs are the first resources for graduate students in the group and within a given project have a considerable degree of latitude in advising students. As postdocs gain experience they are given more autonomy.

We participate in a joint group meeting with four other research groups including one from the Chemistry Department at Rice University. Participants present their research quarterly. This is an opportunity for postdocs to practice presentation skills, as well as learn how to offer useful critical advice. It also provides valuable exposure to how other groups approach research problems.

Responsible Research Conduct.

The University of Houston requires that all employees take courses in fraud awareness and ethics training. Additionally, in our group there is an emphasis on the importance of results, regardless of their outcome. The idea that it is most important to do experiments carefully and to properly record the data is emphasized. The key is for the mentor to be open and accepting of negative results.

General Environment.

There is a serious effort by the mentor to have an open door policy. Group members interact both professionally and socially.