Graduate Student Mentorship Needs Checklist

By identifying your mentorship needs, you can approach faculty with a clear sense of your expectations for them as your mentor. Clearly communicating these needs at the beginning and revisiting them collaboratively over the course of your time working together is integral to the success of the relationship. This checklist can also support you in figuring out if any particular forms of support you are seeking can be met by cultivating a larger network of mentors, from within or outside of your field.

Rank the below items in terms of personal importance.

I am seeking mentors who will...

Academic Support

___ help me navigate departmental program requirements.
___ institute deadlines for programmatic milestones.
___ help me cultivate effective time management skills for meeting all my responsibilities.
___ advise me on coursework selection.
___ help me identify and pursue my research interests.
___ show me how to employ ethical research practices in my field.
___ meet with me regularly and productively to help me stay on track to meet program requirements.
___ review my work and provide feedback in a timely and constructive manner.

Professional Development Support

___ educate me about the practices and procedures of professional activities such as conference attendance, grant writing, applying for fellowships, and academic publishing.
___ keep me apprised of professional development opportunities (including calls for papers [CFPs], grants, fellowships, publication opportunities related to my work, etc.)
___ teach me about / model for me networking practices in my field.
___ connect me with other faculty members or scholars doing work related to mine.
___ help me identify and pursue my career goals (whether inside or outside of academia).

Psychosocial Support

___ make me feel recognized and supported.
___ make me feel as though I have worth as a researcher and teacher.
___ advocate for me in the department and in other research and disciplinary spaces.
___ make me feel comfortable voicing my ideas.
___ listen to my needs and take my ideas seriously.

Other Needs?

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1 This worksheet adapted from Council of Graduate School’s “Great mentoring in graduate school: A quick start guide for protégés.”
Seek out mentors who can meet your top-ranked needs. Remember that no one person will be able to fulfill all of your mentorship needs. It is likely that you will need to work with multiple people (faculty members, fellow graduate students, scholars on other campuses, etc.) to receive the support you need to succeed in graduate school and pursue your career interests.