## Context

Some institutions place an increasingly high emphasis on mentoring when hiring/promoting individuals or evaluating one's tenure dossier.

More and more funding organizations require that a postdoc mentoring plan be provided along with grant applications. For example, the NSF Grant Proposal Guide states that "*Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include [...] a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. Examples of mentoring activities include, but are not limited to: career counseling; training in preparation of grant proposals, publications and presentations; guidance on ways to improve teaching and mentoring skills; guidance on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas; and training in responsible professional practices.*"

**To help you highlight how you have strategically used the Productive Postdoc Conversation toolkits,** we have provided you with examples of statements and mentoring plans that you can use/modify and include in your application or promotion documents, or on your research group website and in mentoring compacts:

### Mentoring Statement 1

I see mentoring conversations as a tool to promote a culture of mentee-centered mentoring within my department and institution. My particular contributions include (1) ensuring that I meet once a week with all my mentees, (2) using tools like the institution's professional development plan to help align mentor/mentee expectations and plan my mentees' experience, and (3) supporting my mentee's professional development and investing one hour a month to my own professional development. In an attempt to become more skilled at having important to difficult conversations with my mentees, I recently used some of the Postdoc Academy Productive Postdoc Conversation Toolkits. Of the 6 toolkits that my mentees and I used, I especially appreciated the "Working effectively in an intercultural environment" toolkit. Exploring its evidence-based contents and selected literature led me to see myself and my mentees through different lenses. Encouraged by the tips and practices shared by colleagues in recorded interviews, I started having conversations with my mentees on their sense of belonging and hiring and retention practices in my lab. Myself and a couple of my postdocs who will soon be on the academic job market are now creating hiring practices and onboarding booklets for mentors and mentees. We will share them with other faculty members in our department to get feedback, and are hoping to use them in the future when hiring and onboarding students and postdocs. We are also planning to complete the CARES online mentoring course next semester to keep reflecting on these topics. I am expecting that this course will help me to have more meaningful conversations with my mentees, and attend to their psychological needs more fully.

## Mentoring Statement 2

When I started working as an assistant professor at X institution, I leveraged local resources to onboard students and postdocs, plan their research experience, make sure they get support from me and local professional development to acquire key skills to be successful academically. My approach seemed successful, and all my mentees enthusiastically sought to pursue academic careers at the end of their appointments. After becoming an associate professor, I further expanded my research group (from about X members to Y members) and sought ways to make my mentoring practices more effective and efficient. I created mentoring compacts to help onboard students and postdocs more swiftly, and started welcoming people to my group and to our research projects by pairing new members with senior ones to work on ongoing research projects. I also intentionally met with my team in weekly meetings, and with individual members once weekly or biweekly. These processes, strengthened by feedback from members of my group, helped us all be productive and helped me stay attuned to both the research being conducted and individual needs. It is through these individual meetings that I realized that more and more of my mentees are seeking to transition into non-academic careers. In addition to referring them to our local professional development offices and reaching out to my network for advice, I invested some time in exploring mentoring conversation support toolkits from the Postdoc Academy. These toolkits, called the Productive Postdoc Conversations, helped me acknowledge the specific challenges postdocs face when trying to expand their network, explore career options, manage their time during the job search, close projects and transition to their next career step. They provided me and my mentees with articles, interviews from colleagues, and key reflection prompts to get ready to support my mentees in their career exploration and transition efforts. Using these resources has helped me become a more empathetic mentor and support X number of mentees successfully transition into careers in government, the nonprofit sector, and industry.

## Mentoring Statement 3

Dear mentee, I would like to welcome you to my lab! I know, both from my experience as a postdoc and as a postdoc mentor, that good mentoring relationships are based on good communication. As you are getting acclimatized to being a postdoc and to being a member of my lab and this institution, I want to do my best to get to know you, both as an individual and as a researcher.

To help initiate our first important mentoring conversations, I would like to use the Postdoc Academy Productive Postdoc Conversation Toolkits. These evidence-based conversation starters will provide you with selected publications, advice from postdoc colleagues, and guidance to prepare for mentoring conversations. I like starting with the "Setting expectations" and the "Building an Actionable Career Plan" toolkits with new postdocs, as they are good ways to align our mutual goals and expectations, and discuss career paths you may be interested in. Having these conversations will also help us tailor your postdoc experience to your goals. We can then use the "Developing Resilience" and "Working effectively in an intercultural environment" toolkits to get to better know one another, our values, how we like to work, play and rest, and discuss many other topics important for your onboarding and life. So far, new mentees and I have spent 30 to 60 minutes discussing each topic, and have dedicated 3 to 5 meetings over the first 2 weeks of their appointments to these conversations. Feel free to block time in my calendar whenever we are both free during the first couple of weeks of your appointment for us to have these conversations.

When we meet, I will do my best to listen to you and ask for further information, prior to making suggestions to help you grow or discussing ways to support you in your research, career exploration, or professional development.

**Mentoring Plan 1**

We are committed to ensure that the postdoctoral researchers associated with this proposal will receive mentoring guidance that allows them to achieve deep and effective training in discipline-based education research fields, evidenced-based STEM pedagogy, professional growth in career competencies and skills (e.g. NPA competencies), and career advancement planning and execution. In addition to their work on the project, the postdoc(s) will have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experience in STEM pedagogy and professional development through the Y network.

Mentoring of the postdoctoral researcher (0.5FTE) at X will be performed by co-PI H. Together with colleagues at X, Y, and Z departments, H will guide the planning and coordination of the project; guide the synthesis of inclusive teaching materials from network Y; and guide the research and development of J. H and colleagues will help the postdoc author research papers, develop proposals and assist in the partial supervision of graduate students and undergraduate participants in the project.

In addition, the postdoc will partake in a novel project developed by PI H. That project incorporates… The postdoc will take part in… [*project description*].

X University has a large and effective Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) that serves as a central resource for postdoctoral training and education. PA, Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Training and Development, leads the OPA, and MO serves as Program Coordinator. This office augments the training environment for the approximately eight hundred and fifty postdoctoral scholars at X by providing professional development, career development and quality of life programming and resources. The OPA liaises on behalf of our constituents with University offices, as well as with local and national organizations. The OPA provides information and assistance on recruitment, appointment, orientation, University policies, and employee relations issues.

In addition to these local resources, the postdoc and PI H will leverage the [Postdoc Academy online resources on mentoring](#), more specifically the Productive Postdoc Conversations. These toolkits provide support to both postdocs and their mentors, to initiate mentoring conversations and act upon topics crucial for postdoctoral success. The postdoc and PI H will use these toolkits to help the postdoc transition into their new community of practice, plan the experience, discuss productivity and work/life balance, and support the postdoc's professional development and career transitions.

**Mentoring Plan 2**

We are committed to ensuring that the postdoctoral researchers will receive mentoring guidance that allows them to achieve deep and effective training in discipline-based education research fields, evidenced-based STEM pedagogy, professional growth in career competencies, and career advancement planning and execution. Postdocs will have ample opportunity to interact with colleagues across the Y network, and through the Z teams and convening.

PI H will mentor the postdoctoral researcher (1.0 FTE) at X University, by providing a structured mentoring plan. The plan is based on the validated approaches in P. Fund *et al, Defining Attributes and Metrics of Effective Research Mentoring Relationships* and V. Womack, *et al, Culturally aware mentorship: Lasting impacts of a novel intervention on academic administrators and faculty*. The approach looks across the roles of supervisor, mentor, coach and advocate intersecting with the domains of research, interpersonal, psychosocial and career, and culturally responsive/diversity. This framework has been applied in several research mentoring trainings that H and colleagues have done, for example [...*examples*...]. Finally, the postdoc mentoring will be informed by Hokanson and Goldberg, *Proactive Postdoc Mentoring*, book chapter in The Postdoc Landscape: The Invisible Scholars, eds. A. J. Jaeger and A. J. Dinin, Academic Press, 2018.

Operationally, the postdoc will partake in a mentoring workshop that incorporates role-play, self-reporting, small group discussions, mentoring inventories, and mentoring pathway development. The training helps postdocs develop valuable mentoring skills that they can apply in their future careers. They will also participate in the Postdoc Academy professional development courses. The first course is six weeks, *The Postdoc Academy: Succeeding as a Postdoc,* which covers joining a community of practice, building a career plan, developing resilience, and working in an intercultural environment. The second course is eight weeks, *The Postdoc Academy: Building Skills for a Successful Career,* will build advanced skills that will enable postdocs to transition to independence. Postdocs will explore: Project management; Managing through team building; Career preparation; Applying teaching skills beyond the classroom; Leadership; and Rigor and reproducibility. The postdoc and PI H will also use the corresponding Productive Postdoc Conversation toolkits to have conversations on the themes explored in the course, and take action to support the postdoc's professional development.

PI H will guide the postdoc in the project, specifically around [...]. PI H and colleagues will help the postdoc define SMART goals, identify promising research areas, collect and analyze data, author papers, develop proposals and help supervise graduate students and undergraduate participants in the project. They will have the opportunity to [...] and will take special ownership of [...].

University X has an Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) which is a central resource for postdoctoral training and education. PA, Ph.D., Director of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, leads the OPA, and BO, Ph.D., serves as the Postdoctoral Program Coordinator. The office augments the training environment for the University's approximately 1,000 postdoctoral scholars by providing professional development, career development and quality of life programming and resources. The OPA liaises on behalf of our constituents with University offices, as well as with local and national organizations. The OPA provides information on recruitment, appointment, orientation, University policies, and employee relations issues.