

Junior and Senior Mentor Contact Form
iAAMCS Mentor Corp

Student name: _____

Mentor Name: _____

Date of contact:

- First quarter: Aug 1-15th
- Second quarter: Nov 1-15th
- Third Quarter: Feb 1 – Feb 15th
- Fourth Quarter: May 1 -15th

Year: _____

Part 1: Graduation

Discussion notes: As students progress through their major, graduation dates can change. We should document the new dates as they occur and note the reasons for the change.

Current student anticipated graduation date:

If a change from last quarter, note reasons for change.

- Classes not completed due to missing requirements
- Classes not completed due to grade or withdrawal
- Change in major
- Entering to programs that delay graduation (i.e. coop)
- Other: _____

Intervention discussion

Problems successfully completing classes due to insufficient background

- Online resources
- On-site tutoring
- Study groups

Notes:

Part 2: Goals discussion

Discussion notes: During the first quarter, the goals discussion should be in depth. Many students do not have family members that have attained an advanced degree. In addition, there may be family pressures to get a job for fear of additional debt. This discussion should present the student with a clear picture of the options for advanced degrees

Advanced degree advantages

- *Start with a high salary even for masters degrees (raises between 4-6% will make it difficult for a student to “catch up” with the masters salary since it starts higher and the percentages are higher).*
- *Many jobs require an advanced degree*
- *Jobs that require an advanced degree are more focused on creating new technologies*
- *There is a wider range of jobs available in non-academic institutions (i.e. corporate labs, military labs and national labs, etc). In addition, advanced degrees can provide opportunities for entrepreneurship through patents and company spin offs.*

Common misconceptions about graduate school

- *Increase debt – Students that are citizens can get funding to attend graduate school which includes tuition, medical insurance and a stipend*
- *More classes – Graduate students often take fewer classes (2-3). Classes are more focused on specific topics. The requirements for some classes may be projects and papers, rather than tests*
- *I am not sure what I would do for research/I am not sure what I am interested in – When starting graduate school, many students don’t know what their specialty will be. It is common for students to take a wide range of classes with the idea that classes that most interest them may be a good research direction. Research is about solving problems that matter to you. It includes creativity and persistence. Research creates as many questions as it answers.*
- *I am not sure I can be accepted – Acceptance into graduate school relies upon many factorings including GPA, GRE scores, essays, undergraduate research and recommendations. There are GRE courses available, assistance with writing essays and REUs can provide strong influential recommendations. In addition, often acceptance by a program may rest upon your advisors talking to someone at the graduate school or via networking.*
- *I am not sure about moving – This is a common concern. When considering graduate schools, you can look at programs near home. Also consider schools with a diverse population. You may find that you make friends for life*
- *I would like to work first and come back – Some students do come back but it can be difficult to shift financial responsibilities that are accumulated based on a corporate salary. It is also difficult to work and go to graduate school. For some, it can be difficult to juggle work and academic responsibilities. In addition, the contacts that you may need for graduate school acceptance may grow cold.*

Long-term goals

- Graduate school
- PhD
- MS
- Work

If these goals represent a change in long-term goals, document the reason for the change

Notes:

Identify short-term actions that support long-term goal

- Internships in non-academic labs
- Graduate school applications
- Fellowship applications,
- Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs)
- Publications
- Presentations

Subsequent sections will discuss progress on current goals as well as direction on starting new short-term goals.

Goals within next year (subsequent sections will deal with these items in turn)

- Graduate school applications
- Fellowship applications
- REU applications
- Publication preparation
- Conference attendance
- Lab Internships
- Other:

Additional notes:

Part 3: Publication preparation (Conference papers/Journal articles)

Discussion notes: Publications are an important mechanism for letting people know what you have found. It can be an avenue for recognition and to create relationships with researchers at other schools. Research that is not communicated really isn't research. Although we can present research at meetings, you can reach a much larger audience with written reports of findings.

Status of publications discussed at last meeting

- Publications finished and submitted

- Publications finished and accepted

- Publications returned for updates

New publications started

Conference papers

- Title:

- Submission deadline:

- Coauthors:

- Elevator pitch of work:

- Your responsibility

Assist with data collection
(simulations, experiments, studies, etc)

Write literature review

Review draft

Create images or charts

Analyze data

Write other sections

Other:

Articles

- Title:

- Submission deadline:

- Coauthors:

- Elevator pitch of work:

- Your responsibility:
Assist with data collection
(simulations, experiments, studies, etc)

Write literature review

Review draft

Create images or charts

Analyze data

Write other sections

Other:

Is this your first peer-reviewed publication?

- Yes
- No
- Other:

Concerns about ability to:

- Use statistics
- Write a section well
- Organize a paper/article
- Use citation management
- Organize a poster
- Write an abstract
- Other:

Discussion notes:

(Does the student feel comfortable with the list of items? Is there anything you can provide to assist?)

Part 4: Graduate school acceptance

Discussion notes: Graduate applications usually include GRE, GPA, letters, publications and essays. At some schools, individual faculty support the admittance of a student. The faculty member may be doing research in an area that you have indicated interest. In some cases, the faculty member has had a conversation about your abilities with another faculty member. This informal recommendation can come from faculty at your home institution or a faculty member that you have researched with. It is imperative that anyone that meets you is impressed by you. This can be as simple as using correct English, having good questions and being able to give an elevator pitch on your work or your aspirations.

Some decisions are by committee. In this case, applications are usually ranked by objective criteria. Even in this case, some students will be admitted with consideration to subjective criteria and not only objective criteria.

Expected semester of grad school entry:

List of schools identified

Stretch Schools

- 1.
- 2.

Likely Schools

- 1.
- 2.

Back up Schools

- 1.
- 2.

Graduate school application checklist: (Each item is discussed at the end of the check list since these items are requirements in many applications)

- Identify letter writers
- Research faculty in the area that you are interested in
- Take a GRE prep class if needed
- CV prepared
- Assist with writing research statement
- Other:

Notes about direction given and next actions:

(Does the student feel comfortable with the list of items? Is there anything you can provide to assist?)

Part 5: REU applications

Discussion notes: Research experiences as undergraduates allow students to conduct research usually during the summer. REUs are an important part of a graduate school or fellowship allocation. It provides a context for your essays and it is an opportunity to publish. Establishing a good relationship with your research advisor can secure strong recommendations from the research advisor. There are several programs for obtaining an REU. NSF funds discipline specific REU sites. Also the DREU program matches students with mentors at different schools. Also through networking you may find REU opportunities provided by research professors as part of a grant.

Applications checklist:

- Identify letter writers
- Research area
- CV prepared
- Assist with writing research statement
- Other:

Discussion notes:

Part 6: Fellowship applications

Discussion notes:

Although the university usually supports graduate students, fellowships can pay more and are prestigious to win.

Fellowship programs

- NSF Graduate Research Fellowship
- GEM
- SMART
- Other

Application checklist items to do:

- Check items that need to be done
- Identify letter writers
- Take a GRE prep class if needed
- CV prepared
- Assist with writing research statement
- Other:

Next steps:

Part 7: Entering research poster competition

Discussion notes: Poster competitions are geared toward undergraduate students and early graduate students. It is an opportunity to discuss your research with a wide range of people including faculty members and other students. It also forces you to put your research in a larger perspective and evaluate progress on the larger problem. Some conferences automatically provide travel funding for students accepted to the poster competition. This is also a way to attend the entire conference for free.

Identified discipline specific poster competitions:

Identified affinity poster competitions:

Poster submission checklist

- Creation of abstract for submission
- Creation of poster
- Printing of poster

Discussion notes:

Part 8: Undergraduate conference travel

Discussion notes: Conference travel is important because it allows students to meet with others that are interested in the same problems. Networking can help you find a summer internship or REU. Talking to professors can make your application for graduate school stand out. Discipline specific conferences can be determined by looking at conferences at which the research advisor has presented. Also conferences based affinity should be discussed (i.e. Grace Hopper, Tapia, etc). It is often easier to get your travel covered when you are presenting at a conference (either a poster or a paper).

Identified discipline specific conferences:

Identified affinity conferences:

Sources of travel funding:

- Conference student travel awards
- REU program or research advisor
- Alliance programs (iAAMCS)
- Home school

Ways to keep travel costs down

- Share a room with another student attendee
- Buy airline tickets well in advance
- Share rides to/from the airport
- Verify the amount of meal coverage (often limited)
- Verify what documentation is needed for reimbursement

When paying for travel in advance is difficult

- Ask if the funder can buy your plane ticket in advance
- Ask your home institution to buy the ticket and be reimbursed from the funding organization

Summary

What are the agreed on actions for the student that have been identified

List resources that student should consult

- Identify letter writers (Part 4, 5, and 6)
 - Should have good command of English,
 - Should have a good opinion of you based on class projects or research
 - Must be a professor from a class that you received an A and/or no lower than B if a required course
 - Good if person can speak to technical ability, time management, speaking/writing skills and attitude
 - Promptness
 - Must give letter writers time to write letters (at least a month). Last minute requests reflect badly on the student
- Research faculty in the research area that you are interested in (Part 4, 7, and 8)
 - Identify the conference and look at contributors to that conference
 - Ask a professor in that area within your home department
- Take a GRE prep class if needed (Part 4 and 6)
 - Use online resources where possible
 - GRE relies upon a body of knowledge
 - Best to learn and retain material over all undergraduate courses
- CV prepared (Part 4, 5, and 6)
 - Explain CV is a personal history of sorts (different than a resume)
 - Provide example iAAMCS CV
 - Help student identify what should appear and in what order
- Assist with writing research statement (Part 4, 5, and 6)
 - Recommend student attend the fellowship writing workshop

Identify external activities that are appropriate for referral by mentor

- Writing workshop
- REU training
- REU placement assistance
- Apply for travel funds
- Doctorial consortium
- Addition to aaphdcs mailing list (once grad student)
- Peer mentoring
- Other:

Schedule time for next meeting in three months

Mentor contact form feedback

What worked well for using the contact form?

Are there additional points that should be added?

Do you have suggestions for reorganization?