



## postdoctoral integrated mentoring program

The McManus Lab has established a postdoctoral co-mentor program, where [every postdoc selects a co-mentor](#) in their first 6 months in the lab. The guidelines for this are pretty loose allowing a unique relationship to develop with your co-mentor. The minimal requirements are that you meet with your co-mentor at least three times per year. However, in some cases the interactions can be extremely frequent, such as if the relationship is collaborative, or if you decide to participate in their lab's weekly group meeting. In some cases, our postdocs have actually been given space in the co-mentor lab. In other cases, simply meeting up for a cup of coffee once a month or giving a presentation at their group meeting during the year may be preferable.

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### Why a co-mentor program?

**Advice.** Having a co-mentor will allow you to seek outside scientific or career advice.

**Networking.** It will help you build your professional network. Your co-mentor can additionally help introduce you to other scientists at UCSF and beyond. They may supply you with professional opportunities such as speaker invitations, fellowship opportunities, and perhaps nominate you for awards.

**Letters.** Your fellowship or job applications will benefit from a strong letter from your co-mentor. The best letters of support come from those who know you well and can speak to your abilities.

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### How should I select my co-mentor?

**Co-mentor selection can be strictly professional.** Some select a co-mentor based on science, where they wish to associate with an expert of their chosen field of study. Often collaborative relationships result in co-author publications, where the co-mentoring lab benefits. Others may choose a co-mentor simply because they have identified a person whom they have great respect and are quite accomplished in their field.

**Co-mentor selection can be somewhat personal.** If you are a female or have a family, you may identify a co-mentor who is also female or has a family, as this may help you get a sense on how to navigate science as a woman or get some perspectives on balancing a family while developing your career. Likewise, if you are a clinician, you might find benefit in identifying another successful clinician PI who knows how to balance life on the bench and the bedside. *Above all else, you will want to select someone who meets your needs and is accessible.*



## What should I expect from my co-mentor?

A co-mentor is not your mentor- indeed your [funding and scientific development](#) will be guided by your PI. That said, your co-mentor should be receptive and offer you advice.

- Accessibility- they should be willing to meet with you, regularly, one-on-one.
  - Listen to you and to your ideas, and you can trust their confidentiality.
  - Help teach you how to be a better scientist by critiquing.
  - Provide constructive and timely feedback on your scientific work.
  - Introduce you to scientific colleagues, so you may begin to develop networks of your own.
  - Provide a strong reference for you when you are looking for a job.
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## What will a mentor want to know about me?

- Your co-mentor will want to see a copy of your C.V.
  - What are your long-term goals? If you are not exactly sure, no worries, but be prepared to discuss ideas about careers you are considering and why.
  - What research ideas and questions are you interested in pursuing?
  - How often you would like to meet with them.
  - Most of all, they will want to know how you would like to be helped!
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## What do our postdocs say about it?

Just ask them! Many of them have really taken advantage of this and it has substantially improved their career opportunities and the development of professional skillsets. The postdoctoral co-mentor program is as strong as YOU decide to make it!