

## Sample Postdoctoral Scholar Mentoring Plan

The Villanova Institute for Research and Scholarship [VIRS] can work with faculty mentors to develop effective Postdoctoral Mentoring Plans. A formalized Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan should be prepared and shared with the scholar prior to employment, if possible, and in all cases, revised as appropriate within the first 30 days of appointment. After hire and revision of the plan with the Postdoctoral Scholar's input, the final version of the plan should be submitted to [VIRS](#) within 60 days of onboarding of a new Postdoctoral Scholar. These plans will be used by VIRS [and collaborators e.g., VITAL] to inform professional development topics for a university wide post-doctoral network.

There is no prescribed format for a Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan but there are several key expectations for what should be included in a mentoring plan. What is included below should be used as a guide.

- Clearly communicate the goals, objectives, and expectations, as well as the anticipated assigned tasks and/or projects, of the scholar.
- If a postdoctoral scholar has more than one mentor (for example, one focused on teaching and one focused on research), the roles of each mentor should be clearly described.
- Outline the frequency and nature of discussions between the mentor and the scholar regarding their research/teaching activities and progress, as well as overall career development.
- For postdoctoral roles that include teaching, developing an e-teaching portfolio that showcases samples of teaching materials, assignments, student work, etc. could be a valuable aspect of a mentoring plan. VITAL is available for assistance in the development of such a portfolio.
- Include a strategy for the scholar to enhance their professional skills and research and teaching independence needed to pursue their chosen career path.
- Include expectations and procedures for attendance, notification of absences and tardiness, requests for vacation, and expectations of maintaining accurate records of teaching and research/scholarly work.
- Include explicit description of other University resources available to the Postdoctoral Scholar and any expectations for their engagement with those resources.

### Sample Plan Language:

[Begin with statement on expected term of appointment. e.g., "The initial appointment term is one year, renewable up to a maximum of three years of postdoctoral training funded under grant #X." or "The initial appointment term is one year, renewable up to a maximum of four years, as an Ennis Fellow". This language must be consistent with the offer letter that will originate from the Office of the Provost.]

Mentoring activities fall into [number] primary categories: (1) training in research/scholarly methods, (2) training in teaching, advising and academic service (3) meeting attendance and presentation, (4) manuscript preparation and/or grant writing, (5) incorporating research experiences into teaching, (6) mentoring of undergraduate and graduate researchers, (7) instruction in professional practice. (*These are meant as examples and are not exhaustive*).

1. Training in Research/Scholarly Methods. The Postdoctoral Scholar will be expected to participate in the following areas of research/scholarship including [provide specific examples]. Where appropriate, University-held training sessions or online modules will be made available (e.g., [provide specific examples]). Training on major equipment use will include [provide specific

examples]. The Postdoctoral Scholar will meet regularly with the faculty mentor(s) [identify names] at least [timeframe, e.g. once per month] to discuss progress on both the research and professional training efforts.

2. **Training in Teaching.** The Postdoctoral Scholar will gain teaching experience through departmental or program teaching assignments at an expected [fill in load, e.g. 2-2, 6 contact hours per year, etc.] teaching load. These courses will include [add courses if appropriate]. The faculty mentor(s) will discuss effective discipline-based pedagogies with the Postdoctoral Scholar and help socialize them to Villanova academic culture and students. The Postdoctoral Scholar will be encouraged to use campus resources such as VITAL. Feedback on teaching will be provided [add timeframe, e.g. once per semester] via peer-teaching evaluations and through student feedback on course and teacher survey (CATS) evaluations. Faculty observation for formative (improvement-based) purposes will be conducted [add timeframe as appropriate] before conducting summative observation. The scholar is encouraged to obtain early-term, student feedback (formative) in addition to CATS. The mentor will review teaching materials developed by the postdoctoral scholar, to support growth as a teacher-scholar and aid in development of an e-teaching portfolio for the academic job market.
3. **Meeting Attendance and Presentation.** The Postdoctoral Scholar will be expected to attend and give an oral presentation at [Name of Professional meeting(s)]. Funds for meeting attendance have been [included in the budget/identified by the department/college]. Meeting attendance will hone presentation skills and allow the Postdoctoral Scholar to network with senior colleagues from other institutions.
4. **Manuscript Preparation and/or Grant Writing.** The Postdoctoral Scholar will be expected to take a lead role in preparation and submission of at least [number] manuscripts for publication. The Postdoctoral Scholar will be a core participant in the drafting of at least [number] application(s) for external research funding with the mentor(s).
5. **Incorporating Research Experiences into Teaching.** The Postdoctoral Scholar will serve as guest instructor for at least [insert number of class periods] periods in a course taught by the mentor(s), for which they will prepare materials including a lecture and graded or ungraded class activity. *[For purposes of professional growth, at least 2 – 3 course periods should be included so that the postdoctoral scholar can implement changes based on mentor and student feedback. Include appropriate reflection and debrief conversation(s)].* The teaching materials will incorporate research performed by the Postdoctoral Scholar to illustrate concepts of relevance to the course being taught. (This activity may be more appropriate for scholars who are primarily research focused without significant teaching duties).
6. **Student Mentoring.** The Postdoctoral Scholar will learn mentoring skills from the faculty mentor(s), and will be assigned one or more students to mentor or co-mentor (indicate undergraduate or graduate) with the goal that this relationship leads to [examples: a publication in which a student serves as first author and the Postdoctoral Scholar as corresponding author, a senior Honors thesis, a presentation by the student at an external conference, etc.].
7. **Professional Practices Instruction.** The Postdoctoral Scholar will receive training in areas including peer review, research ethics, conflicts of interest, animal use, laboratory and field safety and will

engage in reporting activities as appropriate [include as appropriate to project]. The Postdoctoral Scholar will have the opportunity to participate in professional development activities offered by the Villanova Institute for Research and Scholarship, including access to the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, the faculty writing program, scholarly communication workshops, project planning and management skill-building, etc. The Postdoctoral Scholar will have the opportunity to participate in professional development opportunities offered by other campus programs, such as ODEI, VITAL, Falvey Library.

Resources. The mentor(s) will serve as resources for the Postdoctoral Scholar. In addition, the mentee will be introduced to institutional resources for professional development, including the Villanova Institute of Teaching and Learning, the Postdoctoral Scholar orientation, the Villanova Institute for Research and Scholarship, Falvey Library programming, [include these/others as appropriate].

Evaluation. The Postdoctoral Scholar will undergo an annual evaluation, using appropriate department and college level evaluation procedures [outline details/timing here].

Other expectations. [Include here any expectations with respect to procedures for attendance, notification of absences and tardiness, requests for vacation, and expectations of maintaining accurate records of research/scholarly work].