

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE BUSY COORDINATOR

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Mentorship and Trainee Responsibilities (Responsible Conduct of Research - RCR)

Mentoring the junior Researchers / CRCs (Clinical Research Coordinators) is a shared responsibility of all senior Researchers / CRCs.

A mentor should have a **willingness to share** his/her experiences and **assist the trainee** in understanding and adhering to the standards of conduct within their profession. In this way, senior researchers / coordinators can pass on the informal and possibly unwritten standards to the next generation.

Roles of Mentors

- ✓ **Ensure training** – Mentors should ensure that **training commence as soon as possible** for a trainee.
- ✓ **Provide support** – The mentor should guide the **professional development** of a trainee and provide guidance in all matters relating to research conduct. This includes assisting the Principal Investigator (PI) in obtaining IRB and regulatory (e.g. HSA) approvals, assisting with informed consent process, ensuring proper maintenance of essential documents etc.
- ✓ **Ensuring validity and accuracy of research**– The mentor should **have an overview** of trainee's research activities and outcomes. He/she must be confident that the trainees are following the proper and responsible conduct of research principles.
- ✓ **Ensure appropriate attribution** – The mentor should ensure that **appropriate credit is given** to trainees for their work and/or contribution.

Responsibilities of Mentors

- ✓ Be Available
- ✓ Listen Carefully
- ✓ Keep in Touch – Daily **communication** is encouraged.
- ✓ Allow for Differences – Successful mentoring depends on the **personalities** of parties involved.
- ✓ Let **trainee make decisions** - Mentors provide advice, help, and encouragement.
- ✓ Keep learning about effective mentoring through **experience** and available **resources** on mentoring.
- ✓ Teach by Words and Examples- Mentors explain their actions clearly.



Responsibilities of Trainees

- ✓ **Identify Career Plans** – Trainee needs to **identify their particular needs** before seeking a mentor. Trainees should **assess their skills, talents, and interests**, and seek advice from someone who is knowledgeable about suitable career options or through an Individual Development or Career Plan.
- ✓ **Locate Prospective Mentors** – A trainee should **seek individuals who have succeeded in their own careers** on a path the trainee aspires to follow as a mentor.
- **Qualities to look for in potential mentors include:**
 - Experience** in areas relevant to the trainee's personal and career development,
 - Interest** in developing the trainee and his or her career,
 - Willing to **make time** to meet with the trainee, and
 - Able to provide the trainee with **useful advice**.
- ✓ **Distinguish between Supervisors and Mentors** – Not everyone has the qualities of a good mentor. While the terms "mentor," and "supervisor" frequently are used interchangeably, supervisors are not necessarily mentors. Mentors **provide information that is essential for professional success**.
- ✓ **Be Clear about Needs and Expectations** – A mentoring relationship **should not be a passive** one. The trainee must take an **active role** in identifying and communicating his or her needs and expectations. Although a mentor can provide their own helpful perspective, trainee should **reflect** on it before accepting. The trainee must evaluate the mentor's advice according to his/her **own values, goals, and experience**.
- ✓ **Keep Learning about Effective Mentoring** – Trainees should seek to continue learning about the mentoring process in order to be more experienced, and to **prepare to be effective mentors themselves**.

References

1. NHG Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Manual, Chapter 6, Mentorship and Trainee Responsibilities
2. Core Components of Responsible Conduct of Research
[https://www.research.nhg.com.sg/wps/wcm/connect/romp/nhgromp/06+conducting+research/rcr+core+com](https://www.research.nhg.com.sg/wps/wcm/connect/romp/nhgromp/06+conducting+research/rcr+core+components)

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***Disclaimer: All characters appearing in this article are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons is purely coincidental. Best practices may differ between institutions. Readers are encouraged to follow their institution's policies/guidelines relating to the above scenarios/case study.**

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