Guidance for UCSD Principal Investigators on 
NSF’s Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan

Each NSF proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers (PRs) must 
include a supplementary document, one page maximum, describing the mentoring 
activities that will be provided for such individuals. Mentoring activities are evaluated 
under the Broader Impacts review criterion.

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.

The bulleted text below illustrates some of the many mentorship activities PIs may 
propose. PIs are encouraged to customize, embellish, mix-and-match and otherwise 
modify these statements for use in NSF proposals that request funding support for 
PRs.

- In addition to frequent one-on-one meetings with the PI, the PR will participate in 
  weekly lab meetings and be encouraged to attend regular departmental seminars 
  throughout the academic year.

- The PI will encourage the PR’s participation in professional development activities – 
  seminars, workshops, courses and events – offered by UC San Diego’s Office of 
  Postdoctoral Scholar Affairs, Center for Teaching Development, Research Ethics 
  Program, and Career Services Center. These campus organizations provide extensive 
  training opportunities in research skill-development, communication, scientific and 
  public presentation, teaching, grant writing, responsible conduct of research, project 
  management, and job-search strategies.

- The PR will be encouraged to develop and discuss with the PI an Individual 
  Development Plan that can help clarify the PR’s professional development needs and 
  help her/him set attainable career goals.

- The PR will be encouraged to explore the extensive resources available through 
  Science Careers magazine, including the How-To Series, a collection of articles 
  offering practical advice on a variety of topics related to finding a job and building a 
  career in the sciences.

- The PI will ensure that the PR gains experience in both scientific manuscript 
  preparation as well as research proposal development, including budget preparation. 
  The PI will provide editorial as well as technical guidance. Both PR and PI will draw 
  on the resources available through the UCSD Office of Research Affairs’ Research 
  Proposal Development Service. The PR will also be encouraged to take advantage of 
  UCSD’s extensive web-based training resources that include offerings in technology,
business, sexual harassment prevention, and UCSD-specific financial and safety topics.

- The PI will work closely with the PR on the development of abstracts and subsequent presentations of his/her research at the [Insert name of professional society meeting, with dates and location, if known.]. The PR will be encouraged to access resources on the preparation and delivery of scientific talks, such as the online publication *Scientifically Speaking: Tips for Preparing and Delivering Scientific Talks and Using Visual Aids*. Conference participation will provide valuable professional networking opportunities. At the conference, the PI will personally introduce the PR to leaders in the fields of [Insert names of fields.].

- The PR will have opportunities to gain teaching, presentation and outreach experience. S/he will give a classroom lecture in the PI’s graduate course, [Insert course name here.], as well as present an academic seminar in the [Insert seminar series name here.]. The PR will also have opportunities to engage in the lab’s public outreach activities, including [Describe outreach briefly here.].

- In the interest of developing his/her supervisory and mentoring skills, the PR will be given opportunities to assist in the supervision of the lab’s [Insert number here.] graduate and [Insert number here.] undergraduate students.

- On an ongoing basis, the PI will inform the PR of in-person and on-line networking opportunities. Such opportunities are available locally through the UCSD Postdoctoral Association, and nationally through the National Postdoctoral Association.

- The PI will help the PR secure and make a successful transition to independent, academic employment. Drawing on her/his own experiences as well as community guidance and resources such as The Chronicle of Higher Education’s Chronicle Forums on careers the PI will help the PR prepare for job interviews and seminars, evaluate potential academic positions, and negotiate start-up packages.

See also: Developing a Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan from the National Postdoctoral Organization.

**Example postdoctoral mentoring plans:**
http://viceprovost.tufts.edu/grantwriting/files/NSF_Postdoctoral_Mentoring_Plan.doc
http://research.ucmerced.edu/docs/Example%20Postdoctoral%20Researcher.doc