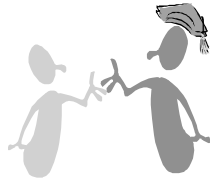


## Advisors & Mentors



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## Outline

1. Your objectives as a trainee
2. Defined responsibilities
3. Choosing an advisor
4. Advisor/advisee relations
5. Advisors vs. mentors

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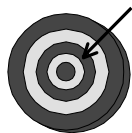
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## 1. Your objectives

- obtain training



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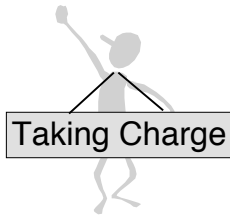
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## Being a Successful Trainee



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## What do you want to learn

### the details

- basic aspects of field
- specific problem area
- techniques

### the generalities

- critical thinking
- problem solving
- communication skills
  - oral
  - written
- managing time/stress
- working with others

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## 1. Your objectives

- establish credentials



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### 1. Your objectives

- establish credentials
  - certification
- graduate student
  - master's degree
  - doctoral degree
- professional student
  - MD, DDS, MBA
- postdoctoral fellow
- resident/clinical fellow

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### 1. Your objectives

- establish credentials
  - certification
  - products
- publications
  - peer reviewed articles
  - books
- patents
- techniques or reagents
- works of art

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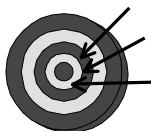
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### 1. Your objectives

- enlarge your network



>75% of all jobs will come from your network

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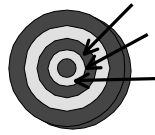
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### 1. Your objectives

- enlarge your network
  - meet others at institution
    - faculty
    - peers
  - meet visitors
  - attend national & international conferences



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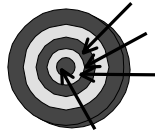
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### 1. Your objectives

- move on!



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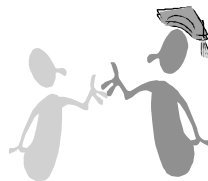
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### 2. Responsibilities



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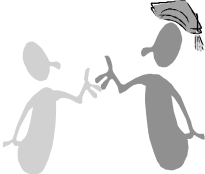
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***Their*** responsibilities

- advice
- financial support
- role model
- introductions
- letters of recommendation
- continuing assistance
- respect



Theirs

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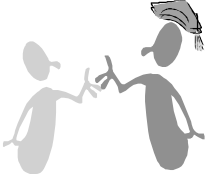
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***Your*** responsibilities

- assistance
- feedback
- respect
- your best effort



Yours

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**3. Choosing advisors**

types of advisors

1. academic advisor
2. research advisor
3. advising committee
4. mentors

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Choosing an *academic* advisor

What to look for

- knowledge of program requirements
- experience in advising
- availability
- rapport with you

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Choosing a *research* advisor

What to look for

- common interests
- experience and track record
  - research
  - training
- available
- rapport

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Choosing a research advisor

junior vs. senior faculty

Advantages and disadvantages of each?

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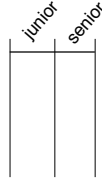
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### Choosing a research advisor

- junior versus senior faculty
  - experience in training
  - extent of network
  - hands-on research involvement
  - availability



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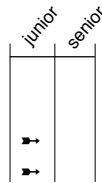
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### Choosing a research advisor

- junior versus senior faculty
  - experience in training
  - extent of network
  - hands-on research involvement
  - availability



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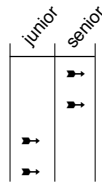
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### Choosing a research advisor

- junior versus senior faculty
  - experience in training
  - extent of network
  - hands-on research involvement
  - availability



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### Choosing a research advisor

#### collecting information

- meet with individuals and ask key questions
  - how much independence will you have
  - how will you be supported (stipend, research)
  - what are their authorship policies
  - how many other trainees will be in group
  - how often will you meet with advisor
  - what has happened to previous trainees

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### Choosing a research advisor

#### collecting information

- be open about your objectives, needs
- consider a trial period
- know when to move on to another group

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### Establishing an advisory committee

#### functions

- provide advice
- serve as intermediaries
- enlarge network
- letters of reference

#### selection criteria

- expertise
- diplomatic skills
- contacts
- willingness to take time

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### Advisory Committee: Exams & Meetings

Exams

- Test your knowledge
- Determine your qualifications to pursue a research degree
- Be Prepared!
- Be in command of the research plan
- Be in command of relevant background material

Committee Meetings

- Provide guidance for experiments
- Move you towards publications
- Keep you on track and on a timeline
- Be organized
- Take charge of your goals and what you want from them
- Give them outlines and data ahead of time

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### 4. Advisor-advisee relations: some sources of problems

advisor

- wears many hats

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### The multi-hat problem



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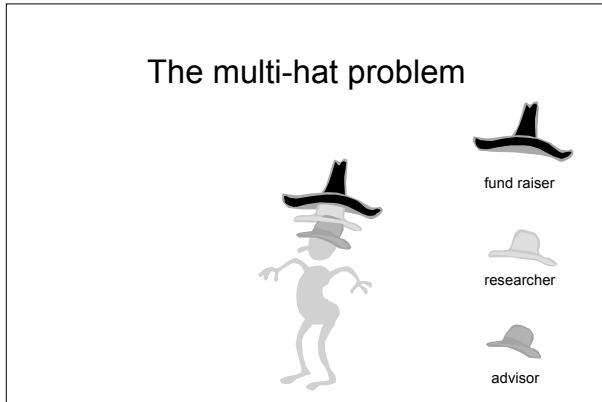
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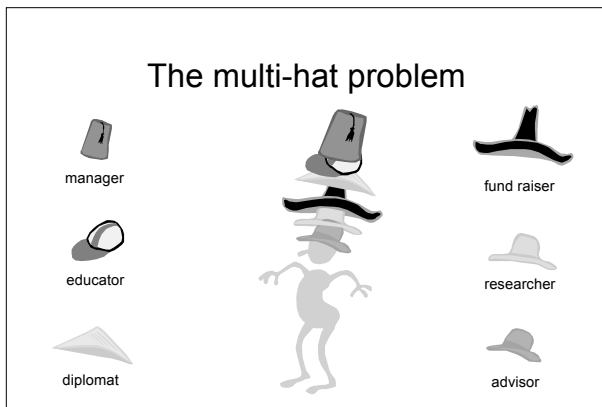
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**Advisor-advisee relations:  
some sources of problems**

<u>advisor</u>	<u>advisee</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• wears many hats</li><li>• extremely busy</li><li>• may know just 1 career</li><li>• has little experience<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- with advising?</li><li>- with you</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lack of<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- confidence</li><li>- diplomacy</li><li>- assertiveness</li></ul></li><li>• too little<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- planning</li><li>- effort</li><li>- Collegiality</li></ul></li></ul>

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### Advisor-advisee relations

- Understand their goals
- think about your mutual goals

Their Goals:  
High Quality Research  
Publications  
Grants

Your Goal:  
High Quality Research  
Publications  
Thesis

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### Advisors

- What are your expectations of an advisor?
- What do you think are your responsibilities as an advisee?

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### About.Com: Graduate School Take Your Advisor's Perspective

- *"You have the primary responsibility for maintaining the student-advisor relationship.*
- *Frequently update your advisor on your progress, seek advice, and be active in fostering the relationship.*
- *Understand that your advisor is busy and probably advises other students as well.*
- *As a scientist and professional, you must learn to think independently. Your advisor's role is to help you to make that transition, but you've got to help him or her out."*

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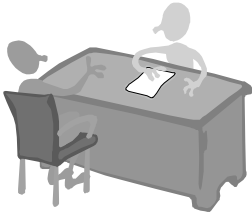
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5. Advisors vs. *mentors*



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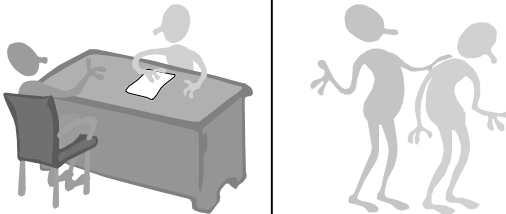
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5. Advisors vs. *mentors*



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Advisor

- An advisor usually denotes a formal relation sanctioned by an academic institution in which a faculty member oversees the coursework and/or research of an individual who is obtaining training.

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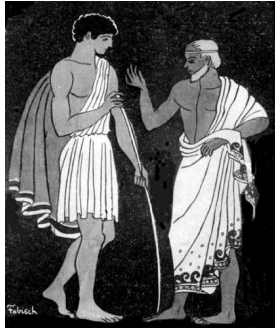
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### Advisor vs. Mentor

- What is the Difference?
- Some, but not all, advisors are mentors, and vice versa.
- Mentoring is more than advising.



Telemachus and Mentor  
by Pablo E. Fabisch  
from Les Aventures de Telemaque

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### Origins of “Mentor”

- The Oxford English Dictionary defines mentor as "allusively, one who fulfils the office which the supposed Mentor fulfilled towards Telemachus. Hence, as common noun: An experienced and trusted adviser." Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary provides two definitions, separating the original and acquired meaning: "a friend of Odysseus entrusted with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus" and "a trusted counselor or guide, tutor, coach." The origins of the modern meaning are often traced back to The Odyssey of Homer, when the goddess Pallas Athena assumed the form of the family friend Mentor (one of the many forms she assumed) to support Odysseus' son Telemachus. One might argue that the first "mentor" described in literature was Athena, a goddess and not an old man.

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### Mentor

- A mentor is someone who provides another individual (the mentee) with advice, training, and/or encouragement on some aspect of their life, though not because of an officially denoted relation. Although the mentor is often perceived as more senior in rank, age, and/or status than the mentee, this is certainly not the only option. Any combination is possible.

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### Why one mentor is not enough

- need multiple perspectives
- need input regarding many dimensions
  - research
  - career
  - gender
  - race/ethnic/religious/national group
  - personality
  - desired job or career (especially those outside your current area)

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### A community of mentors can provide:

- a variety of perspectives
- “outside opinions” of someone not involved in your project
- motivation, encouragement
- Letters of recommendation
- Assistance networking, info on jobs
- An intermediary who may be able to provide assistance in resolving major problems with your advisor.

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### What should you look for in a mentor?

- Time & willingness to mentor
- Sound advice
- Personal “chemistry”
- Integrity and respect
- Savvy
- Any other variable that is critical to you, e.g., research, background, etc.

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### Where to find mentors

- department
- institution
- local geographical area
- professional meetings

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### Finding and Using Mentors

- How should you approach potential mentors?
  - If you are going to a conference and there is someone there that you would like to meet and ask for advice, it is often helpful to contact them in advance of the meeting to set up a (brief) time for discussion.
  - Ask the individual for advice on some aspect of your career or research. (You need not ask someone if they will serve as a mentor to you, though that is certainly an option.)

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### Approaching Potential Mentors

- You often need to build the mentoring relationship slowly, especially if you are meeting the individual for the first time. Starting by talking informally, maybe over a brief cup of coffee, and then letting the mentoring relation grow. Starting slowly allows you and your potential mentor to test if this is a mentoring relation that you wish to develop. (After all, you may decide after a cup of coffee that the person gives bad advice!)

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### Approaching Potential Mentors

- Respect the fact that some individuals may not have the time, energy, and/or desire to mentor others. Their unwillingness to mentor you is not necessarily a reflection of you.

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### Finding/Using Mentors

- How do you make use of a mentor?
  - Share your experience and goals with them
  - Ask questions, solicit advice, and listen to what they have to say
  - Let them know if you followed their advice (especially if it works!)
  - Stay in touch, but don't be a pest!
  - You may find it helpful to establish semi-regular, formal meetings with your mentor, in which you update them on your progress and seek their advice. (An added benefit to these meetings is that they serve as a deadline for you to work toward.)

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### Finding/Using Mentors

- Additional points to consider
  - Train your mentor (and your advisor!). Tactfully let them know what types of information and advice are needed, or if something they are doing is not helpful.
  - Be appreciative and respectful of their time and effort (even if you disagree with their advice).
  - Think about ways you can help them, for example, alerting them to relevant articles in journals they may not read.
  - Pass along the favor – be a mentor to someone else!

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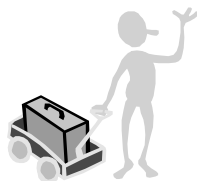
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6. Preparing to move on:  
what is the role of advisors and  
mentors?



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Preparing to move on:  
what you will need

- accomplishments
- references
- self-evaluation
- a short-term plan
- a long-term plan

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### Summary

- define your objectives early
- understand everyone's responsibilities
- advisors/mentors: select carefully & often
- work towards short-term goals and to build long-term relationships
- play an active role in your training!

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