

Empowering Mentees & Supporting Mentors: Statement of Principles and Practical Actions

From the 2022 Global Summit in Cairo, Egypt

The **2022 Global Summit on Graduate Education**, a convening of postgraduate leaders from fourteen countries, was designed to build consensus around the principles of strong postgraduate mentorship and to identify specific actions to support these principles. Summit participants agreed that good mentorship goes beyond academic advising to consider the student as a whole person with diverse and multifaceted needs and responsibilities. Mentors and mentees are not the only parties involved in the mentoring relationship, however. Postgraduate deans, other administrators, employers, and funding organizations all have roles to play in supporting healthy mentorship. The stakes of positive mentoring relationship are high: mentors are responsible for nurturing and cultivating the next generation of faculty, researchers, and industry leaders. The action agenda for the 2022 Global Summit recognizes that diverse stakeholders have important roles to play in creating cultures of care that support mentors and mentees alike.

Principles

Mentorship is most effective when it:

- focuses on the “whole” student, making room for each student’s scholarly and career aspirations and cultural background.
- is viewed as a collaborative process between student and mentor, where each has a role to play.
- respects the student’s need to maintain positive mental health and well-being, and the need to balance the demands of research with personal interests and commitments.
- allows students to take intellectual risks and develop new scholarly paradigms and products.
- encourages all parties to embrace career diversity.
- is appropriately supported, but not replaced, by technology.
- encourages students to use scholarly paradigms and methods to generate new knowledge for public benefit.



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Practical Actions for Stakeholders

Mentors...

- Commit to using practices of **self-reflection** and **personal development**, both to model this concept to mentees and to improve one's own mentoring practices.
- Seek out training and other professional development opportunities to improve understanding of effective mentoring practices and ability to use appropriate technologies.
- Develop and communicate **transparent expectations** for student mentees, and encourage mentees to clearly communicate their own learning and career goals. Consider using **Individual Development Plans (IDPs)** and mentorship contracts as a framework for making expectations transparent.
- Develop **awareness of differences** in cultural backgrounds of students, including students from underrepresented backgrounds and international students.
- Encourage all students to prepare for **careers inside and outside the university** by developing both a CV and a resume.
- Encourage and support advisees in seeking out mentors outside the primary mentoring relationship, such as peers, employers, and other faculty.
- Help mentees understand that developing relationships with a range of trusted advisors is a skill that will help them achieve greater independence and develop a lifelong skill in relationship building.

Mentees...

- Recognize **agency** and **personal responsibility** for the mentoring process.
- Commit to activity and progress through their program by working with mentors to meet program requirements and achieve development milestones.
- Commit to using practices of self-reflection and personal development.
- Participate in developing **shared expectations** through IDPs and mentorship contracts.
- Seek out mentors outside the primary mentoring relationships, such as peers, employers, and other faculty.
- Seek out career and professional development resources offered by the program or institution throughout their time as a mentee.
- Be **proactive** in seeking out available opportunities, not waiting until the end of a program.

Postgraduate Deans and Administration...

- Design career development **opportunities for mentors**.
- Understand the legal and ethical contexts surrounding mentorship, particularly for mediating disputes.
- **Recognize and reward** innovative mentorship.
- Create networks to share and support best practices within and between institutions.
- Ensure and support **clear communication** of university policies and expectations, providing institution-wide standards and norms.
- Promote peer and cascading mentorship.
- Develop systems, policies, and resources for mentors and mentees, including templates, individual development plans, mentorship contracts, and formative assessments.
- Develop systems to monitor academic progress for all students, including those enrolled part-time, online, and in master's and microcredential programs.
- Ensure that there is a **postgraduate student voice** in university governance processes.
- Mediate disputes with an eye toward conflict resolution.
- Cultivate **safe and healthy** physical and virtual mentorship spaces.
- Create policies and training to support technology-enhanced mentoring and education.

Practical Actions for Stakeholders

Funders...

- Incorporate **evidence of effective mentorship** into **evaluation** of research and training grant proposals.
- Consider including mentoring statements and mentoring plans as required elements of research and training grant proposals.
- **Expand funding opportunities** to support the professional development of postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students, including specific grant funding necessary to support time for internships not directly related to research objectives.
- Provide **bridge funding** sufficient to allow current postgraduate students to complete their degrees in circumstances where there is a lapse in a principal investigator or lab director's funding.
- Include research contributions and products, in addition to peer reviewed papers and conference proceedings, and monographs, as **evidence of intellectual merit** in the grant review and award process.

Employers...

- Recognize the **added value** of postgraduate degrees through hiring and promotion practices.
- Offer internships and other hands-on experiences for postgraduate students.
- Share best practices on helping postgraduate students transition to the workforce.
- Encourage **collaboration** between academic and industry researchers, including development of appropriate intellectual property protocols.
- Participate in joint mentorship/supervision of postgraduate students and early career researchers.

About the Organizers



Founded in 1919, The American University in Cairo is a leading English-language, U.S.-accredited institution of higher education. The University offers 39 undergraduate, 52 master's and two PhD programs rooted in a liberal arts education that encourages students to think critically and find creative solutions to the challenges facing our region and the world. It also offers globally recognized professional, competency-based education in English to meet the needs of the dynamic Egyptian and broader regional economies. Chartered and accredited in the United States and Egypt, AUC is an independent, not-for-profit, equal-opportunity institution.



The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.



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