

LDEO Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan: Synopsis

Postdoctoral scientists at LDEO and their mentors are expected to follow the institution-wide LDEO Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan. The goal of the mentoring plan is to provide the postdoctoral scientist with relevant skills, training and guidance on career advancement and to perform as successful individual scientists. At its core, this plan is based on a series of interactions between the postdoctoral scientist and his/her mentor focusing on professional development.

Mentoring Plan Outline:

The LDEO Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan involves the following steps:

- ***Step 1:*** The postdoctoral scientist answers a self-assessment questionnaire (described below) and discusses relevant topics with his/her mentor. If necessary, additional mentors could be included.
- ***Step 2:*** The postdoctoral scientist and mentor/s meet at regular intervals to discuss career guidance, specifically taking into consideration the relevant topics listed in the questionnaire.
- ***Step 3:*** The LDEO Directorate solicits written feedback from the postdoctoral scientists on their overall mentoring experience. Confidentiality is assured to encourage candid responses. Based on the feedback received, the LDEO Directorate determines whether there is a need for intervention. In addition, mentoring activities are part of the criteria by which mentors are evaluated at their (i.e. the mentor's) annual performance review by the LDEO Directorate.

In addition to these steps above, postdoctoral scientists are encouraged to contact the LDEO Directorate at any time if they wish to discuss any aspect of their mentoring experience. Confidentiality is assured.

Components of Self-Assessment Questionnaire:

Using a self-evaluation questionnaire adapted from the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) guidelines for postdoctoral evaluation, a questionnaire has been developed for LDEO postdoctoral scientists. Topics in the questionnaire focus on career guidance rather than scientific research. These include:

A. Current Research Activities

- I. *Accomplishments during the past year:* any submitted or published papers; oral or poster presentations; grant proposals written (and whether funded); patents received or applied for; awards and honors received; new assignments undertaken; networking activities within and outside LDEO; membership in any professional organizations;
- II. *Improved skills during the past year:* evidence of writing skills; presentation skills; oral communication skills; and time-management skills.

B. Long-Term Research Activities

- III. *Research Goals*: overall research goals; how to establish one's own credibility in one's field; additional research skills needed; any new ideas for research; pursuing long-term grants; seeking opportunities for presentations, networking and visibility; number of publications planned; professional courses planned
- IV. *Career Goals*: overall career goals; envisioned road map for the next five years; familiarity with LDEO promotion processes and governance; level of preparation needed to transition to junior scientist rank; target date for moving to new position.

Outcome of Mentoring Plan:

As a result of this mentoring plan, postdoctoral scientists are expected to have the following available to them in order to advance their careers:

- Training in the preparation of grant proposals
- Opportunity to co-author publications
- Guidance on making scientific presentations
- Opportunities to network with the scientific community, both within LDEO and externally
- Career counseling and guidance within LDEO (such as guidance on the promotion process within LDEO) and externally (such as the career paths that are best suited for the postdoctoral scientist), and
- Training in professional practices

Note: This mentoring plan has been designed to ensure maximum flexibility given the variation in the roles and responsibilities of postdoctoral scholars at LDEO.