

10 STRATEGIES

to Strengthen Faculty Research Mentorship Opportunities

Mentorship has long been a critical element of faculty development. Historically, new faculty needed to reach out directly to senior faculty within their department to get support on career growth. While some departments and research offices offer training tools or additional support, the ad hoc nature of these relationships means they are largely unstructured—and consequently early-career faculty have varying experiences and support networks.

While few research offices have the resources to create mentorship pairings for all active researchers, there is a relatively small number of tactics that have an outsized impact on faculty mentorship opportunities. This infographic explores the ten most impactful tactics for building an effective mentorship program.



1 Target Specific Groups of Faculty

Focus on specific groups of faculty that might struggle to find a good mentor within their departments.

EXAMPLE

IUPUI's¹ EMPOWER² Program supports underrepresented, or historically excluded, populations.

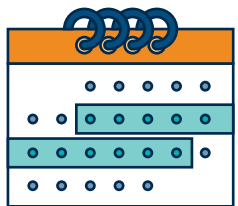


6 Communicate Expectations Up Front

Set clear expectations at the outset and hold mentees and mentors accountable.

EXAMPLE

The **University of Michigan Medical School's** R01 Boot Camp ISMEs⁵ are required to sign a contract confirming their understanding of program expectations.



2 Create a Time-Limited Program

A defined time frame ensures a structured environment and clarifies the level of commitment.

EXAMPLE

The **University of Michigan Medical School's** R01³ Boot Camp offers targeted support across an 11-month period.



7 Provide Support Beyond Mentoring

Consider providing participants with seed funding—or at least extra research services—to encourage them to find and apply for external funding.

EXAMPLE

The **University of Utah School of Medicine's** VPCAT Program hosts a series of monthly research-focused educational sessions; Utah also provides financial support for participants to attend leadership seminars hosted by the university.



3 Require Mentees to Apply

An application requirement ensures mentee buy-in and commitment to the program.

EXAMPLE

The **University of Utah School of Medicine's** VPCAT⁴ application includes sections on career planning and long-term goals, as well as a mentoring plan that describes whom the mentee will work with and how he or she will use that person's time and expertise.



8 Create Planning Tools for Mentees

Provide resources such as worksheets and planning tools that mentee-mentor pairs can complete and discuss.

EXAMPLE

The **University of Oklahoma** created the Individualized Research Plan (iRep) program to help each faculty member develop a plan for his or her research career; iRep combines small group meetings with tailored support from research development professionals.



4 Allow Choice in Mentor Pairing

Allow mentees to select their own mentors, but also be prepared to assist mentees in finding a well-matched mentor.

EXAMPLE

Applicants to **IUPUI's** EMPOWER program can either apply with a mentor already selected or be matched with a mentor by the research office.



9 Track Mentee Progress and Activity

Create mechanisms to track progress and activity to ensure a productive and worthwhile experience for mentees and mentors.

EXAMPLE

Mentees in **IUPUI's** EMPOWER program are required to submit midyear and year-end progress reports to the research office; IUPUI uses this information to monitor progress so that staff can quickly intervene if mentees are having a suboptimal experience.



5 Create a Matrixed Support Network

Develop a matrix of mentors to connect mentees with a support network and access to a variety of perspectives and experiences.

EXAMPLE

The **University of Utah School of Medicine's** VPCAT Program ensures each mentee has an experienced senior mentor, a scientific mentor in the mentee's field, a staff mentor in the research office, and a cohort of peer mentors.



10 Regularly Evaluate Program

Collect participant feedback and implement changes to the program.

EXAMPLE

Mentorship programs typically conduct both an annual evaluation and a full program review every three to five years.