

DATE: September 7, 2009

TO: Laboratory Heads
Postdoctoral Researchers

FROM: Thomas Kelly, MD, PhD
Director, SKI

Linda Stevenson
Director, SKI Administration and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

RE: New Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Guidelines and Procedures

MSKCC is committed to fostering the highest quality mentoring of its postdoctoral trainees. The attached document, developed by the GREAT group of the AAMC, discusses the commitments between mentor and postdoc that can help to build a strong mentor/trainee relationship. National studies have shown that thoughtful mentoring and a clear understanding by postdocs of their own responsibilities improve the postdoctoral training experience and enhance both research progress and future career outcomes. Please read this document, and think about ways you can incorporate these practices into your laboratory training environment.

To ensure that regular, candid communication occurs between mentor and trainee, we have established a **new policy requiring that a meeting take place between mentor and trainee prior to the annual renewal of appointment**. This new requirement will take effect for Research Fellow, Research Scholar and Research Associate appointments scheduled to be renewed January 1, 2010, or thereafter. The objectives of this annual meeting are to review progress on the trainee's research project, to discuss the trainee's career goals, and to evaluate his/her progress toward developing the skills and accomplishments necessary to achieve those goals. At his/her discretion, the postdoc will have an opportunity to create an "Individual Development Plan" to help guide the discussion and to track his/her progress.

Attached are suggested topics that may be covered during the annual meeting and the form that should be signed and returned to academic administration with the reappointment paperwork. Each year, the list of suggested topics and the required form will be sent to both mentor and trainee, well in advance of the anniversary of appointment. It will be the responsibility of the mentor to schedule time to meet with the trainee. Postdocs who have been recently reappointed may wish to review the list of topics and schedule time to talk with their mentors in the relatively near future. Incoming postdocs will be sent, along with their letter of appointment, the AAMC compact and the list of suggested topics for the annual meeting, so that they may begin to plan for their career development.

We believe that the new policy will significantly contribute to maintaining a productive and supportive environment for our trainees. Thank you for your continuing commitment to making MSKCC a special place to pursue advanced postdoctoral training.