



American Neurogastroenterology  
and Motility Society

**Mentoring Program**  
in  
**Neurogastroenterology  
and Motility**

The American Neurogastroenterology and Motility Society (ANMS) Research Committee is launching a Mentoring Program in Neurogastroenterology and Motility to help young clinicians and scientists (MDs, PhDs, or DVMs) as they start their research career in the areas of neurogastroenterology and gastrointestinal motility. The areas of interest can be varied and the research may take the form of clinical investigation, basic science research, or translational science research. The objective of the program is to provide guidance to individuals at an early stage of their career who may enter the field of neurogastroenterology and gastrointestinal motility. For students, fellows, and young scientists, this type of experience can be invaluable and may have a tremendous impact in their later success, considering the challenges of the obtaining funding for research.

The younger members and trainee members of ANMS may wish to participate in this program as mentees (i.e., an individual who wants to be mentored). Any interested individual, whether an ANMS member or not, is encouraged to apply.

### **Description of ANMS Mentoring Program**

Mentees who wish to have a research mentor will apply to this program. Likewise, established investigators with both research and mentoring experience who wish to help with this program in mentoring others will apply to this program. The application process is simple, and is described in detail in the following text. The application form is available on the ANMS web site. The ANMS Research Committee will review the applications and assign a mentor–mentee pair. The mentor will be given the mentee’s application and a biographical sketch or a curriculum vitae. The mentee will be given the mentor’s application and a biographical sketch or a curriculum vitae.

The mentor will be introduced to the mentee at one of the annual national meetings (e.g., ANMS or DDW) at a breakfast, lunch, or dinner meeting given by the ANMS Research Committee. At this meeting, the goals of the mentoring program will be discussed by the ANMS Research Committee. Through this program, the mentor will help provide younger mentees with suggestions, guidance, and assistance. This can be performed through a variety of ways including e-mail, telephone calls, and meetings. We suggest that the mentors/mentees have a telephone call at least once every two months. We also suggest mentors meet with their mentee during the ANMS and AGA meetings.

The ANMS Research Committee, consisting of Yvette Taché, Gianrico Farrugia, Tony Bauer, Jay Pasricha, and others, will monitor the mentoring program and the needs of the mentee by reviewing the annual evaluation forms filled out by both the mentor and mentee. A status report should be submitted quarterly for each mentor–mentee pair.

The ANMS Mentoring Program requests a minimum one-year commitment from mentoring pairs. After that time, the mentoring relationship can continue for as long as the participants are willing. At the end of the first year, mentors and mentees must each complete an evaluation form. The ANMS membership committee will use these forms to track the success of the match, as well as the success of the program.

### **Mentees (individuals who wish to have a mentor)**

The mentee form is for interested individuals (mentees) who wish to have a mentor in this program. The mentee could be a graduate student, clinical fellow, young clinician, or scientist (PhD, DVM, or MD) in the fields of clinical and basic science related neurogastroenterology and gastrointestinal motility. The mentee must be a member or a trainee member of ANMS. Non-ANMS members must complete the ANMS membership application form online at [www.motilitysociety.org](http://www.motilitysociety.org).

### **Criteria for mentees**

1. Seeking an academic career in neurogastroenterology and gastrointestinal motility
2. Less than five years out of postgraduate training
3. Able to meet with mentor once a year
4. Able to have a phone conversation with mentor once every two months.
5. Willing to complete a brief annual progress note or evaluation form at the end of the year.

### **Mentors (individuals volunteering to mentor others)**

The ANMS council believes it is important that established investigators help young scientists and clinicians who are just starting their careers. Therefore, we encourage experienced ANMS members to participate as mentors. The mentor form is for interested individuals who would like to be involved in this program as a mentor. The mentor will help an individual who is beginning a career in neurogastroenterology and gastrointestinal motility. The mentor should have experience in neurogastroenterology and gastrointestinal motility research.

The mentor must be a member of ANMS; a non-ANMS member must complete the ANMS membership application form online at [www.motilitysociety.org](http://www.motilitysociety.org).

### **Criteria for mentors**

1. Willing to do it
2. Able to meet with mentee once a year
3. Able to have a phone conversation with mentee once every two months
4. Active in research – defined as at least an average of one publication a year for the last five years
5. Needs to have been in their field for at least five years
6. Willing to complete a brief annual progress note or evaluation form at the end of the year.

### **Application to ANMS Mentoring Program**

The application forms are on the ANMS web site at <http://www.motilitysociety.org>. On the left side of the home page, see the third grey box ANMS MENTORING PROGRAM IN RESEARCH with links to the Mentor Form and the Mentee Form. Complete and submit these forms electronically to ANMS. In addition, e-mail a biographical sketch or a curriculum vitae to [admin@motilitysociety.org](mailto:admin@motilitysociety.org) at the time of your online submission of the Mentor or Mentee Form. The ANMS Research Committee will review the information and make recommendations as to the pairing of a mentee with a mentor.

### **For further information, contact:**

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# Guidelines for the Mentoring Program

## General considerations

Successful mentoring involves a dynamic process whereby each participant learns to respect and trust the partner's commitment, expertise, and individuality. A firm commitment to the mentoring process and a willingness to invest time and energy are the most important components for a successful relationship.

Mentoring is in many ways an elusive concept and an individual process. Every colleague pair is unique because each person's experience, personality, and professional development track is different. Although both people involved begin the process with expectations about how the relationship will develop, it is often wise to consider establishing a discrete time period as a trial basis for you and your mentor. A specific time frame will enable the two of you to determine whether the mentoring relationship is working and may help minimize any misunderstandings. Following are some guidelines for mentees to consider in fostering an effective mentoring relationship.

## Suggestions to the Mentees

Be considerate of your mentor's time. Mentors are by definition more established in their careers. This means that demands on their time are numerous. However, they have chosen to participate in this program and to be your mentor. You can expect quality time from them, but, in return, you need to be considerate of their time. Return phone calls and e-mails promptly and be prompt. Be sure to ask how much time your mentor has to spend with you and abide by that request. Let your mentor suggest taking extra time if needed. You might even discuss setting aside a particular time every few weeks.

Listen to what your mentor has to say. Mentors, having been there, know what you'll be facing in your future career. Although their advice may seem less relevant to you at the moment, often it is that very information that becomes critical in the future. Consider all the advice your mentor offers on all aspects of your career.

Show appreciation for the time and assistance given to you by your mentor. Mentors need encouragement too, and constructive feedback will help your mentor guide you in the most effective way. Let them know how their advice worked in your situation.

Make only positive or neutral comments about your mentor to others. If, after a period of time, you don't believe that either you or your mentor can participate in an effective mentoring relationship, don't be averse to discussing this with your mentor and possibly ending the relationship. If this occurs, the ANMS Mentorship Committee can assist in placing you in a relationship with a different mentor who may be a better match. If the relationship does end, make every effort to end it on professional terms. It is no reflection on either of you if a particular pair isn't suitable.

## **Guidelines for Interaction**

1. Copies of the respective curriculum vitae or biographical sketch will be given when the assignments are made. The mentee's CV is helpful for the mentor as it provides a review of the junior colleague's career at that point and may suggest some goals for the immediate future. The mentor's CV provides a base with which the mentor can point out key career steps that were particularly valuable, such as research awards, types of grant funding, quality of publications, service, and committee appointments.
2. The mentor should ask the junior colleague to share their goals for the upcoming year as well as more long-term goals, as another point for discussion.

## **Mode of communication**

The exact nature of subsequent meetings, including their topic and duration, will vary from pair to pair. Phone or e-mail likely will be the most effective, regardless of where the two people live. In most circumstances, e-mail probably will be the most effective way for mentor and mentee to stay in touch with a minimum of formality and time spent. However, it is important to set aside a specific time or times to interact during appropriate scientific meetings (e.g., ANMS, AGA), both because it may be a rare opportunity to interact in person and because this provides the junior colleague an opportunity to network with other scientists through the mentor's tutelage. Poster sessions and events such as receptions or dinners are good ways for the mentor to introduce the junior colleague to other scientists with whom the mentee may not normally have the opportunity to meet and interact with. It is important for the mentee to realize that the mentor has many demands on their time during the meeting, including mentoring their own students and postdoctoral fellows. This is why it is important

to specify a particular time and place in advance for at least one face-to-face meeting.

## Potential Pitfalls

There are at least three areas that need particular attention in any mentoring relationship:

1. **Limited Time:** Studies have found that finding the time and energy for mentoring pairs to get together is a great obstacle. Take advantage of e-mail, fax, and telephone calls as ways of staying in touch. E-mail especially allows for relatively short but more frequent contact.
2. **Lack of Knowledge or Skills:** After a senior colleague has accepted a role as a mentor, he or she may discover there is not really the common ground between the two that was expected or that the junior colleague wants assistance in an area in which the mentor does not feel particularly competent to advise. In this situation, the mentor can either contact someone else or assist the mentee in locating others whose expertise may be more helpful for a specific need of the junior person. Be open to finding another person yourself to get another point-of-view in a particular area.
3. **Over-dependence:** Over-dependence can go in either direction in a mentoring relationship. However, it is not wise for a junior person to become over-dependent on the mentor. It is helpful for mentors to encourage their junior colleagues to have other mentors and to eventually anticipate the end of the formal mentoring relationship. It should be everyone's goal to become full-fledged colleagues, although it's always nice to have someone who knows you to consult for advice at any time.

It is important that both mentees and mentors always consider whether a mentoring match may have served its useful purpose. It is better to part on amicable terms than to struggle with a relationship that lacks a firm foundation.

Reference: *Career Advice for Life Scientists; the American Society for Cell Biology*

