

GUIDELINES FOR CAMBRIDGE SUPERVISORS of NIH-CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS GRADUATE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

These notes are for the guidance of the Cambridge supervisor (i.e. 'mentor') of candidates participating in the **NIH-Cambridge-Scholars Program**. The notes have been drafted by the NIH and adapted for Cambridge use by the Secretary of the Graduate School of Life Sciences.

This is an unusual graduate program in biomedical research: two distinguished mentors and their laboratories join together to mentor a single graduate student on a thesis project that is of mutual interest to both laboratories. The principle focus of this program is to train top caliber research students in an advanced, collaborative, multidisciplinary format to best prepare them for successful careers as creative basic or clinical investigators. It is meant to be a truly joint enterprise. As such, the task requires diligent communication between all three parties involved, and requires an integrated effort during the entire term of the research project.

The Cambridge supervisor will be appointed the Principal Supervisor (for University purposes) throughout the student's doctoral program, regardless of the student's location at any given time, and will take responsibility for reporting on progress to the university (see below). The NIH mentor will be appointed the 'Second Supervisor' throughout the program.

Scholars are all enrolled as full-time students at Cambridge and must comply with all the rules and regulations governing graduate students at Cambridge, including the requirement to submit a dissertation for examination within four years of the start of their doctoral program. The regulations for the Cambridge PhD degree, and a full description of the expectations of supervisors and students, are on the [Cambridge](#) website. It is the purpose of this document to highlight additional requirements of the program needed to make the partnership work to best advantage.

The program is supported in Cambridge by the CATO Office, to which all enquiries should be directed (Mrs Karina Prasad kp319@medschl.cam.ac.uk)

A - STEPS FOR SETTING UP A RESEARCH PROJECT

Requirements managed by the NIH administration

- (1) The two mentors in the partnership should agree in advance on an area of research of mutual interest, potential projects that the student may carry out, and when and where each aspect of the project will be conducted. Although the plan will evolve with the discoveries and opportunities that transpire as a project matures, collaborators should agree on a common vision of what will constitute a successful training path for the student.
- (2) If the student chooses to work on a research project with you and both mentors agree to take on the student, it is the responsibility of both mentors to help the student write a **research proposal** (maximum of 10 pages) describing the project and to prepare a brief timeline for where and when the research will be carried out. The proposal should reflect familiarity with the relevant literature and be written by the student during orientation scheduled for the student's first summer. This proposal will be the first task for the trainee. **All the students will be housed at the NIH from August 1 – September 30** prior to the commencement of their PhD (the orientation period), to ensure that the writing of this proposal is comprehensive.
- (3) In addition to helping with the research proposal, each mentor should look closely at the student's transcript and assess whether the student would benefit from undertaking any **formal coursework or training** to add breadth/depth to the student's didactic training. If it is decided the student would benefit from additional coursework, mentors are asked to submit a recommendation via email to the program's Director of Student Affairs, Matt Vogt (vogtm@niaid.nih.gov). Mentors should be able to advise students with respect to the many specialty courses available through the NIH and its affiliates. We can organize one-on-one reading tutorials with senior faculty in recommended areas. Also, NIH encourage student participation in "professional" courses such as those offered at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories, Woods Hole, the Sanger Center, etc., and assistance with funding can be provided. The request for training should also be appended to the end of the research proposal. This programme is additional to the wide range of offerings Cambridge departments provide which are accessible through the Graduate School of Life Sciences

B - TERMS OF RESEARCH AND RESIDENCY

- (1) NIH-Cambridge Scholars are expected to spend **SIX TERMS in Cambridge**. Although this equates to about 54 weeks, the requirement is that 50% of their time is spent in each location. The terms in Cambridge need not be consecutive and students are offered some flexibility in how the time is spent so as to accommodate the scientific exploration process.
- (2) The NIH requires a **four-year work plan** to be submitted to the NIH staff—Matt Vogt vogtm@niaid.nih.gov or Katie Soucy skathryn@niaid.nih.gov on September 30' just prior to commencement of the first year.
 - x Alterations in this plan are permissible, but both mentors must agree on any changes to the student's plan.
 - x Students and mentors should agree at the **earliest possible** stage prior to commencement whether or not the student will **begin the PhD in Cambridge** – this has considerable consequences for the placement of the student in a College and on whether or not College housing can be allocated. Also, students beginning in Cambridge must aim to have **visa clearance** at least by the end of August to ensure being able to start on 1 October. For those starting in the US, a visa must be obtained as soon as possible; the CATO office will obtain permission for their leave to work away, *en bloc*.
 - x A student currently in Cambridge wishing to work away for a future term MUST seek '**Leave to Work Away**' from Cambridge in good time before leaving. The form for applying is accessed through the student's self-service on the Board of Graduate Studies' website. This is required so that the University and College can account for the student's whereabouts (requirement for all student visa holders), and so that the College can arrange accommodation and billing appropriately. Fees will be collected for each term in residence in Cambridge.
- 3) Six University terms translates into about 54 weeks of time that the student must spend in the UK within a 20-mile radius of the University. According to NIH IRTA policy, the total time must be a 50/50 split between the UK and NIH. The plan for time distribution will be acknowledged from the beginning when the student signs the research proposal and timeline to be submitted to NIH.
- 4) NIH offers the possibility of a fifth year of stipend support. Please note however that the University expects the thesis to have been submitted before the end of the fourth year and this flexibility should be used to cover paper writing, rather than continuing with work for the thesis.

C -TRAVEL

- (1) During the year, the student may wish to attend a meeting or visit the partner lab to do an experiment or use a piece of equipment. NIH labs supporting a Scholar are expected to set aside a \$3,000 per annum travel budget. These funds must be used for research related activities only. This stipend should NOT be used for holidays or trips home to visit family. Since this is official government travel using appropriated funds, the U.S. Federal Government maintains very strict rules regarding foreign and domestic travel and all student travel must be arranged through the Administrative Officer in the student's NIH lab.
- (2) Students must make arrangements at least 7 weeks in advance of traveling in order to get proper government clearance for the trip; whether the student travels from the UK to the U.S. or vice versa. The U.S. government travel agent must purchase all tickets. Students cannot be reimbursed if they purchase tickets on their own and they must submit all other travel expense receipts in a timely manner.

D - FINANCIAL

- (1) The NIH mentor is responsible for paying the student stipend, health insurance, and travel beginning October 1st of the student's first year and generally lasting for 4 years.
- (2) The Scholars Program is responsible for the College tuition and University fees for most scholars, according to the partnership agreement, for two years.
- (3) For Marshall and Gates Cambridge scholarship recipients, the student fees and costs are covered for the first two years by the supporting organizations.
- (4) One year of support may be provided for those students who have been awarded Churchill scholarships.
- (5) The Clinical School's Finance Office oversees the management of incoming payments and College invoices across the Cambridge Schools; queries may be directed to the CATO Office.

- (6) A costing sheet is available in the “Mentors and Advisors” section of the NIH website (<http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov>) under Program Funding. It is also available through the link below:

x [2009 Costing Sheet](#)

E - COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE LABS

- (1) Since students work primarily in one lab during any given year, it is absolutely critical that good communication is maintained between the student and both mentors. This can be accomplished by e-mail and/or video or telephone conferencing. Students should seek periodic feedback from both mentors. Phone conferences should be encouraged as a way for all collaborators to discuss points in detail. *iSight*, *Skype*, or other computer cameras used for video conferencing have proven to be convenient tools to ensure students and mentors maintain appropriate levels of communication. Note that the program provides laptops to all entering students to facilitate communication and provide full access to all NIH computer resources. Regular emails between all parties are the most widely used approach.
- (2) A **colloquium** will be held once a year to bring both mentors and students together. This will generally take place in late June or the first week of July each year. The annual colloquium aims to provide an opportunity for students to present their data and for student-supervisor trios to discuss their research plans in a conducive environment. All mentors are strongly urged to attend. The 2010 Colloquium will be held 29 -30 June at Clare College, Cambridge.
- (3) Each year, students must submit to the Managing Director updated CVs, biographies, and information about their research accomplishments along with their Annual Progress Report.
- (4) Students and mentors are expected to publish and present their findings both within the NIH community and outside of it.
- (5) Mentors are expected to encourage students to participate in NIH-wide activities including those sponsored by the GPP, the program (e.g. Journal Club), and the International Biomedical Research Alliance (a non-profit organization that supports the program).

F - MONITORING PROGRESS

a) Cambridge requirements:

- (1) All **supervisors must report termly** on each of their research students through the online reporting system CamSRS. For this program, however, we ask that BOTH mentors comment every term in a collaborative way as follows: the mentor in whose lab the student is working in the term in question should draft a report of progress and forward it to the other mentor for information and comment. The Cambridge supervisor should then submit the report, with any comment from the NIH mentor, into the CamSRS system. The reports are visible to the student and to his/her department. These University reports will be collated and forwarded to the program administration on a termly basis via CATO.
- (2) All the scholars on the NIH-Cambridge program are probationary in their first year and must undergo the standard **‘first year assessment’** for a Cambridge PhD. The student’s first year report is examined by two assessors, who viva the student and report to the Degree Committee on progress. Their report, plus the supervisors’ reports for the year, are the basis on which the University allows progression to the second year. The NIH mentor will be involved in the process of reporting (see above). Rules regarding this progress examination are to be found in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees on the Board of Graduate Studies’ website.

b) NIH requirements

The NIH also makes the following demands on the scholars. Students are expected to upload all progress reports, updated training plans, and other documentation related to their dissertations to their electronic portfolios, the NIH’s password-protected web-based portal. See the following NIH web page for instructions:
<http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/currentStudents/trainingPlan.asp>

- (1) At the end of the first year, students are required to submit a **progress report to the NIH** which summarizes their research accomplishments during the year. For the majority of students who matriculate at the standard time, this document will be due on October 1st and is to be submitted to Matt Vogt (vogtm@niaid.nih.gov). For the few students who have received exceptions and matriculate at another time, the document will be due one year after the date of matriculation.
- (2) The progress report should be approximately 5 pages long (including references). If changes in the direction of the research have occurred over the course of a year, students should include a revised project timeline in the report.
- (3) N.B. The report written for the University's first year assessment (see above) may be used as a surrogate for the first-year NIH progress report.

SECOND YEAR'S RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT AND EVALUATION

At the end of the second year, the student is expected to submit to the academic dean, Dr. Jim Sellers (sellersj@nhlbi.nih.gov), an extensive research summary of the progress he/she has made during the first two years. This document should be 5 pages long. It must include preliminary or published findings of what has been done and plans for future experiments.

THIRD YEAR SEMINAR

At some point during the student's third year, when he or she is present at NIH, the student is required to give an open seminar on his/her work to the Laboratory or Branch affiliated with the project. It is best if the seminar is planned first in the UK with the Cambridge mentor before leaving and then polished by the mentor at NIH before that person schedules the presentation. This requirement can be substituted with a formal presentation at a meeting.

THIRD YEAR REPORT

At the end of the third year, the student is expected to submit another 2-5 page report with a final deadline of October 1. This should again review the progress made including the publication of papers in professional journals. In addition, the report should outline the plans for finishing up the thesis work. While Cambridge has no formal requirement for publication in order to be awarded a Ph.D. (D Phil) degree, both the University and the Scholars Program expect that the student will have at least one first author paper in a respected, peer-reviewed journal in order for the student to be competitive for obtaining a postdoctoral position.

G - THESIS DEFENSE

The dissertation is written and the student defends it in the UK at an oral examination before an internal and an external examiner. **The dissertation must be submitted to the University before the end of the fourth year** (for students commencing in October, the absolute deadline is 30 September in 4 years time) and to the Student Affairs Director. Candidates not submitting by the end of the fourth year may be taken off the register unless they have been hindered in their progress by illness or other serious matters. This has implications for their student visa status and they would have to return to the US to complete the writing-up of the thesis.

H - RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

If differences of opinion occur between the two mentors or between the student and either mentor about the appropriate course of action for the student's education, the first point of contact at NIH is your Class Dean. See the "CONTACTS" page of program web site at <http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/contacts/contacts.asp>

Drs. Jim Sellers, Tom Wynn, Craig Blackstone and other program personnel will also be available for consultation as needed. If necessary, an ad hoc task force will serve in a "third party mediator" capacity to help reconcile any differences that cannot be resolved through individual advisement. If no reconciliation is deemed possible, the Scholars Program will attempt to work out an alternative mentorship arrangement.

In Cambridge, the program is overseen by a Steering Group Chaired by Prof Ken Smith. Queries about the scheme should be directed in Cambridge to the CATO office (see introduction).

Each year of intake of the Cambridge scheme is assigned to a 'year mentor', who the students are welcome to consult on an informal basis. They are:

Year of entry	Cambridge 'year mentor'	email

CONTACTS PAGE

<http://oxcam.gpp.nih.gov/contacts/contacts.asp>

