

University of Rhode Island Clinical Psychology PhD Program Mentoring Statement

The purpose of this document is to articulate our collective commitments to graduate student mentorship. This document sets forth our goals and aspirations for fostering meaningful mentoring relationships that empower students and enrich their experience, acknowledging that achieving this vision requires ongoing effort and continuous growth. Please refer to your mentor's mentor-mentee agreement and/or lab manual for specific guidelines regarding their expectations, responsibilities, and communication protocols.

As a program, we affirm that high-quality mentorship is not merely a mechanism for advancing research, but a vital component of students' academic, professional, and personal development. We strive to cultivate a mentoring culture that prioritizes inclusion; ensures that students' opinions are heard, respected, and actively shape the mentoring experience; and is rooted in shared learning, mutual respect, and meaningful collaboration. We are committed to building a community in which all members—students and faculty alike—are valued, supported, and empowered to thrive. By upholding these values, we aim to cultivate a generation of psychologists who are not only skilled scientist practitioners, but also trustworthy mentors, supportive colleagues, and compassionate leaders.

We recognize that mentorship is the primary vehicle through which scientific training occurs and through which students develop into scholars. Our program is built upon a mentorship-based model, where faculty not only guide students in research, but also foster ethical behavior, nurture professional skills, encourage critical thinking, assist with career exploration, and promote active participation in the academic community. We are committed to cultivating an environment where students can thrive academically, professionally, and personally. This includes supporting students' research development, clinical training, career planning, and well-being. We strive to "meet students where they are" by providing individualized guidance, encouragement, and appropriate scaffolding to foster their growth, progression, and confidence.

As a program, we see high-quality mentorship as defined by the following practices:

Shared Responsibility and Mutual Respect

Mentoring in our program is a reciprocal relationship that evolves over time. Faculty and students share responsibility for cultivating open communication, mutual respect, and professional boundaries. We expect mentors to treat students as colleagues—valuing their ideas, contributions, and autonomy—while providing timely, constructive feedback and consistent support. For instance, we encourage regular, structured meetings (e.g., bi-weekly) and clear expectations about timelines for feedback (typically within two weeks). Students are encouraged to take an active role in their training and advocate for their needs. Just as we strive to provide concrete, actionable feedback, we also invite constructive input from our students.

Acknowledging and Navigating Power Dynamics

We are mindful of the inherent power differentials in faculty-student relationships. Our program is committed to creating a culture where mentors are conscious of their influence and students feel safe to speak openly. Mentorship should never be coercive or exploitative. We strive to establish relationships that are equitable, empowering, and rooted in psychological safety.

Supporting Student Wellness and Work-Life Balance

We acknowledge that graduate school is both intellectually demanding and a period of deep personal development. Our program emphasizes the importance of attending to students' mental health and well-being. Mentors are expected to regularly check in with students about their work-life balance and to connect them with appropriate support resources when needed. We aim to cultivate supportive relationships where students feel comfortable having these conversations with their mentors. We encourage time for self-care as essential components of sustained academic success.

Encouraging Diverse and Multi-Mentor Models

We recognize the limitations of a single-mentor approach. Our program encourages students to develop a constellation of mentors who are able to provide a diversity of perspectives, guidance, and support. We facilitate mentorship across research groups, programs, departments, and institutions, and we normalize seeking input and collaboration beyond the primary mentor.

Supporting Mentor-Mentee Transitions When Needed

We understand that not all mentoring relationships are an ideal fit. Our program has transparent, non-punitive processes for changing mentors, with clear procedures established by the Graduate School (www.uri.edu/graduate-manual/) to ensure continuity and support for all involved. Changing primary mentors is viewed as a thoughtful decision in the best interest of the student's growth and success. We encourage mentors and mentees to utilize institutional resources to facilitate mentor transitions as needed (see [Conflict Resolution Resource Guide](#)).

Modeling Research and Academic Integrity

Our program encourages mentors to model ethical, rigorous, and transparent scientific practices throughout all stages of the research process. Mentors guide students in responsible study design, data handling, and analysis, emphasizing reproducibility, openness, and respect for human subjects. We aspire for mentors to foster critical thinking in their mentees, ensure fair authorship and collaboration, and promote honest, clear communication of findings.

Supporting Clinical Training and Development

Our program emphasizes the importance of mentorship in fostering excellence in clinical training. Mentors are expected to provide thoughtful guidance and constructive feedback as students develop core clinical competencies, from assessment and diagnosis to case conceptualization and intervention. Mentors assist students in navigating practica and externship readiness and in setting training goals that balance research and clinical responsibilities. By scaffolding clinical learning experiences and encouraging reflection, mentors help students progress toward independence and competence, ensuring they are well prepared for internship, licensure, and professional practice.

Career Development

Mentorship involves actively supporting a mentee's exploration, planning, and preparation for a wide range of career paths within and beyond academia. Our program encourages mentors to

take the time to understand each student's goals, strengths, and values, and tailor their guidance accordingly—whether the mentee is pursuing a career in research, clinical practice, teaching, or industry. This includes offering advice on networking, professional skills, and job market preparation, as well as connecting students with relevant contacts and resources.

Continuous Reflection and Improvement

Mentorship is a skill that requires ongoing training, reflection, and feedback. Our program provides regular professional development opportunities for faculty in evidence-based mentoring practices. We solicit feedback from students on the quality of mentorship they receive and use this information to recognize exemplary mentoring and address areas for growth.

Empowerment and Independence

We recognize the value of helping students cultivate increasing autonomy as preparation for independence in their chosen careers. Mentors support this by gradually shifting responsibility to the mentee—encouraging independent decision-making in research, writing, and career planning—while still providing structure and guidance when needed. Empowerment involves trusting the mentee's potential, offering opportunities for leadership, and creating a safe space for taking intellectual risks and learning from mistakes. Through this process, mentees gain confidence in their abilities, develop a strong sense of ownership over their work.