

Framework for Initial HWNI Rotation Conversation

Recently, faculty and first-year students came together for a discussion about effective mentorship. During this discussion it became clear that effective communication about expectations from both sides is key to the success of the mentor-mentee relationship. Here we have provided a list of questions for an initial meeting.

These are intended for faculty to use for an initial conversation with the students in their lab. The structure helps to address the very tangible concerns over the mentor-mentee power dynamic and to facilitate effective communication now that many of these meetings are remote. However, these are just a framework and intended to be a jumping-off point for meaningful dialogue and exchange. Ideally, both parties would have access to these ahead of time. While designed for first meetings with rotation students, these can be used by thesis mentors with graduate students beyond their first year.

- What are your expectations from a mentor? Does a particular mentorship style work better for you?
- How often would you like to meet? Do you prefer to stay in contact by meeting in person (virtually) or via email?
- What do you feel are your technical strengths? Weaknesses? (this can also be an avenue for the PI to communicate the skills/background expected of trainees, and resources if applicable)
- What are some challenges you have faced working in a lab/as a team? What kind of support would you like/need to help guide you through these challenges?
- What would you like to learn during this rotation?
- Do you have any concerns about the rotation?
- (COVID-specific) What are your expectations for how much in-person vs remote work you'd like to do?
- Do you have any questions about me/my work? My lab dynamics?

Beyond this, students should be encouraged to come up with their own questions. A separate guide will be made for this purpose. Still, we felt there was a need to equip PIs with the tools to start these conversations at the beginning of the rotation.