

# Washington University in St. Louis

## Postdoc Peer Mentorship Handbook

Written by Catherine Hoyt and Peter Myers, Founding Coordinators

*Current PPMP Coordinators: Catherine Hoyt PhD, OTD & Peter Myers, PhD*

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 Washington University in St. Louis

### Purpose

The Postdoc Peer Mentorship Program (PPMP) aims to provide postdocs at Washington University in St. Louis with an opportunity to develop mentor-mentee relationships between more experienced and newer postdocs. The program is designed to support postdocs in their first or second year by providing one-on-one support and guidance as they acclimate to the University, St. Louis, and their academic role. These relationships are intended to develop confidence and leadership through support (well-being, academic, cultural) and the development of mentorship skills.

The PPMP is self-sustaining, meaning that each year the current PPMP leaders (1-2 postdocs) will select two outstanding mentors who have completed the Postdoc leadership credential to become the program coordinators for the following year. The PPMP program coordinator will gain additional leadership skills in management, networking and program development.

## The Role of a Peer Mentor

Peer mentors will support their mentee(s) as they progress through their postdoctoral training for a period of 12 months. Mentors are expected to connect with their mentee at a minimum of 1x per month. Connections can be made virtually, in person, over text or email as communicated and preferred by the dyad. Mentors will be matched to a mentee based on the applications which consider both the mentor and mentee's strengths, experiences, research focus, and desired focus for the PPMP relationship. As a peer mentorship program, mentors can provide support by listening, providing information, connecting individuals with others around campus or in the community or other support that helps the mentee engage with learning and development opportunities.

It's important to remember that as a peer mentor, *you will not have all the answers*. We anticipate that mentors will use their experience at Washington University to share knowledge of the resources available to the mentee. This is particularly important when a mentee needs psychological support beyond what the peer mentor is comfortable or able to provide.

## Requirements for the Mentorship Dyad

### COMMITMENT

Postdoc peer mentors and mentees are expected to commit to the program for at least one (1) year. During that year, PPMP dyads are expected to connect at least once a month. Meetings can take place in person or virtually.

### AVAILABILITY

Peer mentors are expected to be available to their mentees during reasonable business hours, unless in the case of an emergency. Peer mentors are encouraged to provide an email address, office location, and phone number to facilitate communication with their mentee(s). The boundaries for phone calls can be set by each individual mentor.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Mentees are encouraged to approach peer mentors with any issues they would like to discuss, and these conversations will usually remain confidential. However, there may be occasions when a problem arises that the mentor is not equipped to deal with or is required to report. On such occasions, the peer mentor should discuss options with the mentee, such as consulting with PPMP Coordinator(s), the Postdoc Office Director, mental health services, or a medical provider for additional advice. It is up to the mentee to decide if it is okay for the peer mentor to share any identifying or situational information with the person being consulted. Peer mentors should feel free to describe situations in a general manner to other peer mentors and to staff members with Occupational Health Services in order to get advice.

*However, peer mentors must report any information regarding self-harm or harm to others, whether actual or potential, by the mentee; such reports must identify the mentee. Peer mentors must also report any information received regarding sexual harassment, discriminatory harassment, or sexual violence; such reports can withhold the mentee's name. See university policies on Discrimination, Harassment and Abusive Conduct and other applicable policies for details (<https://hr.wustl.edu/policies/>). You may also consider using the Confidential Concern Reporting Portal (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/57349/index.html>) and/or contacting the Ombuds for confidential support.*

## PUBLICITY

The Washington University Postdoc Society (WUPS) hosts the Postdoc Peer Mentorship Program home page, which introduces the program and includes a PDF of this handbook. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) and WUPS will help advertise the program as needed (initiated by the PPMP coordinators).

## TRAINING

The Postdoc Peer Mentorship Program has two levels. Mentors can complete the certificate program (outlined below), a commitment of ~24 hours of workshops over 1 year. The goal of the certificate program is to provide mentors with a strong knowledge base in effective communication and anti-bias/anti-discrimination, as well as a toolkit for getting the most benefit out of one's postdoc training. Upon completion of the certificate, mentors can enter into the credential program (outlined below). The goal of the credential is to provide mentors with an opportunity to gain further training in areas of particular interest to them, as well as provide leadership training. Graduates from the credential program will receive a credential issued by the OPA and be eligible to become a program coordinator for the Postdoc Peer Mentorship Program.

## Certificate and Credential Requirements

### Certificate:

- [Postdoc Academy: Succeeding as a Postdoc](#)- Participant must successfully complete the EdX course run by the Postdoc Academy
- Postdoc Academy Learning Session (PALS)- Participant must successfully complete (i.e. attend 80% of their PALS group meetings)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Series- Participants must successfully complete [Diversity 1.0- Awareness](#), [Diversity 2.0- Understanding](#), [Diversity 3.0- Commitment](#), [Diversity 4.0- Action](#)
- Successful completion of Mentorship Training for Postdocs through the postdoc office or Entering Mentoring Course listed under Biology in UCollege
- Successful completion of a [Safe Zones Training](#)

### Credential:

- Successful completion of certificate program
- [Elective DE&I Training](#)- Participants must successfully complete a training of their choice offered through the School of Medicine DE&I office (on the Medical Campus). The training must be approved by the peer-mentorship coordinators.
- [Elective Learning Session through The Academy](#)- Participants must attend/participate in a learning session offered through the Academy (on the Danforth Campus). The training must be approved by the peer-mentorship coordinators.
- [Leadership Management in Action Program \(L-MAP\)](#)- Participants must successfully complete the L-MAP program offered through the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
- Participants must mentor a postdoc currently enrolled in the Postdoc Academy: Succeeding as a Postdoc EdX course and continue to have monthly meetings with the mentee for 12 months following completion of the mentee's completion of the course.

Upon completion of the certificate or the credential you will receive a badge for your email signature and/or LinkedIn. Anyone who receives the credential may apply to be the PPMP coordinator for the following year. The coordinator(s) of the program is selected by the current PPMP coordinator(s) with support from the Postdoc Office Director and is welcome to take over the peer-mentorship program for the following year.

	Program	Hours (approx)
<b>Certificate</b>	Succeeding as a Postdoc	6
	PALS	6
	DEI 1.0-4.0	4
	Mentorship Training	8
	Safe Zones Training	1
	<hr/> Total hours	25
<b>Credential</b>	Elective DEI	1
	Elective The Academy	1
	Peer Mentoring	12
	LMAP	10
	<hr/> Total Hours	24

## Meeting Guidance

### First Meeting

We recommend that mentors reach out to their assigned mentee within 72 hours of receiving the match. In your first conversation, it can be helpful to cover the following topics:

- Preferred name or nickname and pronunciation
- Preferred pronouns
- Office location
- Preferred method of contact and frequency
- Reason for joining the PPMP program (e.g., any specific goals or concerns)
- Individual or career development plan

### Follow Up Meetings

We recommend that mentors provide support for mentees to enroll in the postdoc leadership certificate/credential program. In addition, we encourage mentors to help mentees get connected with local activities, resources or communities of personal interest. Topics that you may want to discuss:

- Imposter syndrome
- PI/Mentor relationships
- Peer/lab relationships
- Career and professional development
- Progress towards career and research goals
- Work-life challenges
- Hobbies

## Resources

[Washington University Mental Health Resources and Employee Assistance Program](#)

[Washington University Discrimination and Harrassment Resources](#)

[Career Development Resources](#)

[Postdoc Career Development](#)

[The Writing Center](#)

[The Teaching Center](#)

[Public Speaking Support](#)

[Office of the Ombuds](#)

[Occupational Health](#)

[WUPS Washington University Postdoc Society](#)

[Postdoc Resources](#)

### *A Few Ideas for Activities*

- Remind mentees of the events that may not be mandatory, but that they should attend anyway.
- Go to a Cardinals, Blues hockey game in the cheap seats or the MUNY free seats
- Go out for a treat after a difficult exam, paper or grant etc.
- Take a trip out to Eckert's Orchard in Illinois for apple & pumpkin picking, hayrides, pig races, and more! (Admission is \$6 at the Millstadt farm. The other locations – Belleville and Grafton – are free.
- Go bowling and play pool at Saratoga Lanes – it's cheap, fun, and off-campus!
- Visit the City Museum in downtown St. Louis (offers group/night rates).
- Surprise mentees with a care package.
- Go out to lunch or coffee or drinks off-campus to take a study break in the middle of the semester.
- Visit the Anheuser-Busch Brewery – It's free and there are samples
- Go ice skating during the winter at Steinberg Rink in Forest Park.
- First Friday events at the St. Louis Science Center – usually geared toward more adult audiences, free admission to the planetarium and IMAX shows.
- Have a game night party – Texas Hold 'Em, Trivial Pursuit, Twister, charades, etc.
- Go see the latest exhibit at the Art Museum in Forest Park – all exhibits are free on Tuesdays!
- Go to the zoo (free!) and take the Metro there, using the event as an intro to the Metro system.
- Have an informal get-together featuring international cuisine, in which peer mentors introduce international students to etiquette and protocol at American universities (e.g. how to address professors, how to compose emails, etc.)

### A Few Ideas for Mentors to Develop the PPMP

- Create a welcome packet for incoming students. A list of frequently used grocery stores, salons, mechanics, dentists, etc. can prove invaluable information for incoming students, most of whom are new to the area. This can be especially helpful for international students.
- Create a reading list of articles, books, podcasts or movies on leadership, career development, mentorship or other topic
- Develop an outcomes survey for the PPMP to document impact of the program. Consider publishing with your mentee!

## APPENDIX

### Recommended CV Formatting

#### **1. As a mentor**

We suggest that you list your role as a mentor as a university service.  
(YEAR). Mentor, Postdoctoral Peer Mentorship Program. Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, MO.

#### **2. As a mentee**

We suggest that you list completed training for the credential/certificate under continuing education or leadership.

#### **3. Certificate or Credential**

We suggest you document this as an academic honor.  
(YEAR). Leadership Certificate/Credential. Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, MO.

**Table 1. PPMP Coordinators**

<b>Name/Year</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Erin Heckler/2020	University Contact for Credential/Certificate	eheckler@wustl.edu
Peter Myers, PhD/2020	Founding Coordinator	petersmyers@wustl.edu
Catherine Hoyt, PhD, OTD/2020	Founding Coordinator	hoytcr@wustl.edu
<i>Your name here :)</i>		