

UW Genetics Graduate Program – Information for Prospective Mentors
Updated December 2021

Thank you for your inquiry about being a mentor in the Genetics graduate program. Below you will find a brief overview of the program, benefits of being a mentor, expectations of mentors, and details on how to apply.

The program includes about 8-12 entering students each fall and a faculty pool of over 70 mentors from many different campus departments. The program has enjoyed continuous NIH NIGMS training-grant funding for over 45 years. The training grant provides funding for domestic students for one year of training, with the option for a second year via competitive renewal. Beyond the training grant funding, most students are paid by PI grants.

Our program distinguishes itself from other graduate programs on campus by its emphasis on genetic analysis. Our students are committed to genetics and choose to come here because of the strong genetics focus among our training faculty. Therefore, we seek mentors who can provide strong genetics training to our students. We define "Genetics" quite broadly, but also rigorously. Our training faculty emphasize the methods and logic of genetic and genomic analyses. This strong focus distinguishes us from other graduate programs and has kept a NIH Training Grant in Genetics funded for over 45 years.

What are the benefits of being a mentor?

1. The ability to train top-notch Genetics graduate students.
2. Hosting students with one to two years training grant support for eligible (domestic) Genetics graduate students. Note: mentors are responsible for ensuring student funding for all other years; the Genetics program does not have funds to cover students outside the training grant years.

What would be required of you as a mentor?

1. First and foremost, for you to provide excellent mentorship to Genetics students, to support their development as independent scientists, to guide them through research and professional development, to maintain a funding plan for each student that you choose to train.
2. Participate in the Genetics program:
 - i. Serve on Genetics thesis advisory committees. Each student needs five members including at least three Genetics trainers per committee.
 - ii. Attend Genetics Colloquium (3:30 pm Wednesdays) on a reasonably regular basis; attend summer Student Colloquia (3:30 pm Wednesdays) for students whose committees you serve on.
 - iii. Participate in the Genetics Program recruiting season (January and February).
 - iv. Serve on program committees and teaching workshops by invitation.
 - v. Complete a mandatory 2h mentor training workshop once every 5 years.
3. Submit a written renewal application to remain a mentor every 5 years.

An application for appointment as a mentor requires five components:

1. A current NIH biosketch.
2. A list of Current and Pending Support that includes your role (e.g. PI, co-I) and direct costs of each source per year, outlining funds to your lab.
3. A 1-2 page statement of research interests. Include a statement of how you, as a mentor, would participate in the Genetics program.
4. A ~ 1 page description of thesis projects that you think would be appropriate for a Genetics grad student (as opposed to students in other graduate programs).
5. A seminar to the genetics community, which usually occurs as part of our regular Wednesday afternoon Colloquium series at 3:30 pm during fall and spring semesters.

The Graduate Program Steering Committee then reviews and makes a recommendation to the full Genetics faculty, who vote on the application. Faculty votes are scheduled once per semester.

If you would like to be considered as a mentor, please send the above items to Genetics Graduate Program Manager Martha Reck (mreck2@wisc.edu) and we will follow-up to provide a timeline and discuss the scheduling of your seminar.

I hope this answers most of your questions, but do let me know if you have additional questions.

Best regards,

Nicole Perna, ntperna@wisc.edu

Professor of Genetics

Director of the UW Genetics Graduate Program