

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ROLE OF A SCIENTIFIC MENTOR DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**

1. All new department faculty members with a  $\geq 50\%$  research focus (basic or clinical) should have a scientific mentor as well as an academic mentor. The scientific mentor should be chosen with input from the new investigator, that individual's divisional director, and the chair of the research committee. The first meeting of the investigator and scientific mentor should take place within the first 3 months of the investigators' appointment.
2. The investigator and scientific mentor will meet at least twice annually at scheduled times (e.g., spring and fall). A report from these meetings should be written by the mentor and signed by the investigator, with copies to the divisional director, department chair, research committee chair, and career development director. The report should include the items in the Scientific Mentor – Investigator Meeting Report.
3. The AHFMR guidelines for clinical investigators state "it is a requirement that all applicants for a Heritage clinical investigator award have a mentor with expertise in the research area to be investigated who will be prepared to foster the career development of the applicant" (for population health investigators it is suggested that a *group* of mentors be named). The potential for a competitive relationship to develop between a mentor and investigator, that would not serve the best interests of the investigator, could exist if the mentor is working in an area of research very close to, or the same, as the investigator. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that the appointed mentor be someone familiar with, but not directly involved in, the same research area as the investigator. This would mean that the mentor may not be able to comment specifically on the importance of the investigators' research, but would also help prevent a competitive relationship from developing. The investigator is encouraged to maintain close relationships with a more senior research colleague(s) who may be working in the same research area, but should not be compelled to have this individual(s) act as their official mentor.
4. It is suggested that biannual discussions between mentor and investigator focus on issues of grant writing and grant support, progress of the research, preparation of publications, laboratory or clinical research organization, laboratory or clinical support staff and trainee issues, and time protection and management. These areas would form the basis of the biannual report. Other (e.g., personal) issues may also be discussed at these meetings, but would only be included in the official report at the consent of both investigator and mentor. The mentor should be willing to act as an internal reviewer of the investigators grant applications, or to help arrange for other appropriate reviewers.
5. All investigators and scientific mentors should be asked to evaluate the usefulness of their relationship on an annual basis. As with the academic mentor, if the mentor-investigator match is unsuccessful, both mentor and investigator will have the option of severing their relationship and having a new relationship created.
6. The investigator may wish to arrange a joint meeting with his/her academic and scientific mentors once yearly.