

Questions to Ask a Potential Mentor

- What are the mentor's expectations (duties, research project, timeline, meetings, work hours, etc.)?
- How does the mentor describe his/her mentoring and managing style?
- How much time does the mentor spend meeting with students and postdocs? How involved will the mentor be with you and your project?
- What are his/her authorship practices? How does s/he handle ownership of data in collaborative research? Can you take part of your project with you when you leave?
- Is there monetary support to carry out your research and to attend conferences to present your work?
- Will you have grant writing opportunities? Are you expected to obtain your own fellowship or grant?
- Does your mentor support your taking time out for your career and professional development?
- Are there opportunities for collaborations with other labs or researchers?
- How does s/he manage conflicts, competition or other issues among team members when they arise?
- What are his/her former postdocs doing now?

You should also pose these questions to his/her current and former postdocs!

Final Tips

- Start thinking, planning and researching postdoc opportunities early.
- Utilize your current Doctoral Advisor, Mentors, Professional Societies, and University Career Services to gather information about careers - postdoc opportunities.
- Develop an IDP or a general career plan before you lock in a position—so you can choose the sector, setting, and structure wisely.
- Explore several options and use site visits or Skype interviews to help you make a decision.
- And finally, hone your networking skills! Cultivate and maintain relationships to ensure your research and professional success.

Individual career coaching, job search and interview assistance is available to all UNC postdocs through the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

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