

Expectations for AAPM Mentors

AAPM Global Research Mentorship Program (GREMP)

In order to understand whether GREMP is a good program for you to engage with, please consider the following questions and important considerations. If you are highly motivated, have sufficient time, and are interested in engaging in global research mentorship, we would welcome you to apply.

What is your motivation?

Motivations to be engaged in global mentoring vary. They can be as simple as having another mentee that you can help grow, having an opportunity to learn how to mentor in challenging environments, or just simply wanting to make a difference worldwide. To help you assess whether you are willing to make that investment, ask yourself these questions when considering whether to take on an international mentee through the AAPM GREMP program:

- Are you interested in working with international PhD students (mentees) who have stimulating ideas, who would benefit from opportunities to learn and grow with and from you?
- Are you interested in working with PhDs from the countries where medical physics is not as developed as a field, or/and where there is lack of opportunities for the progress and promotion in junior researchers' professional carriers?
- Are you willing to share your mentorship practices and possibly some supervisory responsibility with mentee's mentors from their institution, in a form of collaboration/joint projects?
- Are you willing to share your algorithms/codes/simulations with international mentees where data sets from very different environments modify alter your way of looking at data?
- What do you need in order to bring your best self forward as a global mentor? Gain insight into your decision process by writing a *global mentoring philosophy* for your own reflection, which you can also share with potential mentee.

Do you have time to mentor?

Like all relationships, mentoring takes a significant investment of time. To help you assess whether you are willing to make that investment, ask yourself these questions when considering whether to take on a new mentee:

- Do you have the time to commit to the following professional behaviors: promptly return emails and phone calls, respond to scientific drafts with timely and meaningful feedback?
- Do you understand that the long-distance relationship may require more planning associated with virtual meetings? Regularly scheduled mentoring meetings and protected uninterrupted time for mentee are important.
- Learn about the person, as well as his/her discipline, local mentor, research project, home department and local environment?
- Overcome language, cultural, knowledge and hardware/software barriers? Note that mentoring non-native English speakers may require more preparation, more time to establish a connection and align expectations, and extra patience.
- Work in a completely different time zone (day and night)?
- Prioritize the mentee and their needs, sometimes over your own. As one mentee notes: "I think the amount of time the person may have available for you is important. You want them to smile when they see you, not go...'another thing in my week'."

What are international mentees looking for?

The supports AAPM mentors can provide are many, and you should not feel as if you need to meet each of the needs for an international mentee. In addition, you should be aware that international mentees have their own mentors, so the relationship can become complex and hard to manage. The key is to help potential mentees understand what it is you can provide and determine what unmet needs international mentors might provide as part of a mentoring team. The international mentees are looking for a stimulating research environment, role models of good research practices - something that you can show by opening your research lab to international mentees and their mentors.

How can you get started?

Apply to the AAPM GREMP program as a willing AAPM mentor. You should have an active research group that includes your own mentees (ideally PhD students). If a potential international mentee will be identified, you will be considered for matching. The first step of the matching will be an open interview/discussion with the international mentee and their mentor. Remember, the initial conversations between you and your mentee set the tone for the relationship. The focus should be on who you are as individuals and what you each bring to the relationship (your background, context, culture, strengths, etc). Remember that development of the mentee is the key focus of the mentoring relationship; having the mentee complete a mentoring plan together with their mentor will help the mentee and their mentors articulate their desires and needs and will give you both a clear place from which to begin your conversations.