For Professional Development and Professional Ethics Reviews
Assessment Review Report Template

The purpose of this review is to examine how you determine whether students have learned or achieved what you want them to learn or achieve based on the professional development and professional ethics goals that you have set for them.

The following items should be included in a 1-2 page report to the Provost to be submitted by March 15th, 2016 and a short presentation at a spring 2016 cluster meeting for your discipline.

1) Statement of learning goals for professional development and ethics.

   Students are required to learn about the ethical conduct of research and the ethical treatment of animal and human subjects for research. Students are expected to teach effectively, to become skilled researchers, to communicate effectively in writing and orally, to learn about managing research environments and be informed about marketplace opportunities for post-graduate training and employment.

2) A brief description of the professional development and professional ethics training provided to students in your program.

   Students are required to participate in a one-day, in person workshop on Ethics in Research sponsored by the Vice Chancellor for Research. In addition, students complete on-line training the ethical conduct or research provided by CUNY. Students receive ongoing training in ethics by their Ph.D. mentor. Students are informed about ethical treatment of research subjects and must sign an affidavit concerning their knowledge in this area. Biochemistry students seldom, if ever, use human subjects.

   First year Biochemistry doctoral students receive professional development as a formal part of their curriculum in a series of seminar courses all students are required to take. In the Advanced Biochemistry seminars (BICM 7010 and 7020) in the fall and spring semesters, students develop communication skills by learning how to critically read peer-reviewed publications in biochemistry, and then presenting these papers orally in a seminar with PowerPoint. In the Seminar in Biochemistry (BICM 81000), students in the fall semester attend research seminars to learn about faculty research across CUNY. At the end of this course, the student must give an oral presentation about their own rotation research, and receive written comments from the instructor and their peers. In the spring semester of BICM 810000, students learn effective scientific writing, including papers for publication and grants. The final assessment for this class is a mock review panel where students get feedback on their writing from professors and their peers. Other topics covered in the BICM 81000 include plagiarism, hypothesis development, and how to apply for fellowships from
external sources. Assessment of student performance occurs from feedback on their work from internal and external reviews; success in obtaining funding for any number of submitted grants and proposals is the ultimate assessment tool for examining the program’s successful instruction in this area.

Students develop laboratory management skills in their research environments through routine procedures they perform in the day to day functioning of research efforts in campus laboratories.

While much of the formal professional development has focused on first-year Biochemistry students, in 2016 the Program has organized a Career Day for Level III students. This event included presentations by two alumni on how each landed a job, one in academia as a postdoc and the other as a research scientist in industry. Program faculty as well as the Director of the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development at the Graduate Center, provided tips on how to look for a job and write an effective cover letter and resume.

All Biochemistry students are kept aware of Graduate Center opportunities for career counseling through emails sent via the Biochemistry APO.

3) A description of what data or other information you are drawing on to determine whether the training is effective and students are achieving the goals that you set for them (e.g. student performance in a course, students successfully completing Responsible Conduct of Research training, number of students presenting at conferences, students’ job placements).

Students’ communication skills are consistently monitored in Seminar courses and other courses as well as during oral examinations (Second Level Exam and Thesis Defense). Students’ oral and writing skills are assessed in their first year seminar course (BICM 81000 and BICM 7010 and 7020). Assessment of student performance occurs from feedback on their work from internal and external reviews; success in obtaining funding for any number of submitted grants and proposals is the ultimate assessment tool for examining the program’s successful instruction in this area, and several Biochemistry students have been successful in obtaining external funding.

4) Your findings. Is your program’s professional development and ethics training effective? Are students achieving the learning goals that you set related to professional development and professional ethics?
The program is concerned about students’ preparedness for finding professional positions upon graduation and the program will continue to se its newly established Career Day Event for that purpose. The program tracks alumni employment and will continue improving our ability for such monitoring by maintaining email and home mailing addresses for communication and by inviting them to participate in Career Events.

5) Proposed changes, if any, to the learning goals, the training, the assessment of whether professional development and ethics goals are being met.

We are in close communications with the other related laboratory sciences Programs as well as with the GC Career Office to get ideas for new professional development programs we can offer our students. An area of continuing concern is how to get students ready for teaching at CUNY college campuses in their second year. The Program will require first year Biochemistry students to participate in the Teach@CUNY Day on May 2, 2016 to help them prepare for teaching which most will do in the second year of the program.

6) The next steps that will be taken. (There should be a follow-up on these in the report for the next cycle.)

We continue to improve our established career development and other offerings by reading course evaluations solicited of students each semester, reporting on the feedback to the Curriculum and Executive committees biannually and discussing students’ experiences in person to enhance the courses and programs. The EO and DEO discuss course content and student performance with instructors all through the semester and exchange suggestions for improvements in cases where students’ abilities as future academic professionals.

Note: when changes are made, remember to update the appropriate program materials: program website, handbook, bulletin, etc. to make sure that faculty and students are aware of the changes.

3/13/2019