

**General guideline for the USF College of Marine Science  
multi-dimensional mentoring (MDM) model**

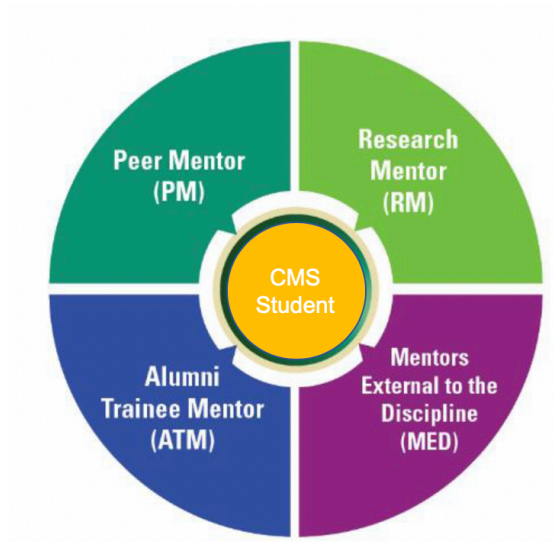


**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**  
College of MARINE SCIENCE

Prepared by Karyna Rosario, Ph.D.  
Edited by Ana Arellano, Ph.D.  
February 2020

## General multi-dimensional mentoring (MDM) model description

The goal of the new multi-dimensional mentoring (MDM) model from the University Center of Exemplary Mentoring (UCEM) program is to ensure that each College of Marine Science (CMS) graduate student has a support system throughout their PhD program, and beyond, by enlisting mentors with different levels of seniority, backgrounds, and professional experiences. The MDM will be overseen by the Graduate Exemplary Mentoring (GEM) leadership at the CMS.



**Figure 1.** UCEM Multidimensional mentoring model (MDM).

The MDM model (Figure 1) proposes the following mentors for each student:

- a) Research mentor (**RM**) – primary faculty mentor that will guide the graduate student in their research program.
- b) Mentor external to the discipline (**MED**) – faculty mentor outside of the student’s discipline that will support his/her professional development and well-being.
- c) Peer mentor (**PM**) - an advanced graduate student within the same department or research area who can share “lessons learned” during critical transitional points (e.g., first year, preparing for candidacy, and dissertation stage) for students.
- d) Alumni trainee mentor (**ATM**) - USF CMS alumni and/or other URM graduates in the workplace who can provide guidance on PhD expectations, professional networking, and career development.

The MDM approach will proactively minimize a sense of academic isolation among students while providing them with positive role models and guidance on how to succeed throughout their graduate program. Additionally, students are expected to become mentors to others in their network and, thus, the MDM model will benefit everyone involved, not only students. Given that each type of MDM mentor has a different role, these mentors will be recruited or assigned at different stages of the student's graduate program to promote productive mentor-mentee relationships (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Proposed timeline for MDM mentor assignments.

Mentor	Recruitment Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 or up to Completion
Research (RM)						
Peer (PM)						
External (MED)						
Alumni (ATM)						

Relevant GEM leadership and/or staff from CMS will help students identify MDM mentors (Table 2). The RM will be assigned before the official start of the graduate program since the RM will be the main point of contact during recruitment and this primary mentor will support, advise, and supervise the student throughout their whole PhD. The RM can help identify a PM for the student, from their own group or a closely-related research group, that can help orient the student regarding the transition to graduate school (e.g., what to expect during the first semester, where to look for housing, etc.). The PM will help guide the student throughout their first years in the graduate program; however, the student should then serve as a PM for new recruits. The MED should be assigned within the first year. The RM or GEM leadership can help identify a suitable MED based on the student's interests. The MED is expected to help students navigate the PhD program through the eyes of a faculty member other than their RM, give students some feedback about their project from a different perspective, and discuss with them whatever they need to help them be successful in their department. The ATM will be assigned by the first semester of the student's 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the graduate program at which point the student should have a mature research project/area of expertise and should start thinking about what to expect upon graduation. The ATM should provide

insight regarding expectations from the PhD, life after the PhD, potential networking opportunities and advise about career paths.

**Table 2. How to find or match mentors with students?**

<b>Mentor</b>	<b>Where/how to find mentors?</b>	<b>Expected meetings</b>
Research (RM)	By the time students are accepted to the CMS program they will be matched with an RM.	Once a month
Peer (PM)	Once a student is recruited, the RM can help match a PM with the student. Ideally, the PM should be assigned before the student actually starts the program. Students may seek other PMs after starting the graduate program.	Twice per semester
External (MED)	The MED can be identified by the RM or GEM leadership based on the student's interests.	Every two months
Alumni (ATM)	The ATM might be the hardest type of mentor to match with students because, more often than not, they will not be physically at the university or nearby. We propose building a searchable or interactive database of ATMs, where CMS staff and students can search potential ATM based on the alumni's research/professional interests, graduate school advisor, and current position.	Once per semester

### **Best practices for the MDM model**

Here is a list of actions that should be considered while matching students with MDM mentors:

- Potential mentors will be contacted first to confirm their willingness to serve as mentors before providing their names to students. This will be more relevant for PM, MED, and ATM mentors since students should be already matched with a RM by the time they are accepted to the graduate program.
- Once a potential mentor has been confirmed, the mentor's background will be discussed with the students to confirm their willingness to be mentored by the identified mentor. This will be more relevant for MED and ATM mentors.
- Students and mentors will be encouraged to communicate throughout each semester (Table 2 lists the minimum number of expected meetings per semester). However, it will be up to them to decide how they want to proceed and what works best for them.
- Students and mentors will be encouraged to participate in workshops on how to become an effective mentor (offered on a yearly basis).

- GEM leadership and/or staff will communicate with both mentors and students at the end of each semester to evaluate if students are communicating with their mentors and to assess the MDM model.

### **Remarks regarding the MDM model**

The MDM model is built upon relationships and is the responsibility of both mentors and mentees to foster their relationship by communicating periodically (see Table 2 for suggested minimum number of meetings per semester). We understand that relationships depend on trust and personal chemistry and we can expect some mentor-mentee matches to fall through. Therefore, the GEM leadership at CMS will keep track of students to ensure that they have productive relationships with their mentors. Otherwise, the GEM leadership and/or staff will help the students identify new mentors.

We also note that students may find their own mentors along the way and these mentors will be considered part of the MDM. In other words, not all mentors will be ‘assigned’ by GEM. Since some students naturally seek to expand their network, students will be encouraged to identify their own mentors. However, it is the responsibility of the GEM leadership and faculty at CMS to ensure that no student is left behind when it comes to mentoring by following through and keeping track of MDM mentors.