**Mentor’s Guide**

This brief guide provides information on the role and responsibilities of a mentor, aiming at establishing some basic common standards and rules.  
More detailed information about organisational and administrative matters can be found on the GHS website ([www.ghs.unibe.ch](http://www.ghs.unibe.ch) and the table on <https://www.ghs.unibe.ch/training/index_eng.html>).

**General duties and responsibilities of the mentor**

1. The mentor’s task is to assist the student along the whole doctoral studies and he/she should meet with the student at least 1 x year to discuss the progress reports.
2. He/she is the link between the GHS and each student’s thesis committee and must therefore always be a member of a GHS Expert Committee III. The mentor ensures that the GHS rules are observed. Thus, he/she must be acquainted with the most important rules of the GHS regulations, in particular the points which relate to course requirements (minimal ECTS credit points) and examination regulations.
3. Each Expert Committee member should be prepared to serve as mentor for several PhD students.
4. Interview meetings of the GHS Expert Committees are conducted three times a year in order to evaluate prospective PhD candidates. The mentor attends the meetings whenever possible.
5. A mentor is assigned to each PhD student in the Clinical Sciences expert committee immediately after the interview.
6. The mentor does not require specific expertise in the research project, but monitors the progress of the work in relation to the submitted research plan and intervenes if problems arise.
7. The mentor is the primary contact for the PhD student and the supervisor if any conflicts arise between them.

**Four main tasks** are assigned to the mentor throughout a PhD project; i.e., the mentor

1. leads the **mentor meeting** (e.g. in GCB mentor meetings take place after the interview between student, supervisor and mentor in order to fix course list)

2. evaluates the annual **progress reports**   
3. chairs the **thesis defence**4. acts as **mediator** if required

In addition, the mentor can be chosen as examiner during the[1st and 2nd year exams](https://www.ghs.unibe.ch/phd_program/1st_and_2nd_year_exam/index_eng.html).

**Mentor meeting after the interview (the supervisor should be also present)**

1. The purpose of the mentor meeting is to meet the student and his/her supervisor on a personal level and to plan and decide on the training units for the PhD student.
2. The selection of suitable training units (courses/lectures) is carried out in agreement with supervisor and PhD student.
3. Criteria for the selection of suitable courses/lectures are: 1) to fill knowledge gaps of the student in a broader area of his/her research project, and 2) to provide specific training in methods required for the research project. The mentor is responsible that such “useful” courses/lectures are selected, rather than courses with the lowest possible effort/ECTS ratio (sometimes preferred by supervisors and/or PhD students).

The GHS offers a list with recommended lectures and courses (see [Training: Course Catalog - Graduate School for Health Sciences (GHS) (unibe.ch)](https://www.ghs.unibe.ch/training/course_catalog/index_eng.html)), but it is also possible to select other courses/lectures or summer schools as part of the mandatory training. The mentor verifies that all the selected courses meet the quality standards set by the GHS.

1. At the mentor meeting, the *Doctoral Agreement* must be completed and signed.
2. It is also very important that the mentor points out to the student that he/she is the contact person and mediator, should problems arise between him/her and the supervisor.

**Progress Reports**

* The mentor evaluates the annual progress reports both in terms of meeting the training requirements of the GHS (coursework and examinations, meetings with co-advisor, conferences, etc.) and the progress in the research project.
* The mentor intervenes in case he/she recognizes major problems, be it on a scientific or a human level.
* An informative feedback to the student is expected.

**Thesis DefenSe**

* Date and place of the thesis defence are arranged by the PhD student.
* The mentor chairs the thesis defense.
* The presentation should last 40 to 45 minutes and be followed by a discussion of 20 to max. 60 minutes. Questions can be asked by both the examiners and the audience. The mentor ensures that the questions are answered by the candidate.
* The examiners give individual marks and enter them on the thesis defense form. The mentor submits the signed form to the GHS.

**Mediation**

* The mentor plays an important role in case problems arise between student and supervisor. He/she is the contact person both for the student and for the supervisor, and should be prepared to act as mediator in such conflicts.
* It is important to tackle problems early and before they escalate.
* If mediation is not successful or impossible (i.e. in serious cases), the mentor alerts the Coordinator of the GHS.