



# Medical Scientist Training Program

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## Mentorship

**MSTP students at UCSF are privileged to be nurtured in a supportive environment and have direct access to a wide range of mentoring resources.**

As soon as students step foot onto UCSF campus, they are each assigned an MSTP mentor based on their career and research interests. These mentors sit on the MSTP Council and have a solid understanding of the MSTP training path and years of experience mentoring students and helping them navigate between Medical School and Graduate School. Quarterly meetings with MSTP Advisors in the first two years of medical school facilitates students to choose rotation labs, decide on a graduate program, and assess required graduate course work in order to ensure a smooth transition into graduate school. In addition to faculty mentorship, students are automatically paired up with MSTP student mentors from upper classes. This is an excellent resource for students to get insight for housing, coursework, campus activities, and more on a peer-to-peer level. Once students begin their graduate years, there are formal requirements for students to meet with their thesis committee every 6 months to assess progress and resolve challenge as well as a formal evaluation from the thesis advisor. The MSTP notifies each thesis advisor at the 2.5 year and 3 year level to prepare students to graduate. The MSTP at UCSF also offers physician scientist career development mentorships through bi-monthly MSTP Clinical Case Reviews at the Mission Bay and Parnassus campuses. Most importantly, the students, faculty and administrators at UCSF work hard to provide a friendly and productive environment for MSTP students to thoroughly enjoy their journey training as a physician scientist.

## Vertical Mentorship

Students from all levels of MSTP training are grouped according to their research interests to meet quarterly to discuss topics of interest and concern, such as:

- How to choose a graduate program/lab/thesis committee.
- What to do when your project doesn't work.
- Wrapping up experiments
- Preparing for Qualifying Exams
- Writing your dissertation
- Planning to return to medicine
- Applying for residencies

Each group will invite a faculty physician scientist to talk at one or more of their meetings.

## **Big Sib-Little Sib Assignments**

Transitioning from undergraduate to medical school is a tough time for everyone, and who better to help guide you through the process than those who just finished their first year? Every MSTP First Year is paired up with a Second Year who will be their "Big Sib" mentor, providing peer advice for new students.

## **MSTP advisor (Faculty Council Members)**

In addition to your graduate advisor, you'll also have an MSTP advisor to assist you in your MD/PhD training. Students are expected to meet with their MSTP advisor every quarter during the first and second year, after which they'll begin meeting with their graduate advisor. However, your MSTP advisor is always available throughout your training to provide mentorship.

## **Thesis Committees**

The role of the thesis committee is to assist the trainee and the thesis advisor in designing and implementing a focused research plan, and each of the graduate programs has in recent years emphasized the need for the thesis committee to enhance the focus and productivity of their trainees. In this regard, many of our PhD degree granting programs are following the lead of the MSTP. Dr. Anderson has also stipulated that: 1) each thesis committee must include at least one member of the MSTP Council; and, 2) that students meet with the Director or with one of the Associate Directors at least yearly during the first two years of medical school to insure that they are actively defining research goals and meeting with potential thesis advisors.

## **Student Experience Faculty Advisor (formerly Advisory College Mentor)**

Each MSTP student is assigned a faculty advisor beginning in their first year of medical school and will stay with this advisor all four years of medical school. The advisor is a practicing physician scientist who understands the needs and concerns of MSTP students. The current advisor is Cathy Lomen-Hoerth, MD, PhD. Dr. Hoerth is very involved with the MSTP, attends quarterly meetings between MSTP and School of Medicine leadership, MSTP meetings and events as well as the annual retreat.

## **Residency Advisor**

As fourth year medical students are planning for their residencies, MSTP will assign them a residency advisor who is currently a resident, fellow or faculty member and is a practicing physician scientist in a specialty of their interest.

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