Guidelines for Sponsoring and Mentoring an ASM/CDC Fellow

American Society for Microbiology/ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ (ASM/CDC) Postdoctoral Fellowship Preceptors and Co-Preceptors are FTE Principal Investigators who are responsible for a 2-year mentored research experience in public health microbiology related to infection disease diagnosis, prevention and control. Preceptors are limited to sponsoring two applicants in a single application cycle and have the following responsibilities:

Pre-Selection Preceptor Responsibilities:

1. Principle Investigators and Co-Investigators must be FTEs and hold a doctoral degree (PhD, MD, DVM, etc.).
2. Obtain Lab Branch Chief and Team Lead approval and commitment to host an ASM/CDC Fellow. Identify the administration/approval chain of command for the research project, project changes (if needed) and required resources.
3. Ensure your laboratory has the resources (i.e., travel funds, equipment, materials, space and supplies) necessary to support the proposed project or a similar project in the same program area.
4. Respond in a timely manner to applicants’ inquiries to the ASM/CDC Fellowship Program and the possible project areas.
5. Collaborate with the prospective fellow during the application process to identify project goals:
   a. The proposal should address a research question within the Preceptor’s area of expertise.
   b. The project should have a reasonable expectation of completion within a two year timeframe.
   c. The research project results should be publishable by the end of the two-year fellowship.
6. Provide input on the proposed project objectives and guidance in developing their ASM/CDC applications.
   a. The proposal should be written by the applicant with input from the Preceptor. It is important to avoid all forms of writing that could be viewed as plagiarism or questionable writing practices (e.g. the preceptor writing the proposal for the applicant or the applicant’s proposal containing appropriated portions of a preceptor’s research proposal).
   b. Each proposal should be a unique project proposal with a strong laboratory component.
   c. The proposal should describe an independent, hypothesis-driven research project.
   d. The proposal should clearly state how the project supports the CDC mission.
7. Identify a feasible project that has a high likelihood of a first-author publication by the fellow within the 2-year fellowship period.

8. If relevant, inform applicant of increased security screening and monitoring when working with select agents. For research projects involving Tier 1 select agents, Preceptors are strongly encouraged to notify potential applicants of the Tier 1 Personal Reliability/Suitability program requirements prior to project proposal submission. Specifically, potential fellows should be made aware that working with Tier 1 select agents will require acceptance into a Personal Reliability/Suitability program that involves greater security standards, including increased screening and monitoring.

Post-Selection Preceptor Responsibilities:

1. Serve as Principal Supervisor of the fellow and evaluate his/her performance during the fellowship.

2. Promote all ethical standards for conducting research including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human-subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes.

3. Supervise the fellow in the design, conduct, analysis, and reporting of his/her research.

4. Ensure that any significant changes in the fellow’s project proposal are reported to ASM and CDC staff.

5. In collaboration with the ASM/CDC fellow prepare a 2-year individual development plan including, but not limited to, opportunities for independent thinking, research ethics, scientific communications (e.g., presentations, publishing and grant writing), career planning, and global health.

6. Make clear the goals, objectives and expectations of the research project and the responsibilities of the fellow and incorporate this information into fellows’ individual development plan (IDP).

7. Discuss the appropriate long and short term goals of the fellowship.

8. Meet with the fellow on a regular basis and provide timely critical appraisal of his/her work and appropriate recommendations and suggestions.

9. Establish a schedule of regular meetings (e.g. every four months), to monitor progress toward individual development plan (IDP) and respond to challenges and opportunities.

10. Provide feedback and expected inputs in accordance with agreed upon timelines.

11. Provide constructive critique of the fellow’s manuscripts and research proposals.

12. Require each fellow to develop his/her presentation skills. This may be achieved through multiple venues:
a. Provide guidance to fellow for his/her annual Research in Progress presentation to the CDC Scientific Advisory Committee and the ASM/CDC Fellowship Program and/or the ASM Steering Committee.

b. Require the fellow to participate in team/unit meetings and to present research findings regularly at these meetings.

c. Encourage fellow to present at Branch or Division level meetings and other seminar programs in CDC and other local institutions including presentation of their work.

d. Encourage the fellow to present his/her work at national and international conferences and use these meetings as an opportunity to provide training in presentation skills.

13. Require and support the fellow to develop scientific writing skills. Some ways this may be done include attending writing workshops, assisting with writing grant proposals, research summaries, and research articles, and writing a review article based on their thesis work or on their new project.

14. Encourage the fellow to take advantage of training opportunities provided by CDC and ASM and to attend seminars at CDC or an appropriate collaborating university. Consider finding a co-advisor at a university who can provide additional guidance and evaluation of the research project.

15. Provide networking opportunities that will help the fellow’s professional development and enhance his/her career development opportunity

16. Assist the fellow with career development and planning by providing information and advice on employment opportunities.

References:
