



# Reverse IDP: A Mentor Mirror

## Is a mentor responding to student needs?

### Introduction:

This idea was developed by Dr. Renetta Garrison Tull, with a reference provided below. Her work speaks to the transition that students (or post-docs) need as they transition from being a student in a research group to being a peer or colleague. Using this reverse IDP, or Mentor Mirror, as she has labeled it, might be helpful for faculty wanting to develop a *Mentoring Philosophy* or to work with their senior/advanced students who are preparing for their next professional steps.

Dr. Garrison Tull's Mentor Mirror includes question prompts to motivate the development of mentees into peers and colleagues who have their own rightful place in the academy. Indeed, some of these questions may also be helpful in articulating broader general goals of your research group's productivity or output. Selected questions from Dr. Garrison Tull's work have been modified and described below.

### Prompts of the Mentor Mirror:

1. **What do you want students in your research group to learn from this experience in working with you and your assembled team?** Much like we have learning objectives associated with our formal lecture courses, think about the knowledge, skills, credentials, or other experiences that you want students learning from you in scholarly/creative work pursuits.
2. **How do your skills, interests, and values align with your students' skills/interests/values?** When planning projects and research experiences that are tailored to students in your research group, it is useful to think about how their goals, pursuits, and values might align with your own. Similarly, finding out where there is a disconnect can be helpful *prior* to dealing with conflict or misaligned expectations.
3. **When thinking of your research group alumni, what skills have they gained from working with you?** This might be of a more entrepreneurial mindset here, but it is useful to think about the value you bring to supporting or launching a student's career/professional to assess periodically. Articulate and describe these skills in the Welcome Letter as an onboarding process to your research group.
4. **What research products do you want your students to have when they leave your research group?** Think about the research products such as typical academic papers, conference proceedings, books or monographs, performances, posters, etc., that you might want your students to have on their resumes or CVs when they leave your group. How do these products or experiences support their future professional growth? Have a plan in place for sharing credit and acknowledging intellectual input into these efforts.
5. **What are your own professional goals over two years? Five years? Ten years?** Student enthusiasm for research and work in your field can be invigorating, though it can also be hugely time expensive. When you think about providing quality mentorship to your mentees, think realistically about how many students you can responsibly mentor and shepherd through a

research program, internship, or experience with you. Do these student experiences align with your own personal and professional goals?

6. **How do you celebrate student accomplishments?** Students may oftentimes confuse the need for community with the need for mentorship. But, at the end of the day, a sense of belonging and cheering for a unit or team can help motivate students and faculty mentors. Think about how you celebrate what your students' accomplishments and successes, as their successes often feed into your own professional goals.
7. **How you help students establish independence?** As your students prepare for their next stages of their career, celebrate this experience with your mentees! You've worked hard together to get to this point. Acknowledge the hard work and effort. Review major accomplishments and how big research goals were developed. As your mentee moves to the next phase of training or to a career, acknowledge or develop ways in which you may want to continue working together. As new projects are planned, establish the rules of collaboration, communication, and credit. If appropriate, you can facilitate networking opportunities or travel to conferences that would sustain such efforts.

## References

R. Garrison Tull, "The Mentor Mirror: A Reverse IDP for Mentors," November 6, 2015. *Internet*, Available: <https://renettatull.wordpress.com/2015/11/06/the-mentor-mirror-a-reverse-idp-for-mentors-srebdoschomotempowered-thinkbigdiversity/> Accessed 03/18/2025.

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