Compass Postdoc Track Syllabus

Welcome to Compass! We are glad you are here.

Compass Philosophy

- We support the careers of Compass Scholars by helping postdoctoral researchers invest time in their career development and develop professional skills needed for personally and professionally rewarding careers.
- We challenge the sink-or-swim culture that tends to dominate academia and research by openly sharing best practices, providing practical resources, and offering guidance in a collaborative, engaging learning environment where all postdoctoral researchers are welcome.
- We are committed to continuous program improvement to achieve this mission.

Program Overview

7-week Training and Mentoring
The goals of the program are to provide essential knowledge and hands-on, practical skill development so you can easily and quickly apply what you learn. There are **7 one-week units** in all. We provide both asynchronous learning material and activities as well as synchronous, live events.

Scholars will be able to complete the weekly asynchronous learning at a semi-structured pace, allowing flexibility. However, we ask scholars to complete learning activities for each unit in the order that we present them in the learning platform by the end of each week. Completing activities in order ensures the cohort can progress together to the next learning unit. Begin to figure out NOW where you make the time in your weekly schedule.

Peer mentoring teams will meet synchronously each week at a mutually convenient time identified by scholars. Live, synchronous cohort coaching sessions with Compass leadership will take place during weeks 4 and 7. These one-hour meetings occur via Zoom on Wednesdays.

A commitment of at least 3-4 hours per week allows scholars to fully engage with the material and develop as professionals.

Expectations of Scholars

As a Compass Scholar, you are expected to uphold the following commitments.

1. **Be a good colleague**: Be kind and considerate in both written and verbal communication in all aspects of Compass.

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2. **Share your perspective and welcome others**: Contribute your experiences, stories, and views to foster everyone's learning. Welcome the input and views of others, while recognizing and respecting they may differ from your own.
3. **Take the time**: Dedicate the time to complete all components of Compass.
4. **Reflect and apply your learning**: Be intentional about reflecting on what you are learning and applying what you learn to your work.
5. **Be an engaged peer mentor**: Be a prepared, active, and supportive peer mentor.
6. **Help us continuously improve**: Complete Compass surveys and follow-up questionnaires.
7. **Maintain confidentiality:** Collaborative learning only works when members can trust each other. Maintain that trust by not sharing other Scholars' personal comments and experiences with people outside the program.
8. **Use artificial intelligence (AI) tools responsibly:** Respect confidentiality, intellectual property rights, and the privacy of all participants by using AI tools for educational purposes only. Do not share AI generated materials derived from Compass (including virtual events) with others.

Requirements of Scholars

Adult learners come to professional development opportunities with their own unique learning goals. This is your program, and we want you to get what you hope to from it! We also want you to engage with learning material you might not have originally thought you wanted or needed, and to be a good community member by engaging with peers so you can learn from each other. While Scholars do not earn an academic grade or traditional course credit, you get from Compass what you put into it! We recommend you complete everything that you can. Former Scholars asked us to help them prioritize completion of learning content, activities, and deliverables. This is our list of "requirements of scholars" organized by what we consider the highest priority at the top. Notice we do not refer to anything as "low priority" -- it is all valuable.

- **Career Development Plan (CDP):** Develop and turn in your personalized CDP at the end of the program (due Week 7). An early (not perfect or entirely fleshed out) draft of your CDP will need to be completed in Week 4 for review by members of your Peer Mentoring Team.
- **Peer Mentoring:** Consistently participate in weekly Peer Mentoring Team Meetups and peer review of CDPs.
- **Cohort Coaching Sessions:** Regularly attend cohort coaching sessions or review the recordings if necessary.
- **Compass Workbook:** Complete the opening and closing activities for each Unit in your Compass workbook. This will help solidify your learning and the development of your CDP!
- **Learning Activities:** Complete the discussion boards in the learning website.

The **Compass Coursebooks** contain specific unit learning content. Review Coursebook material and the reflections in your Compass Workbook when drafting your CDP and to help you handle specific issues you are currently encountering. Keep your Coursebook and Workbook for future reference after the program has ended.

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To receive a Certificate of Completion and digital Credly badge, the following activities must be completed by the end of the program:

1. Submission of Career Development Plan
2. Completion of all required online unit activities on the learning platform
3. Active participation in Peer Mentoring Teams

7-week Training and Peer Mentoring

Important Note – Deadlines (the end of each week)
Each unit spans one week. Scholars should complete each unit's readings and activities by the end of each week.

Asynchronous Learning Materials and Activities (Complete during the week on your own time.)

Coursebook Reading and Review
The Compass Coursebooks are provided via the online learning platform. There are two Coursebooks, each containing three units. The content is delivered in a practical way so that you can take what you have learned and apply it in your work. The first week of the program, the Kickoff week, is meant to orient you to the program and learning platform, with the remaining weeks corresponding to the following Units:

Unit 1: Leading Self
Focuses on creating the career and life Scholars want through building their self-knowledge, understanding their values, managing stress, and knowing when to seek guidance and self-advocate.

Unit 2: People Skills
Focuses on essential practices for building quality relationships with others, communicating effectively and assertively, navigating difficult conversations, and resolving conflict with others.

Unit 3: Managing Up
Focuses on strategies for effectively communicating and working with one's current supervisor (e.g., Principal Investigator) and future supervisors in a constructive manner, for instance by clarifying needs and identifying mutually agreeable expectations.

Unit 4: Training and Supervising
Focuses on essential practices for guiding mentees to learn new skills and develop as researchers, especially how to provide feedback, direction, and re-direction when behavior does not align with expectations.

Unit 5: Networking

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Focuses on promising practices for building a network of peers and mentors inside and outside one's current institution and understanding the role of relationship building, collaboration, and reputation in one's career success.

Unit 6: Job Searching
Focuses on how to skillfully navigate the job search and interview process, including strategies for managing one's well-being while on the job market, preparing for interviews, and making decisions that fit with career goals and personal values.

Self-Reflection Workbook
For each unit, there is an opening and closing activity in your self-reflection workbook. Before reading the unit material in the Compass Coursebooks, be sure to complete the opening activity, and finish the closing activity when you have completed the reading. Though you will not submit your workbook to us, we strongly encourage to use this document to record personal insights and growth throughout the program.

Weekly Discussion Board
Each unit has a discussion board activity in the online learning platform. The discussion is associated with the Coursebook topics and Self-Reflection Workbook.

Career Development Plan
You will also work on your Career Development Plan throughout the program which will be submitted at the end of the program. Using the prior activities to help formulate ideas for your CDP will help make the writing process easier.

Ask & Share Discussion Board
The *Ask & Share* discussion board is for asking questions and sharing your experiences and insights with your peers. *Ask & Share* is a way to build community organically. Scholars can post pretty much anything related to the program in the *Ask & Share* and get feedback from peers. Use the *Ask & Share* for content and program-related posts. For technical (e.g. password resets) or logistical questions (e.g. where do I find...) or PMT-related questions that need to be answered quickly, please reach out via email at compass@wustl.edu.

Synchronous Live Events
(Attend "in person" remotely at a specific time.)

Kickoff
During the first week of the program, the Compass team will host a one-hour Kickoff Meeting via Zoom to welcome all new Compass Scholars and provide an orientation to the program and learning platform.

Peer Mentoring Team (PMT) Meetups
PMTs meet virtually each week for one hour and will set their own weekly meeting schedule at a time convenient for everyone on the team. During PMT meetups, teams discuss Compass content, participate in guided activities, ask for and give advice on real-world scenarios, and provide feedback on CDPs. Whichever method you choose to meet, your cameras should be turned on, and you should be prepared to engage with your

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team members. The **PMT Guidebook** offers weekly guidance for facilitating your PMT meetups (you will gain access to this document when the program launches).

Live Cohort Coaching Sessions
The Compass team will host Live Cohort Coaching Sessions via Zoom with Compass leadership who will share their wisdom and answer Scholar questions. Cohort coaching provides Scholars with an opportunity to receive invaluable career and leadership advice. If there are particular questions or topics you wish to be covered during a coaching session, you may include a request in the *Ask & Share* discussion board or email us directly at compass@wustl.edu in advance of the session. For example, you may want additional nuance or guidance about how to most effectively apply the strategies and practices you learn about in the program to a real-life context.

Deliverables

Career Development Plan
Compass provides a template for Scholars to develop their own personalized Career Development Plan (CDP). The CDP is an essential planning and reflection tool used to guide your career path. Scholars work on their CDP incrementally as they go through the program, drawing upon what they are learning. By the end of the program, Scholars will have developed a complete CDP that they can update over the course of their careers to achieve their goals. The CDP is a living document – flexible and ever-changing – meant to adapt as your goals and circumstances change.

Feedback Surveys

Scholars are asked to complete brief feedback surveys for each unit and event. This is a critical way for the Compass team to learn from Scholars about what is working well, what is not working so well, and suggestions for improvement.

Before and after the 7-week program, you will complete surveys that capture your thoughts and practices, so we can learn how the program is working. We will follow-up with you periodically after you complete Compass to track how Scholars are doing. **We need this evaluation data to continuously improve and evaluate how the program has made an impact on researchers' careers.** We sincerely appreciate the time Scholars take to complete these surveys!

Please reach out to the Compass Team at compass@wustl.edu.
If your email is about peer mentoring, please add **PMT** in the subject line.

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Compass Program Schedule

Week	Unit	PMT Meeting Activities	Live Synchronous Events
Week 1	Kickoff Week	Introductions + Team Charter	Live Kickoff Event (60min)
Week 2	Leading Self	Guided Activity	
Week 3	People Skills	Discuss Case Studies	
Week 4	Managing Up	Peer Review CDPs	Live Group Coaching Session (60min)
Week 5	Training and Supervising	Discuss Case Studies	
Week 6	Networking	Guided Activity (Pitch)	
Week 7	Job Searching	Guided Activity Peer Review CDPs Team Charter Review	Live Group Coaching Session (60min)

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