

## INFO – Mentoring in STRUCTURES

### Mentoring in STRUCTURES

The mentoring program in STRUCTURES is part of STEPS, a step-by-step career program for young researchers, designed to counsel and support them in particular at the transitional points of their scientific career, and to improve diversity and work-family balance in STRUCTURES.

The mentoring program establishes relationships that are based on an agreement among partners. As mentors, individuals share their knowledge, skills and information with the aim to foster the personal and professional growth of the mentee. Through continuous and dynamic feedback, both the mentor and the mentee benefit from this partnership.

### Key Ideas

The key ideas of the program are:

- Focus on transition points
- Mentor matching— across career steps
- Choose mentoring style of 1:1 or 1:few
- Experience both roles — mentee and mentor
- Get matched for one term
- Informal mentoring — meet once per month/- decide on your own about the meeting frequency
- Make new contacts
- Expand your support network

### How the mentoring program is organized

The mentoring program offers you an informal mentor – mentee partnership that naturally ends after one term. At the request of both, mentor and mentee, it can be continued for another term. Each new term is made up by four phases: (i) matching, (ii) drafting aims, (iii) active communication and (iv) conclusion of the partnership.

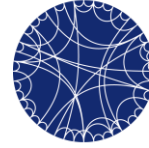
#### **(i) Matching of partners**

Fill out a short questionnaire and get matched. STRUCTURES will identify a mentorship partner. One mentor gets matched with one to three mentees.

#### **(ii) Drafting mentoring aims**

After being matched, the mentee formulates their aims. These could be for example individual career development, difficulties in transitioning steps from peer to boss, participation in academic self-governance, making contacts in a new environment, and support with the next career step.

#### **(iii) Communicating and giving feedback**



During the term, you set up meetings to get to know each other, giving food for thoughts, while you cultivate a respectful interaction, build trust, and give and receive feedback on request. The recommended frequency to meet is once per month.

#### **(iv) Concluding the partnership**

At the end of the term, you conclude the mentoring partnership by reevaluating the formulated aims. A prolongation is up to both partners, where you also have the option to change partnership, e.g. into a network partnership.

#### Your role as mentee

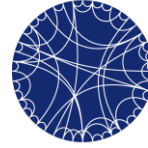
As a mentee, you actively define the topics you want to work on, continuously evaluate the status of your aims and approach your mentor.

- Be professional: come to meetings always prepared, be on time, don't skip meetings, reply to mails and requests within an appropriate amount of time, communicate respectful and with appropriate language.
- Define your goals and needs.
- Be open to new ideas and perspectives.
- Think critically about your mentor's advice: does it fit to you? Put their advice always into perspective. Keep in mind that your mentor shares their own opinion rather than truths or universal facts. Don't give responsibility for your decisions and actions to your mentor.
- Find the balance: Make use of your mentor. Respect your mentor's boundaries.
- Constant evaluation: Reflect your own actions and decisions. Also evaluate if the mentor-mentee relationship works for you.
- Let your mentor know what (does not) work for you. Give your mentor constructive feedback.
- In case of serious problems (health, mental health, legal, ...) please consult a specialist.

#### Your role as mentor

As a mentor, you share your knowledge, skills and information with a (yet) less senior scientist to foster their personal and professional growth.

- Be professional: be attentive during meetings, be on time, don't skip meetings, reply to mails and requests within an appropriate amount of time, communicate respectful and with appropriate language.
- Together with the mentee, evaluate if their aims are realistic.
- Encourage your mentee, don't blame him or her. Although you might greatly contribute to your mentee's growth, their (missing) success is not your responsibility.
- „Failure is normal“ – share your failure and the struggle you experience(d) in your career. Be honest and realistic.
- Share and offer your own opinions. Sometimes it might be necessary to stress out that some advice relies on your personal opinion, with which others might not agree.
- Pay attention to the situation of the mentee and be flexible. What works for you might not work for your mentee.
- Keep in mind that you support your mentee to reach the next step.
- Give constructive feedback.
- Serious problems of a mentee (health, mental heal, legal, ...) are beyond your responsibility. Contact the STRUCTURES office, and we can help.



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### Questions, Conflicts, Issues?

In case you have any questions, issues, a conflict situation related to the mentoring partnership, or in need of a confidential talk, please contact:

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