

WISC mentorship guidelines: for mentors

Objectives of the program

The objective of the WISC mentoring program is to provide a platform for women connected to science and IIASA to share their knowledge and experience with early career professionals through formal mentoring relationships. WISC defines formal mentoring relationships as support from established career individuals to early career individuals. Mentors can integrate professional support with guidance in other areas such as work/life balance, living abroad, and community.

Informal mentoring relationships can develop spontaneously and without management or any specifically recognized mentoring program, but in order to provide a consistent framework for this program, we have created guidelines for both mentors and mentees to help in building a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees.

Expectations

For mentoring relationships to be successful there must be clear expectations between the individual receiving developmental guidance and the individual providing that guidance. We recommend that mentors and mentees come from different research programs. Mentors should be available to provide career advice, but should refrain from giving advice on research direction.

Mentee Expectations

- Approaches the mentoring relationship with specific purpose or goals:
- Guidance in a general or specific professional area such as, early career development, broad career development, professional development
- Guidance in navigating professional settings, institutions, structures, and politics
- Initiates, prepares, and recaps the meetings with mentors

Mentor Expectations

- Acts as an experienced role model
- Provides wisdom, advice, counsel, coaching and encouragement
- Acts as a sponsor in professional organizations, supports networking efforts
- Guides in navigation of professional settings, institutions, structures, and politics
- Facilitates professional development
- Challenges and encourages appropriately to facilitate growth
- Accepts assistance from mentee in mentor's professional responsibilities within appropriate limits

Getting started

Once you have agreed to be a mentor, it is helpful to agree with the mentee how the relationship will work. This should ideally be done either before or during the first meeting.

Suggested meeting format

- Meetings are recommended to take place about every 3 months and scheduled to last approx. 60-90 minutes.
- Meetings can take place at IIASA or offsite, however, noisy or informal locations are not recommended.
- Mentees are encouraged to propose the meeting agenda to the mentor ahead of the meeting and to record the outcomes and action plans of the meeting.
- Mentors and mentees should agree upon communication outside of meetings; method, turnaround, frequency etc.
- Mentees and mentors should agree upon any issues that will not be discussed.

Confidentiality

The mentor/mentee relationship depends on mutual respect for the information shared in confidence. However, the success and future improvements of the program itself will depend on anonymous feedback given to the WISC coordinators.

We encourage mentors and mentees to agree at the beginning of their relationship on the limits on confidentiality and if the contents of the meetings to be kept confidential or can they be discussed with outside parties.

For issues that come to light that fall outside of mentor/mentee relationship we recommend that mentors and mentees together bring the issue to the IIASA Counselor.

IIASA Women in Science Club (WISC)

Practical advice

As a mentor you are a more experienced woman connected to science who is willing and able to pass on the benefit of that experience. We offer some practical advice to help you your role as a mentor.

3 stage approach for mentors (Megginson et al., 2006)

Stage 1 – Exploration

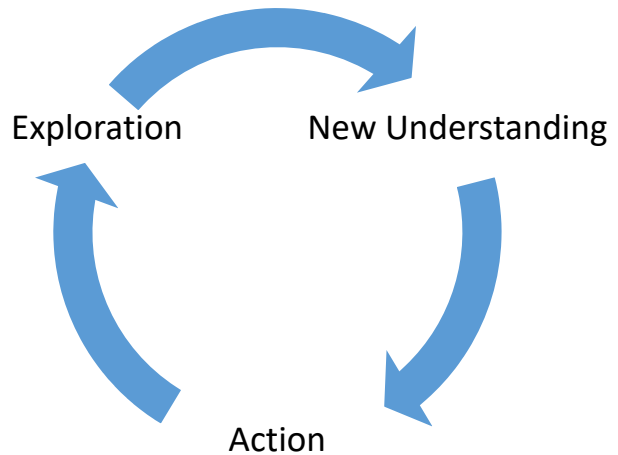
During the first stage of the process your role as a mentor is to provide information, when requested by the mentee, and to ask probing questions to help the mentee make judgements.

During this stage, you will employ ‘active listening’ skills: using good questioning techniques and then recapping, paraphrasing and summarizing to try and get to the center issue being raised. Remember you are there to guide the mentee, not to provide a solution or impose your point of view.

Stage 2 – New understanding

Having worked through the first stage, the likelihood is that some ‘new understanding’ will be reached about the issue being discussed. This may be a minor change in viewpoint or a major breakthrough in a person’s thinking processes.

Regardless of the size or significance of the breakthrough, your role as the mentor is to reflect back to the mentee what they have learned. You should then guide the mentee through thinking about the implications of potential conclusions.



Stage 3 – Action

If you have successfully reached a new understanding the next stage is to agree what actions should be taken. Again this is not about you as the mentor telling the mentee what to do. You need to guide the mentee toward identifying actions they can implement.

If actions are agreed you must ensure these are recorded and then monitored through regular review and feedback.

Mentor Dos and Don'ts

Mentor Dos	Mentor Don'ts
Do provide mentorship only in your areas of expertise. Suggest other mentors as resources outside your expertise or when the attempted mentoring relationship is not working.	Don't provide direct research supervision to the mentee or take on more mentees than is realistically manageable.
Do indicate openness to being a mentor. Be accessible and reliable to the mentee, but respect the boundaries of your mentoring agreement. Set clear expectations	Don't insist that the mentee must follow all your advice. Your role as a mentor is to encourage the mentee to identify issues and to help the mentee to explore desired outcomes and develop a range of options from which the mentee can
Do treat the mentee professionally and in an ethical fashion. Be thoughtful and sensitive about the mentee's feelings, culture, life circumstances, and time.	Don't gossip or share personal information about the mentee or make personal requests of the mentee.
Do model professional behavior and invite the mentee to meetings or events if appropriate	Don't micromanage the mentee. Provide advice and counsel, but do not direct the mentee to take specific actions.
Do identify the mentee's strengths and help her learn how to use them.	Don't be afraid to admit you do not know the answer. If a mentee asks a question and you are not sure of the answer, find the answer together and learn from it.

Source: <http://www.apa.org/education/grad/table-2-mentoring.pdf> and <https://mentorprize.org/index.php/be-a-mentor/dos-and-donts/>

For more information please contact the WISC Mentoring Coordinators at wisc_mentor@iiasa.ac.at.