



Guidance Notes for Mentee Applicants

Thank you for your interest in the Postdoctoral Group Mentoring Programme 2019-20. Please read this document before completing your online application form, which should be submitted by 27 November 2019.

We would ask you to consider carefully the expectations of mentors and the personal time commitment involved in participating in the Programme – details of which can be found below.

The Group Mentoring Programme will run from December 2019 to June 2020 and is jointly coordinated by Organisational Development (People & culture) and Research Policy Office (Research and Enterprise).

What is Group Mentoring?

Mentoring Groups (also known as mentoring circles) consist of a Lead Mentor, who are academic staff with experience of postdoctoral supervision, and a group of participants or Mentees who are postdoctoral researchers. Groups meet bi-monthly to discuss the experiences and challenges faced by Mentees in their career development pathways and identify opportunities to address these.

The advantages of group mentoring over traditional one-to-one models include:

- Peer to peer support in addition to standard mentoring
- Networking and building relationships
- Variety and depth of discussions
- Mentee benefit from the different perspectives of peers and mentor
- Can reach a larger number of mentees with fewer mentors
- Administratively lighter touch

Criteria

Applications are invited from all postdoctoral research staff who are not actively participating in other formal mentoring schemes. The scheme is open to staff on any contract type – full-time/ part-time, fixed-term etc.

Application Process

The deadline for applications to become a mentee is **27 November at 5pm**. Mentees will be grouped with colleagues who are at a similar stage in the postdoctoral career and wish to discuss similar issues. Mentors will be matched with groups of staff who were working outside of their area of research.

Training

Mentees and mentors will be invited to a programme launch event, currently scheduled for Friday 6 December, 10-11.30, Old Staff Common Room. It is essential that you attend as you will be allocated to your group at this session. This will include an overview of the scheme and basic training on how to approach the mentoring experience.

What are the benefits to Mentees?

For mentees, group mentoring can provide:

- A smoother adjustment to a new role or position
- Help in acquiring more quickly and comprehensively the skills and knowledge they need
- Guidance on career development
- A greater understanding of both the formal and informal workings of the organisation

What are the expectations of Mentees?

Mentoring groups allow mentees an opportunity to talk and share their experiences with other postdoctoral researchers outside their immediate research team.

As a mentor you are expected to:

- Commit to group mentoring meetings of up to two hours in duration to be held at least four times during the second semester of 2018-19 (number and schedule of meetings will be up to the mentor and group members to agree)
- Contribute to a supportive and positive atmosphere that encourages individuals to share personal stories and advice
- Provide feedback on the initiative as it progresses throughout the year and participate in a review meeting to collect feedback for future years

How will it work?

- **Group Composition:** Interdisciplinary groups of up to 6 participants will be allocated to each mentor. Successful schemes elsewhere have found that the groups work well if participants have broadly similar interests, but are from a mixture of different disciplines. This enables a greater variety of perspectives and experiences to emerge in discussions and can lead to a broader range of benefits for the participants.
- **Voluntary participation:** It is essential that participation is voluntary for both mentors and mentees. If a mentee decides not to continue, there will be no negative repercussions. However, we would ask that they notify the lead mentor or programme coordinators (rpo@qub.ac.uk) to provide feedback to inform future schemes.
- **Training and support for mentors:** Training will be provided for mentors. This will include details of how to initiate the group and set ground rules. Further meetings for the mentors will be arranged during the year and the coordinating team will be as required.
- **Group Meeting Planning Sessions:** Mentors will adopt their own method to operating and facilitating their groups. Groups are a space for everyone to speak. At times group leadership will involve the facilitation of discussion between the mentees. As the scheme aims for a fairly informal approach, however, mentors will be asked to consider a loose plan for running the sessions.
- **Group Meeting Coordination and Frequency:** We will advise that groups meet a minimum of four times during 2018-19. However, it will be up to the group and mentor to discuss and decide a schedule of meetings. We advise that meeting dates are scheduled at the first meeting of the group to ensure that diaries are set well in advance.