



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**Postdoctoral Group
Mentoring Programme
Guidance Notes for Mentors**

Guidance Notes for Mentor Applicants

Thank you for your interest in volunteering to take part in the Postdoctoral Group Mentoring Programme 2019-20. Please read this document before completing your 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 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 academic staff with at least one year post-probation experience at Queen's to join the programme as mentors. Previous experience as a mentor is not essential but would be beneficial.

Training

Mentees and mentors will be invited to a programme launch event, currently scheduled for Friday 6 December, Old Staff Common Room. It is essential that you attend as mentoring groups will be arranged at this session. This will include an overview of the scheme and basic training on how to approach the mentoring experience. Mentors and Mentees attend from 10-11.30am, followed by a short mentor development session from 12-1pm.

What are the benefits to Mentors?

Mentoring groups are not only beneficial for the participants. There are personal and professional benefits for those that take on the mentor role. For mentors this can include:

- Opportunities to develop and refine skills (mentoring, coaching, listening, supporting)
- Opportunities to network and influence
- Opportunities for reflection through the views of mentees and peers
- Satisfaction when a mentee succeeds or gains confidence
- Opportunities to share experiences to assist others in their development and growth
- Development and evidence of a key academic leadership skill

What are the expectations of Mentors?

A mentor's key role is to listen and facilitate. Mentoring groups allow mentors an opportunity to share their experiences with 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)
- Provide 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@gub.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 six times during 2019-20. 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.