

réseau romand de
mentoring pour femmes



Documentation for future mentors

This guide should help future mentors to understand what mentoring means and how a mentor can help a mentee.

Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes

The “Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes” is a mentoring program for female researcher (advanced PhD students and post docs) of the universities in Western Switzerland (Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel and Fribourg) and the EPFL. It exists since more than 20 years already and the aim of the program is to support young female researchers in their academic careers. We offer a one-to-one mentoring with a professor in Switzerland or abroad.

The program offers furthermore 4 group meetings for all mentees. During the group meetings, the mentees can get in touch. The program offers workshops on different topics, as mentoring, grant possibilities, the recruitment procedure for professorship, and transferable skills such as networking, leadership, or work-life balance. Furthermore, former mentees are invited to talk about their career paths and how the mentoring helped them in their career and with the choices they made. Each edition ends with a network meeting of mentees and alumnae of the program. Mentors are very welcome to attend these meetings (voluntary participation).

Interested candidates have to apply for the program. After a selection process, each mentee is interviewed to discuss about her questions and the profile of the mentor. The program duration is 18 months, and we recommend four to five meetings between mentor and mentee. We also ask the mentor and mentee to establish a mentoring agreement that serves as a base for their relationship.

What is mentoring?

“You cannot be what you cannot see.”

Marian Wright Edelman (American activist for civil rights and children rights)

In a mentoring relationship an experienced person shares her or his knowledge and experiences with the mentee. The aim is to support the mentee to achieve her professional and private goals. Mentoring is characterized as a learning and development process that is voluntary, confidential and free of charge (Cuerrier, Christine, 2004).

A mentor should be openminded and willing to share her or his experiences with the younger generation. She or he should have a certain experience to share. The aim should not be to produce a “mini me”, but to guide the mentee on her way. A mentor should make sure to have time to meet the mentee on a regular basis.

Mentoring brings many benefits to the mentee, but it should also have benefits for the mentor. Mentoring can give you personal satisfaction. You can develop new skills and increase your understanding of yourself, others, and organizations. You gain another perspective of the younger generation, and you keep up to date with professional developments. Finally, it is also a career enhancement for your CV.

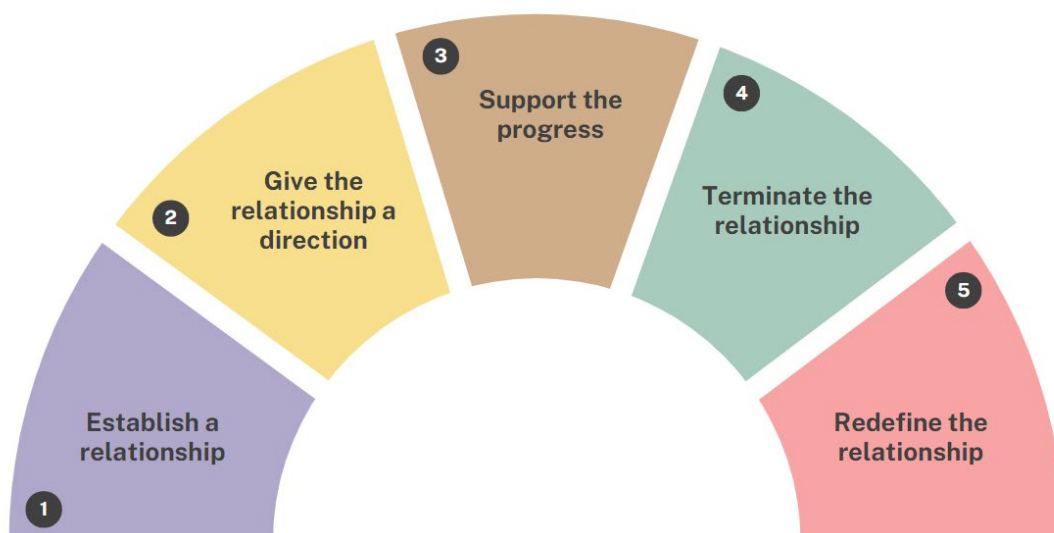
How to:

- Listen actively to the mentee.
- Ask open questions to clarify and understand the mentees questions or problems.
- Synthesize what you discussed.
- Give feedback on what the mentee told you.
- Formulate requests or demands that help your mentee to become active.
- Be present during the meeting (no disturbance).
- Be emphatic.
- Be positive but give realistic advice.
- Be honest.

Mentoring is not...

- An obligation.
- A power relationship.
- A relationship in one direction. Both can learn out of it.
- A therapy.
- A coaching.

Proceeding of the mentoring relationship



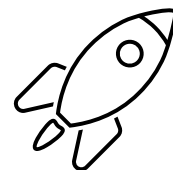
The 5 Steps of Proceeding the Mentoring Relationship

1

ESTABLISH THE RELATIONSHIP

MOST CHALLENGING

- Discuss objectives, expectations and boundaries. Helps to be motivated and engaged.
- Discuss the frequency and length of the meetings as well as the communication forms.
- Sign the mentoring agreement.
- Create a trustful environment.
- Schedule the next meeting.

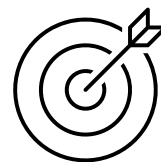


2

GIVE THE RELATIONSHIP A DIRECTION

PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

- Discuss about and identify the objectives and competencies that the mentee should/could develop.
- Think of stimulant actions for the mentee.

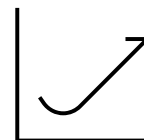


3

SUPPORT THE PROGRESS

WORK ON THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENTEE

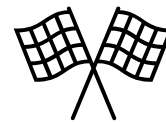
- Bring the mentee out of her comfort zone, so that the mentee can work on problem solving.
- Reflect on different paths or scenarios to bring forward the career of the mentee.
- Ask critical questions, but do not demoralize.



4

TERMINATE THE RELATIONSHIP

Conclude the official end of the relationship and discuss whether you want to stay in touch, and if, under what conditions.



5

REDEFINE THE RELATIONSHIP (OPTIONAL)

If you want to stay in touch, discuss the conditions (as mentor - mentee, formal - informal, regularity, etc.)

