



GUIDELINES FOR THE FIRST MEETING

For your first mentoring meeting, it is recommended you clarify the fundamentals of your mentoring relationship. This includes agreements on the framework conditions as well as on each participant's specific objectives and expectations for the mentoring relationship and for each other. Clarifying these aspects helps to avoid any misunderstandings and to structure the mentoring process.

A FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

In order to structure the mentoring process to the satisfaction of both parties and avoid any confusion, it is recommended that mentors and mentees make clear arrangements on the following aspects in the first meeting:

- ***Confidentiality of meetings***

A profitable mentoring relationship requires a candid and trusting exchange between the participants. It is recommended that mentee and mentor come to an understanding and commit to keep the contents of their meetings confidential and only to discuss the topics and contents of the mentoring partnership with third parties when they have explicitly agreed this in advance. This agreement should also apply beyond the end of the mentoring relationship.

- ***Frequency, form and organization of contact***

At least one meeting should be held in person each semester as part of the mentoring partnership. It is advisable to discuss whether, beyond this, further face-to-face meetings and/or email and telephone contact is possible and desirable, and how and when such contact should be structured and prepared.

- ***Meeting locations and dates; preparatory information for the meeting***

The programme intends for the meeting to be held at the mentor's location, and reimburses the mentee's travel costs accordingly. The mentee is responsible for organizing the meeting: it is their role to arrange a date for the meeting. It is also recommended that, before each meeting, the mentee sends a brief record of the last meeting as well as an overview of the planned topics for discussion and objectives for the upcoming meeting. This should provide continuity in the dialogue process and aid preparations for the new meeting. The content and scheduling of the meeting are the responsibility of the participants, and should be personally arranged and agreed.

• *Duration of the mentoring relationship*

The mentoring relationship runs for a fixed term, and initially amounts to a period of 12 months. Shortly before this period expires, both participants are asked by the programme coordinators whether they would consider extending the mentoring relationship for a further year. Both parties are asked to send their responses to the programme coordinators independent of one another. It can even be discussed in the first meeting whether the mentor and mentee should reach an agreement on this issue in advance – without the need to determine the substance of such an agreement. The mentoring relationship officially ends after two years. A decision on whether contact should also be maintained in future should only be taken after 24 months as part of the concluding meeting. If the mentee or mentor should leave the university, the mentoring relationship also ends officially.

• *Handling emerging problems*

The mentee and mentor are informed that the project coordinators at their location are available at any time to respond to queries and to provide support in resolving any ambiguities, problems or conflicts.

B EXPECTATIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Experience and the results of evaluations from numerous mentoring programmes show that the efficiency of a mentoring process and the satisfaction of its participants are highest when the mentee and mentor come to an agreement at the start of the mentoring relationship on

- *which topics and objectives they wish to pursue in the context of the mentoring relationship,*
- *what expectations they have of their role and that of their counterpart.*

A potential basis for this discussion is for the mentee to present their professional situation, their career to date and their ambitions, as well as what they might consider ‘works in progress’, and thereby derive topics, objectives and expectations for the mentoring. This also enables the mentor to position themselves in the relationship.

Topics and objectives can also be defined in writing – including with a view to conducting a joint overall evaluation on conclusion of the mentoring relationship. Such agreements should take into consideration that topics, objectives, expectations and support requirements are not fixed quantities; instead, they may change or develop over the course of the mentoring process. Regular mutual reflection and transparency in relation to these aspects facilitates the mentoring process.