

ACE Mentorship Scheme and Sign-up

Overview: The Adapting to Changing Environments (ACE) center at the University of Edinburgh is offering a mentorship scheme that takes advantage of its interdisciplinary membership and early career network to provide ongoing mentoring support, opportunities, and training to researchers. The scheme will offer both 1:1 (“on your tod”) and group (“with your pod”) mentoring options that include participants across a wide range of disciplines and career stages: from mathematics to ecology and early career (early or late PhDs and postdocs) to later career (new to late PIs). By including a wide breadth of participant research backgrounds and career stages, the scheme aims to promote diversity in the content discussed during mentoring relationships, increase flexibility for mentees to choose whether they prefer a mentor that is peer, near or far career, and allow early career researchers (late PhDs or postdocs) to gain mentoring experience. Overall, this mentorship scheme aims to strengthen research connections and promote early career development in the ACE network by matching mentees to mentors that provide support, advice, and share experiences across diverse topics (career and professional development, time management, work-life balance, etc).

Signing up and next steps: This is an ongoing opt-in scheme and you will be assigned a mentor and/or mentee if you request one and engage fully with the questions and information required in the sign-up form below. The form requires you fill in some personal information about yourself, which topics you are able (mentor) or want (mentee) to discuss, and which type of mentorship arrangement you prefer (1:1, group composed of colleagues of similar career stage, peer, near career, or far career). We encourage early career researchers (late PhDs and postdocs) to sign up to be mentors as near career mentoring relationships would provide valuable perspectives and promote mentoring experience. Please read our general guidelines below before signing up to the scheme.

Once filling in the form, mentors will enter into the scheme’s mentor pool and mentees will be contacted by an ACE Early Career Network mentorship officer with possible mentor options. The mentee will then indicate whether they are happy to be assigned to one of the possible mentors. From the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) [postdoc mentoring scheme](#): “This should be a positive choice on your part. You can and should request other options if you feel concerned or worried about mentors who are suggested. It is important that you feel comfortable with the mentor you chose, and that your mentor is not someone with who you already are working with closely or someone who might be required to undertake any meaningful form of professional assessment of your work (e.g. line managers, teaching program organisers).” As the scheme aims to offer diverse mentoring options to mentees, it may be difficult in some cases to provide matches that combine all the mentee’s first preferences. Therefore, the closest options available will be offered and the mentee will have the choice of whether they would like to sign up for a less preferred option (e.g., group instead of 1:1 mentoring, postdoc instead of early PI mentor) or wait until a better arrangement is available. Once mentees have agreed to a mentor, the mentorship officer will put the mentee(s) in touch with their mentor so that they can arrange a first meeting (see below general guidelines on how to approach the first meeting).

Sign-up form: XXX

ACE Mentorship Scheme Guidelines

The ACE mentorship scheme takes advantage of existing guidelines and materials offered through the University of Edinburgh including the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) [postdoc mentoring scheme](#) and the Institute of Academic Development's [mentoring resources](#).

What is a mentor: A mentor is someone who provides support and guidance to a colleague by providing an opportunity to have positive conversations about topics related to their colleague's career and professional development, offering advice and experiences where appropriate. We highlight here that the mentoring role can be performed effectively in different ways and can be adaptable to specific mentoring relationships. Please see the IAD's "[Being a mentor](#)" resource for further information and recommendations.

The first meeting: After mentees approve and are introduced to their matched mentors, mentees should organize a first meeting together ASAP. From the SBS postdoc scheme: "This 'trial' meeting should be mainly to get to know one another a bit and to check that you feel comfortable with the proposed mentor. It is also the opportunity to start laying the groundwork for your ongoing relationship: what do you both see as the purpose of the relationship? What kinds of topics the mentee is most keen to discuss? How often and how do you want to meet and communicate? Discuss the level of confidentiality you both expect with respect to your discussions and make a plan for a follow up meeting." After the first meeting the mentee should contact the mentorship officer to confirm whether they are happy to proceed with the mentoring arrangement, whether the participant prefers to be reassigned, or prefers a different arrangement option. From the SBS postdoc scheme: "It is important to recognise that few of the people involved in this scheme will have much experience of formal mentoring, and that it is to be expected that some mentoring relationships will not work through no fault of any party. Ending mentoring relationships that are not working in a swift and amicable way is going to be crucial to the success of the scheme."

The second meeting: Once participants have approved their mentoring arrangements, we suggest mentees arrange a second meeting. Following the SBS postdoc scheme we suggest "you arrange a second meeting within 2-3 weeks. Ahead of that second meeting, think about the sorts of issues or challenges you face professionally in order of priority that you would like to discuss with your mentor. You can present a list to your mentor via email, and this will help guide your initial meetings and discussions. We strongly recommend that after your first or second meeting, you prepare a written agreement or 'mentoring contract' with your mentor which briefly lays out the following: i) What you each expect from the other in this relationship, ii) What your main work-related objectives are at the moment, iii) How often you expect to meet, iv) How you will contact with each other, v) An agreement on confidentiality of anything discussed in meetings. As you move forward, you can review and modify this agreement – it may be useful to reflect on your stated objectives, how you are progressing towards them and if/how these have evolved or changed after each meeting you have." We suggest mentoring relationships meet together between 4-6 times for a year duration in a meeting format that best suits the mentorship arrangement (in person, online, hybrid). After a year, participants can choose to

re-enter the scheme for a new match or extend their mentoring arrangement with their current match. These are only guidelines and the nature of the mentorship can differ to what is suggested here, and should ultimately be decided and agreed upon by matched mentors and mentee(s).

How to get the most out of being a mentee: The mentee(s) in this scheme should take an active role in steering content discussed in further mentorship meetings. From the SBS postdoc scheme: “We suggest you arrive at meetings with an agenda or list of ideas / topics you would like to discuss in some order of priority. Ideally, you could send this list to your mentor ahead of the meeting. Try to be as open and honest as you can with your mentor, as this will help them to understand your situation and concerns and offer the best guidance. You will also need to remain open minded and open to feedback from your mentor – their advice and feedback should help you gain perspective and understanding of your own situation, but you will need to engage openly with any feedback. It is crucial that you, as the mentee, set the agenda and objectives of your discussions with your mentor and that you feel listened to and supported by your mentor.” For peer mentorship arrangements, we recommend participants take turns being the mentee (either during the same meeting or alternating meetings) and should thus both have an idea of topics they wish to discuss together ahead of meetings. Please see the IAD’s [“Being a mentee”](#) resource for further information and recommendations.

Want to give us feedback or have suggestions on how this scheme could be improved?

Please fill in our anonymous feedback form or contact a mentorship officer directly:

XX@ed.ac.uk

Is this mentorship scheme not quite the right fit for you?

There are several other mentorship schemes available through different schools and institutes at the University.

- Institute of Academic Development: [Postdoc Circles](#) and [other](#) mentoring schemes
- School of Biological Sciences: [Postdoc Mentorship Scheme](#)
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Mentorship Scheme Sign-up Form

Personal information

Name:

Email:

School and Institute:

Career Stage: Early PhD / Late PhD / Early Postdoc / Late Postdoc / Early PI / Mid PI / Late PI

Years of research experience:

Other work experience outside academia: Yes / No

How long have you been in your current role in Edinburgh?

How long have you been in Edinburgh?

Which fields do you or have you worked in?

Are you signing up to be a mentor, mentee, or both? Mentor / Mentee / Both

Mentor version

Are you comfortable mentoring mentees 1:1 and in groups?

Yes / No - just 1:1 / No - just in groups

Which topics would you be able to discuss with your mentee(s)?

Work-life balance / Career development / Navigating change of fields / Working across interdisciplinary disciplines / Applying for fellowships / Applying for grants / Reviewing / Editing / Publishing / Research presentations or seminars / Research visits / Science communication / Outreach / Working with Industry or third sector organizations / Collaboration / Organizing conference symposiums or working groups / Moving to a new country / Managing a team / Supervision / EDI and accessibility / Field work / Lab work / Advanced computing / Writing skills

Other topics you could discuss that are not listed above?

<Free text>

What do you hope to gain from being a mentor? (e.g., renew ideas or gain experience in mentoring roles, develop interpersonal and communication abilities, exposure to new work perspectives and approaches, etc.)

<Free text>

Mentee version

Do you prefer to be mentored on your tod (1:1) or with a pod (group)?

1:1 / group

Would you prefer a mentorship arrangement with someone at a i) later career stage or ii) similar career stage (i.e., peer mentorship = serve as both mentor and mentee)?

Similar stage (peer) / Later stage

If you selected the later stage above, what career stage would you prefer for your mentor?

Late PhD / Early Postdoc / Late Postdoc / Early PI / Mid PI / Late PI

Which topics would you like to discuss with your mentor?

Work-life balance / Career development / Navigating change of fields / Working across interdisciplinary disciplines / Applying for fellowships / Applying for grants / Reviewing / Editing / Publishing / Research presentations or seminars / Research visits / Science communication / Outreach / Working with Industry or third sector organizations / Collaboration / Organizing conference symposiums or working groups / Moving to a new country / Managing a team / Supervision / EDI and accessibility / Field work / Lab work / Advanced computing / Writing skills

Other topics you are interested in discussing that are not listed above?

<Free text>

Other things you hope to gain from being a mentee? (*e.g. Are there particular aspects of your current job you would be looking for guidance in? Particular kinds of career development advice? Advice on work/life balance?*)

<Free text>

Do you have any other preferences for your mentor? (E.g., gender, work background, etc.)

<Free text>

Please list mentorship arrangement options in order of descending preference:

Mentorship structure / Career stage / Topics of interest / Other preference(s)

Are there any other factors you would like us to consider or do you have any questions you would like the mentorship officer to address before setting up a mentoring arrangement?

<Free text>

Feedback Form

TODO