

The Eastern Arc Mentoring Scheme *Guidelines for Mentors*



Photo by Christin Hume on Unsplash



**EASTERN
ARC** Academic Research
Consortium

Each mentoring relationship differs depending on the needs, expectations, and personalities of mentee and mentor – but they all involve a relationship of trust and confidence between two people. There is no single set path to being a good mentor, but good mentors do share certain qualities.

Planning for mentoring

You are providing your mentee with your time, confidence, and experience – but mentoring should also be a positive experience for the mentor. It might be helpful to reflect on some of the following questions before your first meeting with your mentee:

- Have you ever benefited from mentoring, or from the guidance of someone who was like a mentor to you?
 - Why was this useful?
 - What was particularly helpful about the guidance this person provided?
 - Was there anything about this person (their manner, personality, experience) that made them particularly helpful?
- Conversely, have you ever felt in need of mentoring, but lacking in this support?
 - What kind of help could a mentor have provided at that point?
 - What might have turned out differently if you had had access to that support?
 - What are your expectations for this mentoring relationship?
 - What do you think you can offer a mentee?
- How do you think acting as a mentor might change your own perspectives?

This guide has been adapted from materials produced for the Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme (WUMS). We are grateful to WUMS for their support in sharing copies of their documentation.

What makes a good mentor?

A good mentor is:

- Encouraging
- Willing to challenge their mentee (when necessary)
- A good listener
- Patient and understanding
- Open and honest
- A positive role model (who is also willing to share their mistakes)
- Non-judgmental
- Reliable

A good mentor should:

- Help the mentee to achieve confidence in their abilities
- Ask pertinent, challenging and thought-provoking questions
- Enable the mentee to see familiar situations and issues from a new perspective
- Provide guidance and encouragement
- Ensure that discussions are always confidential
- Encourage the mentee to explore new ideas and address issues
- Be willing to share knowledge and expertise

What *shouldn't* a mentor do?

- Don't start from the point of view that you know what is in the mentee's best interests – instead, try to find out more about why they view situations in a particular way
- Don't assume mentoring is all about sharing your wisdom – often, it is about listening, and working out the right questions to ask
- Don't try to set the agenda for the meetings – let the mentee decide what they need
- Don't pretend to be perfect – fallibility is relatable!
- Don't lecture the mentee if they don't follow your advice – you are there to suggest different ways of approaching a problem, not to solve it
- Unless they confess to an unsolved murder, never break the confidence of your mentee.