

Mentoring and guidance highlights

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The EHPS conference is a great opportunity to discuss ideas with researchers from different countries. It is also a great place to arrange meetings for networking and collaborative project work. The conference provides the chance for networking and working on synergistic research projects through organised workshops and meetings. In particular, the pre-conference workshops, CREATE and the Synergy expert meeting are examples of activities where participants have the chance to present their research, future research plans, receive constructive feedback and form project-based collaborations.

Early career researchers have so many time constraints to advance their research, learn about current research trends and future paths within academia that they might overlook an important element of their professional development, which includes getting guidance on how to address their personal and career development needs. Currently Meet the Experts aims to facilitate interaction between early career researchers and established academics on research and networking. Within this activity there is a chance for delegates to get some tips on their career development. However, it can only accommodate a limited number of people and other initiatives could be added to support the large number of EHPS members. The EHPS conference is an opportune place for early career researchers to engage with

established academics, ask for their guidance and potentially begin a mentoring relationship.

The main aim of mentoring is the mentees' professional development, though it can also be a rewarding experience for the mentor. Mentoring can include discussions on any issues raised by the mentee (e.g. advice on job decisions, career management) and it is covered by confidentiality. The mentor usually adopts a dialectical method, in which by asking questions s/he prompts the mentee's critical thinking. This process can include review and reflection of current research activities as well as guidance on future goals and arrangements towards career development. Mentoring can be either face-to-face or in a group setting and vary depending on mentee's needs (for more information see: MRC guidance for mentoring <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/documents/pdf/mrc-guidance-on-mentoring/>). A group based mentoring activity can involve a senior academic, who 'hot chairs' brief group sessions, replies to early career academics' questions and provides tips on career development.

Drawing from our personal experience with mentoring and the enormous potential that it has on personal and professional development, we would like to invite senior academics to write about their experience of mentoring and provide tips for early career researchers. We would also like to invite mentees to write on their experiences. We are particularly interested to know about how they established a mentoring arrangement, and how it supported them in their career development. We would especially welcome brief reflective articles on



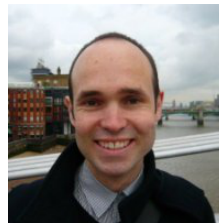
mentoring experiences taking place within the upcoming EHPS conference. The articles will be published in the EHP Bulletin and we hope to motivate and further support early career researchers on their decision about career development. To submit your articles please email kk532@medschl.cam.ac.uk.



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