

# Mentoring in Health Sciences

Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester, UK

**1 in 3 staff in Health Sciences would like a mentor but does not have one.**

**Over half of Health Sciences staff are willing to be a mentor.**

**Athena SWAN survey 2012**

## What is mentoring?

Mentoring is the critical role and responsibility assumed by an experienced employee who agrees to help, build a relationship with, and facilitate the professional growth of one or more colleagues. The mentor is not a line manager but a 'career friend'. Mentoring might suggest the sponsorship of a junior colleague by a senior colleague, or be seen as a relationship amongst equals in which someone is helped to develop themselves by a member of their peer group. (Leicester Learning Institute)

## What are the benefits of mentoring?

### For the mentee, mentoring can:

- reduce the stress of transition to a new role
- speed up the learning of a new job or set of skills
- promote the socialisation of new staff
- increase productivity
- increase motivation, confidence, and reflection
- help to articulate issues in a conscious and thoughtful way
- provide a way of seeing through difficulties

### For the mentor, mentoring can:

- offer an insight into the issues facing members of a professional community
- afford new perspectives on the culture of the University
- provide an opportunity to share experiences and expertise
- increase reflection on current practices
- build leadership skills

## What are we doing about it in Health Sciences:

- Members of the Athena SWAN team will take 10 minutes to talk through mentoring at local research group meetings to introduce the idea and answer questions over the next couple of months.
- A list will be collated locally of those interested in being mentored and those willing to be a mentor. With consent this information will be shared with the college
- We need to record the success or otherwise of this initiative so once you set up your first meeting could you email hsenquiries with the subject line 'Mentoring' and insert your name and your mentors name with the month of the first meeting. We don't need to follow this up in any way after that.

## Experiences of mentoring:

**Being Mentored:** For me, having a mentor has always given me space to think about specific issues, such as career progression, work-life balance and has given me the chance to learn about the way that other people manage an academic career. Looking at someone else's career trajectory, and talking through my own ideas with someone unconnected with my day-job has helped me to focus and prioritise what I want to do, without feeling that I have to compromise what I want to say or think about it.

HS Researcher

**Being a mentor:** I have been a mentor to around 8-10 members of staff over the past 15 years. I have supported people through their transition from a ward environment to a research post; discussed promotion and job applications; talked through work-life balance issues; and given space to those who have difficulties with working relationships. I have been able to provide signposting on where to get information in and around the University and facilitated contact with others. I have always enjoyed mentoring and consider it an important part of my role.



*"I fully support this initiative to extend and systematise mentoring across the department"*

Prof Andrew Wilson  
(Head of Department)

**In order to apply for a Gold Athena SWAN award in November 2015, we need to have a mentoring system in place that is fit for purpose**

Further Information: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/academic-practice/research-development/mentoring/scheme-researchstaff> or <https://www2.le.ac.uk/colleges/medbiopsych/internal/research-staff/mentoring>

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