
Contract Research Staff mentoring scheme

The Department of Chemistry launched the Mentoring Scheme for Contract Research Staff (CRS) in March 2014. The scheme has been devised in collaboration with the Department's Post-Doc Affairs Committee (PDAC), and is fully supported by the Head of Department and Athena SWAN working group.

Under the scheme, a 'pool' of academic and senior staff have volunteered to mentor CRS across a range of work-related topics and issues including:

- help with research-related issues: project management/time management
- help with other work-related issues: people management/conflict resolution
- career development and progression: values, aspirations, training
- routes to academic and/or industry careers
- work-life balance (including "women in science" and related issues)
- provide motivation, confidence and inspiration

Mentors can also specify other work-related areas where they can help.

Contract research staff can view a list of mentors on the postdoc webpage, <http://www.ch.cam.ac.uk/pdac/mentoring> and then contact the individual mentor. Mentor profiles can be browsed through the Chemistry homepage: <http://www.ch.cam.ac.uk/staff/academic-senior-staff-az>.

When you contact your chosen mentor(s) directly – please put 'Mentoring Request' in your email title and include a sentence or two about your mentoring needs.

The scheme is not intended to replace any successful mentoring relationships where a PI recommends a suitable mentor. These should continue, and CRS can continue to seek a mentor/mentoring advice through their PI.

What should I do next?

Research shows that a mentoring relationship is much more successful if mentees can choose their mentor based on who they believe can best match their needs. Therefore, it is necessary that mentees are clear about the support they require and how their mentor can help.

Consider your mentoring requirements

These documents are considerations before contacting a mentor:

- [Introduction to mentoring](#)
- [Getting the most out of mentoring](#)

Making mentoring a positive experience for everyone

Mentors are asked to respond to **all** initial mentoring requests within one week (a holding email is fine). If they are unable to support your request, they will confirm this to you and may either advise another mentor to make contact with you or refer you to Kathleen Pickett for guidance.

Feedback on the Mentoring Scheme

In September 2014, 6 months after the launch of the scheme a questionnaire was distributed to all CRS to assess the usage and the effectiveness of the scheme. From this it was found that of the respondents 33% had taken up the scheme and that 86% of those had found it useful, however 100% said they would recommend it to a colleague.

Wondering how mentoring can work for you? Below are some of the comments made by CSR who have undertaken the scheme:

Arriving as a postdoc in Cambridge in March 2014 I read about the newly offered mentoring scheme. I got in touch with Dr. Andreas Bender, a lecturer in a field partially overlapping with mine, who agreed to become my mentor right away. Since then we have met regularly to discuss scientific and personal development issues with a focus on long term visions and perspectives. Over the past year, I have profited enormously from his external view, his contact network and could initiate very fruitful collaborations. Therefore, I can only recommend any postdoc at Chemistry to take part in the mentoring scheme.

Julian Fuchs (March 2015)

Contact:

For questions, queries, ideas, feedback or concerns about mentoring in the Department and/or the revised scheme, please contact Kathleen Pickett , Welfare, Training and Development Adviser, Email: kjp45@cam.ac.uk

