Early Career Researcher Mentoring Circle 2018

Circle Mentor Information

What is a mentoring circle?

A Mentoring Circle is a group consisting of Circle Mentors and a group of participants (Mentees) that meet to discuss professional experiences and challenges in a supportive peer group as well as with more experienced colleagues.

During 2018 the Research Staff Office is coordinating an Early Career Researcher (ECR) Mentoring Circle for early career postdoctoral research staff. Mentoring circle meetings will take place monthly and will focus on a different discussion topic each month. Mentors will be academic faculty or experienced research fellows from any discipline. Mentors will be responsible for co-leading up to two circle meetings during the year.

ECR Mentoring Circle Objectives

- To facilitate discussion in order to progress mentee potential, skill and knowledge development
- Offer the opportunity for networking across disciplines
- Help the mentee explore and plan their career
- Offer the mentee the opportunity of acquiring new knowledge and skills by understanding the mentor’s (and mentees) practical experience
- Facilitate a culture of mentoring within the University’s researcher community

Why become a circle mentor?

Previous Sussex circle mentors have indicated that being a circle mentor has provided:

- Opportunities to develop/refine their coaching/mentoring/listening/supporting skills
- New ideas or perspectives
- Resources or insights useful for their main role
- A sense of satisfaction and/or recognition

Quotes from previous Sussex circle mentors:

- “I have met interesting people from across the Campus. I have also learned about the resources that are available for post-docs and what resources need to be improved.”
- “I have become more aware of how equality and diversity issues manifest and what potentially can be done to improve them.”
- “An important role and you learn as much as you advise”
- “have increased my confidence in being able to mentor younger scientists and provide support and guidance to the younger generations”
- “developed a wider network, gained experience of different disciplines”
- “I've learned dealing and exchanging with juniors from a non-academic standpoint. Being able to show what is possible was also useful.”

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Expectations of Circle Mentors

The Circle Mentor’s key role is to listen and facilitate. Circle meetings allow the participants an opportunity to talk and share their experiences, issues, hopes and fears with other researchers.

As a circle mentor you would be expected to:

- Attend an initial 1-hour briefing meeting with the scheme manager prior to leading your first circle meeting.
- Be able to co-lead (with another mentor and a researcher development coach) up to two circle meetings of 2-hour duration during 2018. Upon registration mentors will be able to indicate preferences for the discussion topics they would wish to lead.
- Ensure mentoring circle ground rules and expectations are adhered to during the circle meeting.
- Provide a supportive and positive atmosphere that encourages individuals to share personal and honest stories and advice.
- Provide a good balance as a facilitator, bringing everyone together.
- Provide constructive feedback and when appropriate, push participants to think more deeply, address uncomfortable issues and set higher personal ambitions.
- When appropriate provide practical relevant advice/suggestions.
- Portray a realistic view of academic possibilities.
- To facilitate their ongoing development, encourage participants to identify specific personal/professional actions to work on following the mentoring circle discussions.
- As a more senior academic/researcher within the circle you will have valuable experience/knowledge/information so please share it with your circle, but you are not expected to know all the answers.

Join the 2018 Mentor Pool
To apply to join the mentor pool for the 2018 ECR mentoring circle follow the link below:

Register as a mentor

All circle mentors will need to attend a 1-hour briefing meeting the scheme manager in advance of leading their first circle meeting. This meeting will be intended to give an overview of the role of the circle mentor, clarify expectations, explore the skills required of mentoring circle leaders and discuss any questions you might have.

Further Information and contact

The scheme is managed by the Research Staff Officer, Dr Natalie James, who will be the first point of contact for any questions or issues relating to the scheme.

We thank you for your interest in the 2018 ECR mentoring circle and look forward to working with you further.

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