

Cowie Scholarship Foundation (CSF) Mentoring Scheme Guidance for Mentors and Mentees

GUIDANCE FOR MENTORS OF COWRIE SCHOLARS

1. The mentoring relationship

CSF scholars participating in the mentoring programme are each matched to a mentor. Matches are based on the information provided in the CSF mentor-mentee matching template that all mentors and mentees have completed. The mentoring relationship is expected to last for one year, though may continue beyond this time if mutually agreed by mentor and mentee. Recognising that it is beneficial to have multiple mentors, the mentors matched to the fellow as part of this programme can complement any internal mentors provided by the scholars host organisation, in addition to any others mentors they may have.

Cowie Scholarship Foundation (CSF) mentoring activities are guided by the best practice set out in the BBSRC review “Academic career mentoring and best practice for formal mentoring programmes”, as encapsulated in the UKRI Future Leader Fellows mentorship programme, which itself is an outgrowth of the BBSRC scheme [<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/skills/developing-careers/academic-mentoring/>]. We recommended all mentees and mentors read these two documents. Mentors and mentees will need to read the training materials provided by the CSF team; the training materials will include an introduction to the mentoring programme, set expectations for mentors and mentees, and outline the contracting process so that both parties are clear regarding what they want to get out of the mentoring relationship and how the relationship should progress. Please note that the mentoring relationship is a confidential one and, as part of the contracting process, pairs should establish what they each understand confidential to mean, and whether there are any topics that are out of bounds for discussion.

As a mentor you will:

- Provide general professional and personal support to the fellow and be available to answer questions and provide advice to the fellow regarding their career development. Please remember that being a mentor is not primarily an advice-giving role; giving advice is just one tool that mentors have in their role of aiding mentees to talk through their own thoughts and decisions.
- Meet the fellow for an initial ‘contracting’ meeting, organised by the mentee, and held at a location that both parties are comfortable with, whereby the contracting process is undertaken. It is recognized that in-person meetings may not always be possible; however, wherever possible we strongly encourage mentors and mentees to meet in person for this first discussion
- In addition to the contracting meeting, hold mentoring discussions with the mentee at least three further times over the year-long mentoring relationship, with one session in-person if practical and if Covid-secure.
- Be available to support the fellow throughout the academic year as agreed during the initial contracting discussion held at the contracting meeting.

2. Organisation of mentoring discussions

- The mentee is responsible for organising mentoring discussions.
- In addition to the initial face to face contracting meeting, mentors and mentees should hold at least three further mentoring discussions over the year-long mentoring relationship. It is recognised that in person meetings may not always be possible; we strongly encourage mentors and mentees to meet in person for at least one of the three further mentoring discussions and, should further meetings not be possible, to arrange the further discussions via video or teleconferencing.
- Mentors and mentees are, of course, encouraged to meet/discuss as often as is needed. Such meetings can take place at neutral locations outside of either's organisation, or can, for example, be combined with the mentee giving a talk at the mentor's organisation. Frequency of contact through other means, such as email, should be discussed as part of initial contracting discussions, and mentors should let the mentee know how much time is likely to be needed to respond to such contact.
- Travel and subsistence expenses associated with the mentoring discussions can be claimed up to a total of £500 over the course of the relationship.

3. Structure of mentoring discussions

The structure and nature of the mentoring discussions should be agreed during the initial contracting discussion, and topics for discussion should be brought to meetings by the mentee.

Topics for discussion should be mentee-driven, and the mentee should approach mentoring meetings with an agenda of topics they wish to discuss. However, it is worth keeping in mind that the support commonly sought by mentees CSF fellows includes:

- Establishing leadership
- Training and development needs
- Output strategy
- Engagement strategies, e.g., with academia, business, policy, media etc.
- Professional relationship management
- Balancing commitments
- Career progression and planning

4. Post-discussion

To help ensure an effective mentoring relationship it is recommended that after mentoring discussions, mentors and mentees provide feedback to one another about particularly useful elements of the discussions, and where additional support or communication is needed. Examples of feedback that can help improve the relationship include asking what the mentee found useful, what they are going to do before the next meeting, and what they have learned.

To help keep track of your activities as a mentor, and of the progress of the mentee, it is recommended that mentors keep some notes of the meetings regarding what was said and what actions the mentee has agreed to undertake and how actions will be followed up and, across what timeframe.

5. Ending the relationship

Recognising that mentee needs can change over the course of the year-long relationship, and that either party involved may not feel the mentoring match is working, the relationship can be brought to an end at any time by either party during the year. If this is required, please contact the CSF team [info@cowriescholarshipfoundation.org] and a new mentor will be matched to the mentee as soon as possible.

At the end of the year-long relationship, it is useful for the mentor and mentee to mutually agree on the ending of the relationship by summarising and reviewing what has been achieved and what actions, if any, remain for the mentee and mentor. Should both parties mutually agree to continue the relationship beyond the one-year, expectations should be set for the relationship moving forwards.

GUIDANCE FOR COWRIE SCHOLAR MENTEES

1. The mentoring relationship

As a CSF Scholar, you have the opportunity to be matched to two CSF mentors. Matches are based on the information provided in the CSF Mentor Matching Template that all mentors and mentees have completed. The mentoring relationship is expected to last for one year, although may continue beyond this time if mutually agreed by mentor and mentee. Recognising that it is beneficial to have multiple mentors, the mentor matched to you as part of this programme should complement any internal mentors that you may have within your host institution, and any additional mentors you may have.

As a mentee you will:

- Organise an initial 'contracting' meeting with your mentor, held at a location that both parties are comfortable with, whereby the contracting process is undertaken. It is recognized that in-person meetings may not always be possible; however, wherever possible we strongly encourage mentors and mentees to meet in-person for this first discussion, if practical and if Covid-secure
- In addition to the contracting meeting, organise mentoring discussions with your mentor at least three further times over the year-long mentoring relationship, at least one of which should be in person
- Approach your mentor for support throughout the fellowship as agreed during the initial contracting discussion
- Drive the mentoring relationship and set an agenda of topics for discussion at your mentoring meetings

2. Ending the relationship

See above, noting that you will have the opportunity to update the matching template to inform the matching process if this is necessary.

MENTORING CONTRACTING

Contracting is an important activity that can help ensure a successful mentoring relationship. As part of this process it is recommended that the points below are discussed as part of your initial discussion. Every mentoring relationship is unique and discussing these points will help you to establish how your relationship will work and progress. It is highly recommended that

you both make a note of your discussions around these points and use these as a basis to guide your future mentoring relationship and acknowledge what works for your partnership.

Confidentiality

The mentoring relationship is a confidential one. It will be therefore useful to discuss:

- What do you both understand by “confidential”?
- Are there any exceptions to this confidentiality?

Mentoring meetings

Mentoring meetings should be mentee driven. Additional general considerations are:

- Where and how often do you think your mentoring meetings will take place?
- What sort of preparation should the mentee carry out prior to the mentoring meetings?

In terms of the discussions to be held during the mentoring meetings, you should establish:

- What do each of you want to get out of the mentoring relationship?
- What are the main topics that you expect to be discussing and are there any limits to the topics you are happy to discuss?
- Is it acceptable to discuss personal issues as part of your meetings?

Consideration regarding communication between meetings may include:

- Are there limits to the availability of the mentor between meetings?
- How regularly would you like mentee-mentor contact to take place between meetings?
- What is the preferred method of communication between meetings (e.g. email, telephone, Skype, etc)?
- How long should the mentee expect responses to contact via email from the mentor to take?

Post-meeting considerations may include:

- Who will take the lead in providing post-meeting feedback?
- How soon after the meeting should feedback be expected?