
About Mentoring Programme for Young Researchers

Charles University Mentoring Programme for Young Researchers

Charles University is pleased to announce the opening of the Mentoring Programme for Young Researchers.

The mentoring programme represents a new form of career support for young researchers at Charles University through the sharing of informal practices. During the pilot cycle, twenty mentor-mentee pairs will be supported.

<p style="font-family: 'Trebuchet MS', sans-serif; font-weight: bold; font-size: 16px; color: black; text-decoration: underline;"> The call for mentees is now closed for submissions. Next call will be open in Autumn 25. </p>

Schedule of the Pilot Mentoring Cycle:

08-10/24	Call for applications to the programme - mentors - CLOSED
11-12/24	Call for applications to the programme - mentees - CLOSED
01/25	Matching mentee-mentor pairs - CLOSED
02/25 - 12/25	Mentoring meetings (approx. five meetings per year)

The mentoring programme focuses on:

1. Providing tools for the smooth career development of young researchers. It helps to effectively overcome obstacles and address dilemmas related to career direction.
2. Supporting equal opportunities and cultural and institutional change at Charles University, with an emphasis on supporting women in science and research.

Target Group

Mentees are employees of Charles University - young researchers in the early stages of their careers - Ph.D. holders with a maximum of eight years of experience in science and research, both women and men. Applicants are welcome regardless of their preferred future career in research - those aiming for habilitation as well as those planning further career steps outside of academia.

Mentors are experienced researchers with a minimum of eight years of experience in science and research after earning a Ph.D. Mentors are expected to come from Charles University, other Czech or foreign academic institutions, and non-academic sectors (companies, government institutions, non-profit organizations). Mentors from academic environments must have a permanent position (associate professor or professor). Mentors from non-academic environments will not be required to have a Ph.D. title.

Expected Benefits of the Mentoring Programme:

Benefits for Mentees

- Identifying and achieving preferred career goals through gaining informal information and access to new networks (networking).
- Informed decisions in the area of enhancing competencies to facilitate progress in the chosen career path.
- Informed decisions in balancing personal and professional life.

Benefits for Mentors

- Gaining mentoring skills and transferring them into work as a supervisor and educator.
- Adopting a supportive culture in working with young researchers.

Benefits for Charles University

- A functioning mentoring program as a proven support tool for women - young researchers in the early stages of their careers, and subsequently reducing gender segregation in middle and higher positions of university management.
- Introducing new procedures for the career development of young researchers through the sharing of experiences from experienced colleagues from Charles University and other institutions.

Content of Mentoring Meetings

Meetings must always be confidential. Mutual trust and the awareness that discussed topics and information will not be disclosed outside the pair are the foundation of successful mentoring.

The meetings should focus on the program's objectives, i.e., setting and achieving career goals, identifying the competencies needed to achieve them, and balancing personal and professional life (if relevant). At the first meeting, the mentee, in cooperation with the mentor, will set specific goals in the *Mentoring Agreement* that they want to achieve during the mentoring meetings.

Examples of discussed topics include: specifics of an academic career, the path to a permanent position, career transition to a non-academic institution, competencies needed to achieve career goals, competitiveness/conflicts within the research group, balancing personal and work life, etc.

Various forms of meetings are welcome: discussions, joint visits to professional symposiums, or networking events, etc.

Selection of Mentors

Mentors will be selected based on the applications received within the Call for Mentors. Based on the received applications, twenty mentors will be selected, ensuring a roughly equal representation of men and women, covering all major scientific disciplines (humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, medical sciences, and technical fields), and including both employees of Charles University (agents of change) and those from other academic and non-academic institutions. Emphasis will be placed on career path variability.

The list of mentors will be published on the program's website, and if necessary, potential mentors outside this list will be contacted to reflect the preferences of mentee applicants. Mentees will have the opportunity to propose their own mentor, whom the program administrator will contact. Mentors will not be financially compensated for their mentoring activities. The main benefit for mentors is acquiring new competencies through mentoring.

These competencies include: the ability to motivate and support younger colleagues, leadership skills, communication skills, the ability to see a situation from another's perspective, and creating a culture of open feedback.

A mentor should also be someone ready to share their own experiences, knowledge, and expertise; they should be empathetic, open, and supportive.

Selection of Mentees

Mentees will be selected based on the Call for Mentees. The application will consist of an application form, CV, and motivation letter. If the program administrator receives more than twenty applications, the selection will be based on the following criteria: a) gender (priority will be given to female researchers, with half of the mentee spots reserved for them), b) scientific discipline (a wide representation of disciplines across the university will be preferred), c) the applicant's motivation to participate in the program. Special consideration will be given to applications that address topics such as parenting, mobility, and non-traditional career paths.

Matching Mentee – Mentor

Matching will be based on the preferences indicated by mentees in the program application, where they can choose a mentor from the list. If no potential mentor matches the mentee's preferences, the project administrator will contact other potential mentors outside the original list. Interdisciplinary pairs of mentee-mentor will be welcomed. A specialist on equal opportunities will be involved in the matching process to ensure that the mentoring program provides the greatest benefit in the area of equal opportunities at Charles University.

Mentors and mentees must also have a "minimum professional distance." Minimum professional distance means that the mentor must not be an employee of the same department/institute as the mentee. However, experienced researchers working in a similar field at foreign universities or applicants from the private sector will be preferred as mentors to ensure the mentors' independence from the postdoc's home institution.

Detailed information for mentees and the application form for the mentoring programme will be published here in early November 2024.

If you have any questions, please contact Eva Janů at eva.janu@ruk.cuni.cz with the subject "*Mentoring Program for Young Researchers.*"

The Mentoring Program is administered by the Department for Science and Research, Rector's Office of Charles University.

Other Tools for Supporting the Career Development of Young Researchers at Charles University

The mentoring program is one of the pillars of *the Career Development Programme for Young Researchers at Charles University*. In addition to mentoring, young researchers can also take advantage of Educational opportunities according to the European Competence Framework for Researchers.

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