

Application Guidance RSB Mentoring Scheme

Purpose of the Programme

The Royal Society of Biology will be piloting a mentoring programme during 2027. The aim of this programme is to support early career members in their professional development, while building leadership and mentoring capacity in our senior professional members.

The RSB will recruit early career members to take part in the scheme as mentees and senior professional members as mentors. Mentors will provide advice and expertise for early career mentees. Mentors and mentees will be matched according to personal aims and interests expressed in the application form.

We recognise that senior professionals often lack access to traditional mentors. For this reason, mentors will also be invited to take part in reciprocal, peer-to-peer mentoring with professionals at similar career stages.

Positions will be allocated according to how well applications address the selection criteria, as those meeting the criteria are expected get the most out of the scheme. If a high number of applications are received for the scheme, the Society will also take into consideration availability of well-matched mentors, based on application forms.

Definitions

Early career - A biosciences professional* with 1-10 years' experience after their highest qualification.

Senior professional - A biosciences professional* having been in a senior or leadership role for five years or more, currently employed in the biosciences or having retired in the past two years.

**We seek diverse participants from various areas, including teaching (schools), industry, third and public sectors, academia - catering to the range of life science professions showcased within our membership. This also includes technical staff such as technicians, people working in the civil service and people that have taken varied routes throughout their career journeys. When reviewing applicants' eligibility, documented career breaks (including parental leave, adoptive leave, family care, health reasons and reasons related to COVID-19) will be taken into consideration.*

Benefits

What are the benefits of being mentored?

- Confidence building and improved performance
- Personal development: broadening horizons, experiences, skills, knowledge and ways of thinking
- Improved communication, critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Support through career changes

- Enhance and expand your professional networks

What are the benefits of becoming a mentor?

We hope this will be an enjoyable experience encompassing several of the benefits below:

- Develop mentoring skills and leadership practice
- Gain insights into the challenges faced by different people via access to diverse thinking, knowledge, perspectives and experiences
- Sense of achievement and feeling of giving something back
- Enhance and expand your professional networks
- Opportunity for self-development

Guidance for Mentees

Role Description

Mentees should own and drive the mentoring partnership. For the partnership to be productive mentees must be committed, engaged and have clear, realistic goals. The mentee is an equal and active partner during mentoring, and will take responsibility for their own learning and development.

As a mentee, you should aim to:

- Prepare for mentoring meetings in advance to make the most out of the meeting.
- Ask for support when you need it, be honest and engage in self-reflection.
- Take ownership for arranging and driving each meeting, and setting short- and long-term plans for the partnership.
- Bring challenging and relevant topics to meetings to get value from discussions.
- Be open minded and willing to try new approaches to broaden your horizons, while evaluating ideas and reaching your own decision on future actions.
- Commit to completing action plans from meetings, take accountability for your own performance.
- Provide constructive feedback to your mentor to strengthen the partnership.

Eligibility Criteria

You must:

- Reside in the UK
- Be over 18
- Be a paying associate (AMRSB) or member (MRSB) of the Royal Society of Biology

We'll review your application against the following attributes.

Essential criteria
Currently employed in the biosciences
Ability to commit time to the programme*
Willingness to take ownership of the partnership (e.g. scheduling meetings)

Clear and appropriate development goals (e.g. specific objectives)
Desirable criteria
Realistic expectations and understanding of the developmental nature of mentoring
Honest, open-minded, and willing to challenge and be challenged.

***Time commitment**

- Available from the start date of the scheme for the duration of the scheme.
- Ability to attend scheme briefing call and training event, regular meetings with mentor, and mid- and end-term review calls.
- Ability to provide feedback on the scheme as required.

Applications will also be considered on ensuring a spread of expertise, sector representation and preferences to be able to offer as wide a range of mentors as possible.

Guidance for Mentors

Role description

Overall, the intention of a mentor should be to help others to achieve their potential. This is a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship where a person voluntarily gives their time to support and encourage another. It should be power-free, supportive, not directive and mutually beneficial.

As a mentor, you should aim to:

- Assist with confidence building to help with the mentee's career development.
- Provide the opportunity and openness to develop a professional relationship.
- Share guidance, ideas and experiences of working in the biosciences.
- Be enthusiastic and encourage the mentee to make the most out of opportunities across the Society and in related networks.
- Become a sounding board for questions, listen and support mentees without judgement.
- To give honest and constructive feedback in a supportive environment, challenging assumptions, ideas and behaviours.
- Be able to direct to Society staff members who could assist with enquiries further.
- Nurture and support the enhancement of professional development.
- Maintain perspective and appropriate detachment.

The role of a mentor is **not** to:

- Provide all the answers and always have a solution to a mentee's problems.
- Tell a mentee what to do, or take responsibility for their decisions.
- Organising meetings and decide on discussion topics.
- Be a counsellor, trainer, or replace existing professional relationships (e.g. line managers).
- Be available to their mentee at all times.

Eligibility Criteria

You must:

- Reside in the UK
- Be over 18
- Be a paying member (MRSB) or Fellow (FRSB) of the Royal Society of Biology

We'll review your application against the following attributes.

Essential criteria
Experience in a senior or leadership role for five years or more, currently employed in the biosciences or having retired in the past two years.
Ability to commit time to the programme*
Strong professional conduct

Interest in supporting others
Desirable criteria
Leadership experience or previous mentoring experience
Experience across multiple sectors
Professional registration experience (e.g. Chartered Biologist)

***Time commitment**

- Available from the start date of the scheme for the duration of the scheme.
- Ability to attend scheme briefing call and training event, regular meetings with mentee, and mid- and end-term review calls.
- Ability to provide feedback on the scheme as required.

Applications will also be considered on ensuring a spread of expertise, sector representation and preferences to be able to offer as wide a range of mentors as possible.