

Mentor programme

Why do I need a mentor?

During your PhD studies, you may accumulate a number of questions and thoughts that you do not feel comfortable discussing with your supervisor, or you may simply want a second opinion or different perspective from a qualified outsider. Therefore, we suggest that you find yourself a mentor. A mentor should be a person that you can discuss your progress and your typical workday with but who does not have any direct connections to your project or supervisor. Questions that could be relevant include:

- Do I find difficulties in planning my project? Is it progressing as I hoped?
- How can I direct my PhD studies towards a particular career?
- Is there a good balance between my work and private life?
- How do I plan maternity/paternity leave?

Even though you do not think you need a mentor just yet, it can be useful to consider good candidates. You do not have to meet if the need does not arise, but it might at some point. Once the need is there, it is often more difficult to spend time and energy on finding a mentor.

How do I find my mentor?

You should find someone who is not in direct contact with your project such as a collaborator or close colleague of your supervisor. It could for instance be a previous lecturer or a colleague's supervisor. Consider of the mentor's field of expertise as well: If you do theoretical work, you might want someone who has knowledge about the everyday of a theoretician. If you, on the other hand, are doing field or lab work, you might want a mentor who can better relate to this.

When you find a suitable candidate for a mentor, simply send him/her an email with an invitation to meet with you and to discuss the possibility of a mentor/mentee relationship. Attach this document so he/she can get an idea of what the mentoring commitment entails.

When the mentor agrees

Once you have found a mentor, make sure to work out how often you will meet. You may want regular meetings, for instance every second week, or you may decide to meet only when the need arises. Points to agree on could be:

- How often do we meet?
- How long should our meetings be?
- Where do we meet?
- Is there something we should prepare before the meeting?

For the mentors

Although you are not obliged to take in any mentees, we hope that you will support this programme and thus invest some of your time in helping the PhD students. A mentor/mentee relationship is experientially beneficial for both parties.



Kind regards,
PHAUST (The PhD association at Aarhus University, Science and Technology)
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