



The African
Academy of Sciences

Effective mentoring strategies I

In developmental mentoring models, mentees are expected to be on the driving seat and autonomous in goal setting while their mentors encourage and support their learning and growth. There is no line of accountability, but both partners should learn from the mentoring relationship. The following strategies should enhance efficiency in your mentoring relationship.

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Developing mentorship goals

Enrol into The AAS Mentorship Scheme having reflected on your professional strengths and needs that will key in the mentoring relationship. On your first meeting with the mentor/mentee, agree on mentoring goals based on your needs or strengths. These should be achievable within the timeframe of the relationship. The mentoring goals can cover, but are not limited to, scientific expertise; career pathways advice; policy engagement; leadership; interdisciplinary collaboration; communication; entrepreneurship; publishing; fundraising; grant management; networking; well-being at the workplace; visibility; research management; scientific citizenship; student supervision, managing administrative duties, as well as balancing work and family life.

The mentoring agreement

A template is provided to enable you to articulate and record your mentoring goals, mode of communication, and timeframe for the mentoring relationship. This document partially formalizes the relationship and enables you to come back to reflect on your goals at different stages of your mentoring relationship. Signed Mentoring Agreements should be shared with the Mentoring Coordinators for evaluation and learning purposes.

Your first meeting

Upon matching mentors with mentees, the Mentoring Coordinator facilitates the first mentor-mentee meeting and guides you to discuss your mentoring goals and outline them in the Mentoring Agreement. Because the first meeting is virtual, you are advised to prepare in advance a life story, a book, or event, that impacted you and that reflects your values and purpose. This will enable you connect with your mentoring partner. You should also discuss your preferred modes of communication, ground rules, preferred names, and time management, among other essentials you may find necessary.

Structuring mentoring sessions

It is the responsibility of the mentee to share the agenda for each mentoring session at least 24 hours in advance, and summary notes after each mentoring session. Both parties should agree on how to structure the sessions for instance, allocating time for providing updates, reflecting on progress, asking questions, assessing progress towards achieving mentoring goals, and discussing emerging opportunities for the mentee and mentor.



Effective relationships

A successful mentoring relationship depends on establishing and nurturing friendly, encouraging and supportive mentor-mentee interactions. Effective mentoring relationships should be characterized by:

- 1) Mentees and mentors establishing clear expectations and commitments and expressing these to each other;
- 2) Mentees structuring and initiating meetings in a manner that is mutually beneficial;
- 3) Mentors listening to mentees and providing an accepting and safe environment where mentees can reflect on the opportunities and challenges in their chosen career pathways;
- 4) Mentors guiding the mentees on the broader contextualisation of their career goals and broadening their perspectives on their career pathways;
- 5) Mentors advising mentees by sharing their understanding and experiences of challenges in their careers and practical approaches to achieve positive results;
- 6) Mentees learning from mentors how to handle certain career and social situations such as how to analyse options, make decisions, and translate lessons from different situations;
- 7) Mentors enabling mentees to increase their visibility, expand networks, and enhance exposure to different situations by inviting them to various events and/or introducing them to key people in their fields;
- 8) Mentors asking key questions to support the mentee to develop their problem solving and creative thinking skills and to be resilient and independent;
- 10) Mentors being generous with tools, approaches, and opportunities that support mentees to learn.

Visit <https://www.aasciences.ac.ke/mentorship-scheme> to find out more
or email mentoring@aasciences.ac.ke

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No. 8 Miotoni Lane, Karen | P.O. Box 24916 – 00502 Nairobi, Kenya | Tel: +254 20 896 0674/5



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