



Mentoring within the Research Councils Individual Merit Promotion Scheme (IMP)

The Individual Merit Promotion (IMP) scheme is the main route for senior scientific researchers, who have made, and who will continue to make, an outstanding personal contribution in their field, to gain promotion.

The Research Councils and other participating organisations are invited to make nominations annually for individual merit promotion. The scheme is currently administered by NERC.

The aim of the mentoring scheme is to enable current IMP scientists to encourage and support those who are considering going for IMP within the next few years as well as those who consider it to be within their future career path. This scheme is only eligible to those people.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring has proved to be an effective learning approach and is built on a series of one-to-one meetings between the mentor and mentee. Mentoring focuses on developing capability by working with the mentee, helping them to identify and achieve goals and realise their potential. The role of the mentor is to listen, encourage the mentee to ask themselves appropriate questions and to give advice and guidance when it is appropriate. It is important to remember that the flow of learning in a mentoring relationship is two-way, and the mentor often gains as much as the mentee.

How do I find a mentor?

The IMP mentors are volunteers from within the IMP network. These mentors will have either IMP 2 or 3 status. We have a variety of people from different scientific fields and from each of the participating organisations. Each mentor has a personal profile on the NERC IMP webpages. From here you can contact them directly. Should a mentor reach capacity point where they cannot meet the demands of any additional mentees then they will be removed temporarily from this list. Unlike other internal mentoring schemes, matching of mentors and mentees are not done centrally.

All details on the mentoring scheme can be found here:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/skills/careers/imp/>

The mentoring scheme coordinator is Alexia Seller (aleak@nerc.ac.uk). If you need any more details or have any questions then please feel free to contact her. Alexia will keep on contact with both the mentees and mentors to review how things are going.

What are the benefits to the mentee?

Mentors can help your development and open up wider possibilities and benefits. These may include:

- Having access to a role model
- Practical advice, including identifying goals and being supported while working towards achieving these goals.
- Putting feedback into context and deciding how to deal with it
- Developing greater confidence
- Gaining insight into life further up the career ladder
- Being able to benefit from someone else's experience.

What are the benefits to the mentor?

- Satisfaction gained from seeing positive outcomes for the next generation of researchers
- Greater understanding of the research undertaken by different organisations
- Appreciation of the environment and challenges being experienced by junior researchers

Frequently asked questions

Should I select a mentor at my own organisation/Centre?

Not necessarily. A mentoring partnership can work where ever you are. Research has shown that being based in different locations is not detrimental to the quality of a mentoring partnership. It's whatever works best for you.

What is the difference between the roles of a line manager and mentor?

Whilst there are certain shared roles in development, the line manager is generally involved in setting goals, building relationships within a team, stretching performance and providing feedback. The mentor provides offline support and can help the mentee develop insights into their performance, manage career and personal goals, challenge their thinking and assumptions and help them accept feedback constructively.

How often should I meet with my mentor?

Ideally, for the partnership to work, we would suggest meeting quarterly. This would be something you would discuss at your first meeting. It is important to set something in place early on so both mentor and mentee know what the commitment is.

What should I expect from my first meeting?

- To set the expectations and boundaries
- Clarify confidentiality
- Set objectives for mentoring – on both side