

2021-2022 Future Faculty Mentorship Program for an Academic Career

Introduction

Future Faculty is pleased to present our plan for the 2021-2022 mentorship program for early career researchers that are actively motivated to pursue a career in academia. The aim of this mentorship program is to give early career academics (ECAs) the opportunity to get personal and relevant support and guidance essential to their academic career. The program will encourage ECAs to enhance their skills and experience needed for individual development and a successful career in academia.

The mentorship program is open to all researchers at the stages of postdocs to young PIs within the Faculty of Medicine. To be eligible to participate as a mentee in the mentorship program, the applicant must have a doctoral degree (PhD), be a member of Future Faculty (or eligible to become a member) and intend to be affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine for the duration of the whole program.

The mentors for this program will also be researchers affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine and will be matched to each mentee based on questionnaires and their overall suitability. For a researcher to participate in the program as a mentor, the researcher should be (or be in the process of becoming) a docent and intend to be affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine for the duration of the whole program. Finally, mentors should advocate Future Faculty values and uphold academic integrity, which includes honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

Program outline

The 2021-2022 program will accept up to 20 mentees who have been selected according to clear eligibility and selection criteria. These mentees will be matched to suitable mentors chosen from researchers within the Faculty of Medicine.

The program will be launched in September 2021 with a ‘Kick-off meeting’ involving both mentees and mentors to be hosted by the mentorship company, KMP+ House of Mentoring ApS (www.house-of-mentoring.com). The participants will meet with their counterpart regularly after this event. This will be followed by an informal networking event for all participants around November 2021. There will then be a half-time workshop event February 2022 and finally concluding with a ‘Thank you’ event in May/June 2022. The participants are expected to meet with their mentee/mentor at least six times during the program. Mentees will also be encouraged to participate in a career events and seminars organised by Future Faculty and the Careers Centre.

2021 Program timeline:

February 2021

- Open applications for mentees
- Recruitment of mentors

April 2021

- Applications close

May 2021

- Reviewing period for mentees
- Selected mentees will be notified

June 2020

- Matching of mentees to mentors

September 2021

- Kick-off meeting (hosted by KMP+)
 - Separate workshops for mentors and mentees
 - Introduction of the program
 - Prepare to get the most from the program

November 2021

- Informal networking event with mentees and mentors
- Some mentors to share their career stories

February 2022

- Half time workshop
 - Interactive group session, e.g. career plan

June 2022

- Wrap-up event
 - Both mentors and mentees

Mentees

The aim of this program is to benefit early career academics within the Faculty of Medicine and to provide them with personal and relevant support and guidance essential to their academic career. A mentee's role within this program is to organise meetings with their mentor and to make the most of the program.

To be eligible to participate in the mentorship program, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

1. Has a PhD
2. Is a member of Future Faculty (or eligible to become a member)
3. Intend to be a part of the Faculty of Medicine for the duration of the program
4. Be fully committed and motivated to complete the program
5. Has submitted a complete application

Application process

The application to participate in the program as a mentee will consist of a questionnaire, a short motivation and a short curriculum vitae (CV). This is in order to assess whether the applicant is in a position to benefit from the program and to make the best possible match to a mentor. The applicant must also perform the Individual Development Plan (IDP) self-assessment questionnaire (link below) developed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) and reflect upon the result within the motivation. For the application to be considered all parts must be completed.

Application form for mentees

Basic information:

1. Name
2. Department
3. Area of research (multiple choices: clinical, preclinical, other (please specify))
4. Field of research (e.g. cancer, diabetes, etc)
5. PhD date
6. Deductible time
7. Institution and location of PhD
8. Current position
9. How long have you held this position?
10. Sex (male/female/ rather not specify)

Questionnaire:

11. Do you prefer a mentor from your research field? (yes, no, doesn't matter)
12. Do you prefer preclinical researcher or clinical researcher as a mentor?
13. Would you prefer a mentor at a specific career stage? (For example: BUL, UL, Docent, Professor, etc.)
14. Do you have a preferred language for the mentoring sessions (Swedish or English or Either)?
15. Do you have any suggestions for potential mentors?
16. Is there anyone you would like to exclude as a mentor?
17. Do you have any specific desires for your mentor such as experience or particular topics you would like to discuss?

Motivation (approximately 500 words):

- Commitment: What is your motivation to participate?
- Reflection on self-assessment results:
 - What steps have you already taken to achieve your career goals?
 - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Expectations: What do you hope to achieve with the program and your mentor?

Self-assessment questionnaire; <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

Reviewing process

A panel of reviewers will perform the reviewing process of mentee applicants. The reviewers will receive the complete list of candidates prior to evaluation to eliminate any conflict of interest. Each application will be blinded and assessed by at least two members of the panel. The panel will then come together to decide on the final accepted participants.

The applicant will be evaluated based on the motivation and CV. An evaluation matrix will be used to grade the different components of the motivation and the CV (see Appendix 1).

Following criteria need to be considered when evaluating the applicant:

1. To what extent does the motivation demonstrate commitment for participating in the program?
2. To what extent does the motivation demonstrate a clear purpose for participating in the program (knowledge of strengths and weaknesses, awareness of skills needed)?
3. To what extent does the candidate express vision, goals and steps already taken?
4. How likely is it that the applicant will benefit from the mentoring program?
5. Has the applicant done the online self-assessment and does the motivation contain a reflection on how the results align with and influence their career plan?
6. To what extent do the contents of the CV (diversity and amount of activity) indicate that the applicant is actively pursuing an academic career?

Mentors

A good mentor during the early stages of an academic career can be invaluable; this makes the mentor's role a vital part of this program. It is therefore important that a mentor be committed to helping the mentee through their current career stage by offering relevant advice and networking.

To be eligible to be a mentor in the program, a researcher must meet the following criteria;

- Has an active career in academia at Lund University or is affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine,
- Is or is close to becoming a Docent,
- Can fully commit to the program; therefore be available for personal meetings during the whole program (minimum six meetings),
- Must advocate Future Faculty values and to uphold academic integrity which includes; honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

Mentor recruitment process

An open invitation will be sent out by Future Faculty steering board for recruitment of mentors to the program. Potential mentors that express their interest in the program or are nominated by others will be evaluated before they are added to the pool of mentors. Nominated mentors must give their consent to be involved in the mentorship program before any evaluation takes place. To participate in the program, eligible potential mentors must complete a simple registration form and send a short CV.

Mentors that participate in the program (matched with a mentee) will have their contribution to the program recognized by a certificate signed by the Dean (or Vice-dean). It is important to note that application and selection to the pool of mentors does not guarantee participation if a mentee is not matched to the applicant. Unmatched mentors will be considered for following years.

Application form for mentors

Basic information:

1. Name
2. Department
3. Area of research (multiple choices: clinical, preclinical, other (please specify))
4. Field of research (cancer, diabetes, other (please specify) etc)
5. PhD date
6. Institution and location of PhD
7. Current position
8. How long have you held this position?
9. Sex (male/female, rather not specify)

Questionnaire:

1. Do you prefer a mentee from your research field? (yes, no, doesn't matter)
2. Do you prefer a preclinical researcher or clinical researcher?
3. Would you prefer a mentee at a specific career stage? (For example: early postdoc, late postdoc, or early PI)
4. Do you have a preferred language for the mentoring sessions (Swedish or English or either)?

Mentee/Mentor matching

Mentees will be matched with mentors based on answers from the questionnaires and their overall suitability. There should be no conflict of interest between the mentor and mentee.

Specifics that are considered when performing the matching:

- No conflict of interest (i.e. No co-authorship or collaboration between the research groups they are affiliated with)
- Research field
- Preferred language
- Career steps
- Clinical vs preclinical researcher

Matching process

1. Mentorship task force will together match potential mentors to each mentee based on questionnaires and motivations given in applications. Before the meeting, everyone will have already read the information on all the mentees, mentor's information will be divided amongst the task force members.
2. Mentee will be informed of choice of mentor and asked to approve or reject the choice of mentor. If the mentee chooses to reject, the mentee will be re-matched.
3. Once a mentor is accepted, the mentor will be notified of the match and asked to accept or reject the mentee.

Matching follow-up

To maximise the benefit the program for all participants, it is important that the mentees have the opportunity to request a new mentor. Mentees will be encouraged to organise the initial meeting during the Kick-off event to occur within the first month of the program to establish if the matching is suitable. During this time, program organisers will be available for contact to sort out any problems. If re-matching is necessary, a new mentor will be chosen from the unmatched mentor applicants.

Mentee/Mentor meetings

Mentor and mentee should meet a minimum of six times during the program and preferably once a month. The mentee is responsible for organising all meetings with the mentor. The mentor and mentee should design the outlay of the meetings together. However, it is important to set the ground rules between the mentor and mentee early. Expectations and goals with the mentorship program should be established during the first meeting.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Matrix for reviewing of mentee applicants

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Commitment	Applicant has clearly demonstrated that they will be fully committed to the program in terms of time and active participation/engagement.	Applicant has demonstrated that they will be committed to the program in terms of time and active participation.	Applicant has demonstrated that they are prepared to commit only the minimum necessary time and participation to the program.	Applicant does not appear to be prepared to commit necessary time and participation to complete the program.
Motivation	The applicant's motivation demonstrates a clear purpose for participating in the program (awareness of strengths and weaknesses, awareness of skills needed).	The applicant's motivation demonstrates purpose for participating in the program and an awareness of some strengths and weaknesses, and skills needed.	The applicant's motivation demonstrates a desire to participate in the program but little awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and skills needed.	The applicant's motivation does not demonstrate clear purpose to participate in the program and have no awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and skills needed.
Benefit	The applicant expresses vision, clear goals and has already taken steps to reach these. This demonstrates that the candidate is in a position to benefit from the program.	The applicant has vision, clear goals and has taken some steps to achieve them. The candidate will likely benefit from the program.	The applicant has goals for the future but has taken few steps to achieve them. The candidate will have limited benefit from the program.	The applicant does not express and vision or goals for their future. This suggests that the program will not be of benefit to the candidate.
Self-reflection	The applicant has completed a self-assessment and has reflected on how the results align with and impact their career plan.	The applicant completed a self-assessment and did a shallow reflection of their career and how the mentorship program can benefit them.	Applicant completed a self-assessment but failed to reflect upon the results.	The applicant did not complete a self-assessment.
CV	The applicant's CV shows consistent progress and contains a diversity and amount of activity that reflects a high level of initiative.	The applicant's CV shows recent progress towards goals and contains enough diversity to demonstrate initiative outside of publications.	The applicant's CV shows general progress towards goals but limited diversity suggesting little activity outside of publications.	The applicant's CV demonstrates very limited progress outside of publications.