

# Career Coaching & Mentoring for Researchers

**EURAXESS TOP IV Net-wide training**  
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HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

# Signs that career coaching may be helpful:

- I'm unhappy in my job
- I need the pay check
- I'd like a raise
- All I do is work
- Career/personal life crossroad
- I apply for new positions but never get them
- I'm not fulfilled by my job anymore
- I feel out of touch
- I have too many interests and can't make decisions
- I'm in over my head!
- I don't get along with my team

# Common areas requiring support:

1. Personal development and individual growth
2. Educational development
3. Career planning
4. Skills development
5. Team dynamics

# Types of mentoring

- Classical mentoring (one-to-one)
- Group mentoring (one mentor-to-many mentees)
- Multiple mentoring (many mentors-to-one mentee)
- Team mentoring/Mentor circles (many-to-many)
- Peer mentoring (peer-to-peer)
- Reverse mentoring (junior level to senior level)
- Triad mentoring (one-to-two; two-to-one)
- e-mentoring (online)

# Campus case study

**Rabbe Hedengren**

Career and Leadership in Academia

Uppsala University – Division for Quality Enhancement

For questions, please contact [Rabbe.Hedengren@uadm.uu.se](mailto:Rabbe.Hedengren@uadm.uu.se)



## Envelope Activity: Recommendations, ideas, suggestions

- Pass each envelope around and give groups 5 minutes to list as many answers to each question.
- One question per envelope, one answer per notecard and as many answers per question as possible.
- Once each group has answered each question, have them summarize the findings (one question per group).
- Each group should highlight their top 2-3 suggestions from the findings.

# Q1: What recommendations do you have for a researcher who is looking for help to address conflict?

- Timing is key!
  - Understand the situation.
  - Acknowledge that there is a problem.
  - Take time to reflect on the situation before addressing it.
  - Organize in person meetings, be aware of biases.
- Discussion
  - Talk to the person directly whenever possible – open dialogue.
  - Include Human Resources as needed or a mentor/supervisor.
  - Third-party support: Ethics Commission, department chair, mediator, professional counsellor.
  - Use institutional mediation or conflict resolution resources.
- Actions
  - Educate yourself on institutional policies and guidelines.
  - Training: individual training and training on global strategies/policies.
  - What institutional tools are available for use?
- Communication
  - Listen to all parties; be aware of cultural or language norms.
  - What is the root problem? Is there an underlying issue? Is the conflict of a personal or professional nature?

## Q2: What recommendations do you have for a researcher who is looking to increase their profile visibility and expand their professional network?

- **Proactive Attitude**
  - Create events and opportunities to share your research and information about your career.
  - Be curious.
  - Stay up to date with news and topics in your field.
  - Connect with national and international researchers in your field.
  - Search for recommendations and successful examples.
- **Networking**
  - Attend events in your field and areas of interest to broaden your scope.
  - Ask colleagues for event suggestions (especially international events).
  - Explore funding options for mobility opportunities.
  - Alumni networks and professional association membership.
- **Social Media**
  - Ensure your social media and online profiles are up-to-date and relevant.
  - Register a profile on Euraxess and Horizon portals 😊
  - Increase the number of keywords explaining your scientific topic.
- **Self-Assessment**
  - What are your intrinsic motivations?
  - Participate in a seminar to improve your networking skills.
  - Ask for feedback and recommendations from colleagues and mentors.



## Q3: What recommendations do you have for a researcher who is overwhelmed with work and trying to establish a better work-life balance?

- Ask for support
  - Take time off, use flex hours and vacation time.
  - Seek support from colleagues, supervisor, mentor, medical and psychological support.
  - Set a goal/action plan for what a better balance looks like.
- Training/ Seminars (Professional Development)
  - Attend a professional development seminar on time/task management.
  - Educate academic leaders/managers to better support their staff.
  - Stress-management seminars for doctoral students.
- Time Management (Personal & Professional)
  - Assess the time you have and how you use it (work habits, productivity, etc.).
  - Use professional software and online tools to increase productivity (calendars, emails).
  - Timesheet activity: track activities for a period of time to get a realistic understanding of how you spend your time and your commitments.
- Priority Management
  - Delegate more and learn to say no!
  - Assess why there is a lack of time (personality, organization, priorities, delegation).

# Q4: What recommendations do you have for a researcher who is leading a team for the first time?

- Expectation Management
  - Clearly, realistically and honestly define your expectations for yourself and your team.
  - Learn about group dynamics and what motivates people .
  - Get to know the strengths and weaknesses of your team members and get to know them as people, not just employees.
  - Define and communicate your goals for the team, be aware that not everyone may see things as you do.
- Good Practices
  - Ask senior colleagues for best practices and support.
  - Think twice and take your time.
  - Be courageous or at least act courageously!
  - Hear, listen, learn, be patient, be empathetic but be decisive.
  - Remember you are not alone even if you feel that way.
  - Build an atmosphere of trust and openness among team members- remember *you* set the tone.
  - Allow for feedback and individual approaches to work.
  - Ask “What do you need?”
  - Be a leader, not just a boss: your objectives are the team’s objectives.
  - Be prepared and ask for assistance, don’t invent answers.
  - Establish regular meetings.
- Institutional Resources/ Training & Tools
  - Attend a leadership class and develop your skills.
  - Build upon previous leadership experiences in other settings.
  - Institutional support for administration and finances.
  - Develop a support system of colleagues outside of your immediate team (for example with Euraxess colleagues).



# Introductory meeting

- Have the mentee come prepared with some ideas/goals
- Ask them to explain their ideas/goals in detail
- Prioritize goals
- Set a timeline – be specific but flexible!
- Set the tone from the very beginning...consider a contract
- **Know your institutional rules and regulations!**

# Contracts and agreements

1. What do we want to accomplish? List goals.
2. How will we accomplish this goal?
3. How will we communicate?
4. Both parties should sign and agree to the terms.

# Weekly/Monthly Journal Log

Mary Mentee	Log progress
Goals I have achieved this month:	
Goals for next month:	
Things I need to improve:	Time management, assertiveness
Things I need help with:	Building a daily calendar, learning how to submit an online journal, creating a chart in excel, etc
Decisions I made this month:	
Unfinished business:	





Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-Bound
<p>Make sure your goals are focused and identify a tangible outcome. Without the specifics, your goal runs the risk of being too vague to achieve. Being more specific helps you identify what you want to achieve. You should also identify what resources you are going to leverage to achieve success.</p>	<p>You should have some clear definition of success. This will help you to evaluate achievement and also progress. This component often answers how much or how many and highlights how you'll know you achieved your goal.</p>	<p>Your goal should be challenging, but still reasonable to achieve. Reflecting on this component can reveal any potential barriers that you may need to overcome to realize success. Outline the steps you're planning to take to achieve your goal.</p>	<p>This is about getting real with yourself and ensuring what you're trying to achieve is worthwhile to you. Determining if this is aligned to your values and if it is a priority focus for you. This helps you answer the why.</p>	<p>Every goal needs a target date, something that motivates you to really apply the focus and discipline necessary to achieve it. This answers when. It's important to set a realistic time frame to achieve your goal to ensure you don't get discouraged.</p>



## Activity: Scenarios





Read your assigned scenario and pretend you are the coach or mentor in the situation.  
Create an action plan for a researcher using SMART goals when possible.

<b>SPECIFIC</b>	
<b>MEASURABLE</b>	
<b>ATTAINABLE</b>	
<b>RELEVANT</b>	
<b>TIMELY</b>	

# Career Coaching & Mentorship Scenarios

1. An early career researcher has failed to be awarded a fellowship for the third time. Without a fellowship he won't have any funding and he will not be able to continue his research. His morale is low and he is very discouraged. He comes to you looking for advice and wants to develop a plan. What do you do?
2. A researcher comes to you looking for guidance on team dynamics. There are three researchers in her unit (of which she is one) and the supervisor is rarely in the lab as he is very preoccupied with other work. The researcher is coming to you because she doesn't get along with the other 2 members of the team and is concerned that she has been producing more results and working more hours than the others, but because the supervisor has a long history with one of the other researchers, she doesn't get any credit for the work she has done. How can you help her?
3. An early career researcher comes to you because she is stressed. She is teaching 20 hours a week and working in the lab approximately 40 hours a week. She feels pressured by her department chair to produce a minimum of 1 new article every quarter if she wants to be considered for a permanent position. Her work-life balance is off and she is suffering from lack of sleep and appetite. What do you suggest?

# Career Coaching & Mentorship Scenarios

4. A young professor comes to you concerned about the team dynamics in his lab. He is younger than several of the lab members who publicly disrespect him. He wants to ensure that everyone on the team is happy and enjoys their job, so he hasn't approached them, but he is concerned that they are becoming more vocal when they don't agree with a decision that he has made. He was so happy when he was appointed head of the lab but now he wants to quit. How can you help him?
5. A young PhD candidate tells you about their research project but confides in you that over the past year they have found other areas of research more interesting. They keep thinking that if they simply focus on their initial project, they will eventually find something exciting but they aren't sure how to proceed. What do you suggest?
6. A male supervisor comes to you looking for advice on how to handle an international PhD candidate in his lab. The female candidate rarely offers her opinion in meetings and never makes eye contact with the supervisor (because he is male), but when fellow female colleagues solicit her input, she offers high quality and intelligent work. The supervisor wants the candidate to be more vocal and more at ease with him and with the mixed gender team. What do you suggest?

# Career Coaching & Mentorship Scenarios

7. A young researcher comes to you looking to ameliorate her working relationship with her supervisor who is very unresponsive. The supervisor rarely responds to her emails and takes weeks to review her articles. Due to his lack of response, she is falling behind in her thesis and is concerned that she will run out of funding. She is also extremely frustrated. How can you help her?
8. A young researcher comes you because he is highly discouraged. For the past 6 months, all of his lab experiments have failed. He is quickly losing motivation for his research and feels isolated with little support from his lab mates. He is considering a change. What do you suggest he do?

# Career Coaching & Mentorship Scenarios

9. A researcher comes to you with concerns about the lack of communication within his lab. When he corresponded with his supervisor before arriving at the French university, all conversations occurred in English. The researcher does not speak French but assumed that English was commonly used within the lab. However his lab mates do not speak a lot of English and often converse in French. He is feeling isolated within the lab and resents that the supervisor isn't around more to engage with him in English. How do you suggest he proceed?
10. A permanent professor with a long tenure at the university comes to you looking for ideas to support his growing research team. Recently several of his researchers moved on to new positions at other institutions and he had to hire new younger researchers as replacements. He is frustrated by their entitled attitudes and their desire to be recognized for every piece of work they complete. He does not approve of their work ethic nor their desire to publish every aspect of their life on social media. He cannot fire them because his research team has already undergone a lot of change and he is concerned about his professional reputation. What do you suggest he do?





# Building a team of mentors and coaches

- Identify potential candidates within your institution
- Cast a wide net and develop a deep pool
- Provide training
- Mentor buddy
- Regular follow up
- Annual training & resources renewal
- Celebrate

# Tips from the field...

- Internationalization
  - Specific needs: cultural integration, on-boarding
  - Opportunities for international student mentor programmes (pros & cons)
- Ensure supervisors are supportive of their PhD candidates receiving coaching and normalize the process within your institutional
  - Identify key stakeholders
- Coaching and mentoring is necessary at every level of your institution



# Thank you!

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