

Luxembourg Charter on Mentorship in Academia

Preamble

Mentoring is one of the fundamental aspects in building and driving a positive and inclusive research culture, contributing to the development and growth of a responsible and diverse group of researchers who contribute to research with impact. With mentorship, the focus should be on the support and growth of people, enabling them to reach their maximum potential, no matter their career stage. This charter aims to define the baseline characteristics of quality for a mentor in research, highlighting common values of high-quality mentorship that should be the foundation of mentorship in the Luxembourgish research ecosystem.

Differences between a mentor and a supervisor

Supervision is not the same as mentorship, but a supervisor should integrate aspects of good mentorship into their activities and relationships with the individuals being supervised. A supervisor plays an active role in the overall organization, management, and success of a research project or group, while a mentor focuses on developing people within and beyond the academic context.

Expected impact

Mentors can use this charter to:

- Evaluate and expand on their existing mentoring qualities
- Reflect upon their mentorship style
- Compare existing styles of mentorship
- Share these values with their mentees
- Discuss about the importance of given values among colleagues and potential future mentors

Mentees can use this charter to:

- See the benefits of having a mentor, and decide on the qualities important to them
- Better define and create clear expectations around a mentor-mentee relationship

Institutions can use this charter to:

- Develop and implement initiatives promoting mentorship as key ingredient for high-quality research and career development
- Identify and support good mentors already existing in their institutions
- Brief new mentors about expected values

This charter will be rediscussed on an annual basis, including examples of best practices from the different signatories in annex, to create a living resource for mentorship in Luxembourg. This will drive an attractive research ecosystem in Luxembourg and beyond through instilling good mentorship as one of the fundamental pillars of high-quality research.



Values and competences of a good mentor

A mentor embodies an ideal balance of both professional and human values. While the following are considered baseline qualities for good mentorship, there is great diversity and creativity in quality mentorship. This list represents a selection of guiding principles, which can be adapted upon for different scenarios of mentorship, and there are many more that can be found in good mentors.

A mentor acts with **integrity**. They know their values, stay true to them, and pass them on to others as an ethical baseline that should be followed.

A mentor is **respectful**. They treat mentees as equals and allow space for different opinions.

A mentor listens first but is also **proactive**. They can identify those who need extra care and make themselves available for support.

A mentor is **accessible and selfless**. They are generous with time and advice and make others comfortable to ask any type of question, with no expectation of a return for their assistance.

A mentor provides **support with encouragement and enthusiasm**. They create a safe atmosphere for others, empowering them to do their best and supporting them during easy and difficult times.

A mentor is **empathetic and shows compassion**. They understand the needs of others, both professional and personal. They have the ability to listen, be aware of what is said or cannot be said, provide a platform for openness and discussion, and adapt their mentorship style to different personalities.

A mentor fosters **inclusivity and diversity**. They strive to ensure that different backgrounds, cultures, points of view, disciplines, and other differences inherent in individuals are addressed in an equitable way.

A mentor is a source of **inspiration to others**. They are an example and role model to look up to, in both words and actions, to inspire their mentees.

A mentor supports the **professional development** of their mentees, often using their own professional networks and experience to expand career opportunities available.

A mentor **encourages a critical and forward-thinking view on different aspects of research including its role in society**. They foster a diverse skillset to promote a broad set of research outcomes and career opportunities for mentees.

A mentor **builds relationships based on honesty and trust**. Through this, an open communication around needs and expectations on both sides is promoted. They can both give and receive feedback in a constructive manner.

A mentor **challenges themselves to develop their mentorship further**. They can both adapt to and learn from changes in their mentoring relationships, re-evaluating their own preconceptions and learning from those they mentor.



Annex: Action plan for Mentorship in Luxembourg

The following initiatives are either currently ongoing in Luxembourg, or planned to be for the near or mid-term:

Existing and ongoing initiatives

- ADVANCE – mentoring programme to support career development of researchers and promote gender equality
 - o Two main strands for different target groups: fellows and Faculty
 - o Different mentoring formats: 1-2-1, group and peer mentoring, with internal and external mentors
- [Euraxess 2getthere](#) – career placement/mentorship for “next steps” out of academia
- [FNR Award for Outstanding Mentor](#) – Scientific mentorship, Anonymized evaluation. Distinct from supervisor (mentor is above/beyond supervisor)
- Student Success Mentoring Programme, Inclusion Office (SEVE), University of Luxembourg. Support for students from under-represented groups.
- Training for ADR (*Autorisation à Diriger des Recherches* - Doctoral supervision rights) holders
 - o Developing the skills and competences of supervisors, integrating aspects of good mentoring
- Venture Mentoring Program (VMS) from the Incubator of the University of Luxembourg

Upcoming initiatives

- Mentorship and coaching at LIST – In 2021 LIST put available a tool of all employees to define their own personal development plan (PDP) and trained a group of employees to play the role of coaches. Nevertheless, researchers expressed that they rather needed a mentor to better define their PDP. In this line, the HR Dept. would like to deploy a mentorship programme starting with the identification of mentors (internal or external).
- Research Culture Seed Funding call – The Working Group on Research Culture will launch a funding scheme, run by the FNR, on fostering implementation of cross-institutional mentoring and career development initiatives.

Cross-cutting and alignment initiatives

- The Working Group for Research Culture will support the coordination of mentorship activities across Luxembourgish research institutions, through the creation of a Task Force on Mentorship, with the aims of:
 - o Alignment on and sharing of best practices and learnings between the institutions
 - o Ongoing landscape mapping of all ongoing and upcoming activities
 - o Developing common practices and unified resources for all institutions

