

ECSS MENTORING PROGRAMME



2025

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Introduction

The goal of the Mentoring Programme within the European College of Sport Science (ECSS) is to assist Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in developing their professional career. Hereby, the focus of the Mentoring Programme is giving ECRs the opportunity to discuss various issues and challenges they are facing. The discussions are not intended to include advice on the ECR's scientific qualification process (e.g., Masters or Doctoral project/thesis), as the person acting as mentor is not part of the ECR's qualification and final evaluation process.

The purpose of this mentoring relationship is that a more experienced person functions as mentor to a less experienced person, called mentee. However, both the mentor and mentee benefit from the relationship by reflecting upon one's own career pathway, gaining insights into new challenges and developing new ideas and networks.

In the following, the application procedure is outlined and recommendations are provided on how to develop and facilitate the mentoring contacts.

How to apply for a mentoring contact?

ECRs who wish to be part of the ECSS Mentoring Programme should send their application via email to the mentoring@sport-science.org **no later than 30 January** to start the Mentoring Programme at the ECSS Annual Congress of the respective year.

ECRs should outline in their application the following points:

- **Curriculum Vitae:** To receive a short overview of the mentee's career and qualifications.
- **Motivation:** Why do I want to be part of the Mentoring Programme?
- **Topics to be addressed:** What do I want to discuss with my mentor?
- **Goals to be achieved:** Which goals do I want to achieve within the Mentoring Programme?
- **Names of preferred mentors (optional):** Senior ECSS members, including ECSS Fellows.

However, there is no guarantee that the preferred mentor will agree to take over the mentor role. Also, the mentor is not required to be an ECSS Fellow, but must be a member of the ECSS. The mentor will be a more experienced individual than the mentee – they could be working at any level of employment (in academic, industry, etc.).

The ECSS Executive Board member in charge of the Mentoring Programme will contact the preferred mentors and/or other potential mentors based on the information provided in the mentee's application. After the mentor accepts the invitation, mentees will receive contact details from the Executive Board member to arrange the initial contact.

Which topics could be addressed within the mentorship?

We ask you to use your own initiative to find topics that are relevant to you over the 18 to 24 months of the Mentoring Programme. There are no limits to your creativity here.

The supervision of the mentees' qualification theses is deliberately reserved for their supervisors (e.g., doctoral supervisor). As such, this is not a task of the Mentoring Programme.

Example topic suggestions could be (please add or change topics according to your needs):

- Building an (inter)national network.
- Publication strategies: Are there publication strategies that I can consider early on for my research work?
- Profile development in sport science: How do I sharpen my profile in the field of sport science?
- Reconciling an academic career / qualifications and family life.
- Complex demands in the academic system: From the acquisition of third-party funding to the possible pressure to publish – how do I learn to deal with this?
- Conflict management: How do I solve difficult situations?
- Career planning: What opportunities are there within and outside academia besides the traditional university career path?

When does the Mentoring Programme start?

At the ECSS Annual Congress, there will be a tandem kick-off meeting. After a short welcome and presentation of the general guidelines, mentees and mentors will get the time to discuss and fill in their working agreement. If the mentor or mentee cannot participate at the Congress, they should find an individual date and time for starting the mentorship and filling in the working agreement.

The Mentoring Programme has a clear time frame and therefore a fixed start and end date (commonly 18 to 24 months; exact time frame to be decided between the mentee and mentor). If both individuals wish to continue the mentorship beyond this timespan, it is up to the mentor and mentee to define the relationship.



How to start the mentorship?

Checklist for the initial meeting (at the kick-off meeting)

Clarify expectations: What do you both expect from participating in the Mentoring Programme? What do both expect from each other (topics, behaviour, initiative, punctuality, reliability, etc.)? How can any dissatisfaction that may arise be addressed?

Define the framework conditions: How often, via which channels (e.g., face-to-face meeting, video conference) and, if applicable, at which location should the mentoring contacts take place? What major topics are on the agenda for the mentoring work?

Be aware of your own goals: What does the mentee want to achieve during the Mentoring Programme? What career-relevant decisions need to be made and when? Goals and contents of the mentoring should be defined together.

E.g., working through and discussing everyday university life, accompanying decision-making processes, feedback on specific areas, strengthening certain competences, accompanying the mentor to appointments or meetings with subsequent reflection.



How to maintain the mentoring contact?

Personal contact between mentee and mentor forms the core of the mentoring relationship. How this contact is to be organised is at the discretion of the mentee and mentor. At the beginning of the Mentoring Programme, it should therefore be jointly considered and individually agreed how often and in what form contact will be made.

Meetings in person certainly enable the closest contact. However, as the mentoring partnerships are formed across national/international borders, they can prove to be very time-consuming due to the physical distance. The mentoring partners can consider whether there are favourable opportunities for personal meetings over the next 18 to 24 months, e.g., due to business trips to conferences or similar events that are taking place anyway. Thus, video conferences, telephone and email offer opportunities for an effective exchange.

The way in which contact is made, its frequency and the specific dates are ultimately left to be agreed individually between mentor and mentee. They should be adapted to the needs of the mentee on the one hand and the time available to the mentor and the personal preferences of both.

The mentees are responsible for arranging, preparing, organising and evaluating the mentoring contacts. It is the mentees' task to contact the mentors on their own initiative and to communicate the respective need for dialogue as well as the upcoming topics. A high level of commitment and reliability as well as a regular exchange are indispensable conditions for the success of the Mentoring Programme. We ask the mentees to take this particularly seriously, as the Mentoring Programme ultimately depends on the committed and active participation of the mentee.

How to prepare for mentoring meetings?



In order to make the best use of the time provided by the mentors, the individual mentoring contacts should be well prepared by the mentees in advance. Ideally, the mentees should make a note of relevant aspects or questions and send them to the mentors in writing beforehand.

- What topics should be discussed?
- What goals does the mentee want to achieve through the meeting?
- What specific questions should be answered after the meeting?

How to evaluate the mentoring meetings?

iMPROVE
DEVELOP
TRAINiNG
MOTiVATE
COACHiNG
iNSPiRE



Reflection on the following questions is recommended as a follow-up to the individual mentoring contacts:

- What actions have been suggested? What results of the dialogue can be recorded?
- What next steps need to be taken, by when, by whom?
- When and where will the next mentoring meeting take place?
- What should be discussed in the next meeting?

How does the mentorship officially end?

To evaluate the mentoring cooperation, it is advisable for the mentee and mentor to hold a final discussion before the official end of the programme. In retrospect, both partners should review the relationship and share their experiences.

- What important (learning) successes did the mentee achieve during the Mentoring Programme?
- Which strategies, information and tips were particularly helpful, and which were less so?
- What goals are the mentee now aiming for?
- How structured, supportive and goal-orientated were the mentoring discussions?
- How clearly did the mentoring partners perceive their own role and task in the mentorship?
- Which goals were not achieved? What was the reason? How can unfinished business or pending items be dealt with?
- Does it make sense and is it possible/desirable to continue the mentoring relationship on an informal level? How do mentee and mentor want to keep in touch with each other?





European College of Sport Science

For more information or to address any queries regarding the ECSS Mentoring Programme, write to:

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