Research Postgraduate Mentoring Guidelines

Definition of Mentoring

"Having a good mentor early in your career can mean the difference between success and failure in any field."

Apart from the research supervisor(s), new PhD students at RCSI are assigned a mentor who is outside of their supervision team and generally outside their home department. The mentor's role is to offer guidance on how the student can become self reliant and to assist them with general career development and the acquisition of professional skills and training.

General Mentoring Goals

- Career Management – career planning and goal setting
- Self Reliance – taking responsibility for own career
- Support – encouraging and developing confidence
- Learning – acquiring knowledge, skills and experience

Roles of a Mentor

There are many potential roles for a mentor to adopt when meeting with their mentee. The list below is offered as a guide to encourage both mentor and mentee to think about the roles that may be adopted by a mentor when setting expectations in the mentoring relationship.

Coach	❐	Counsellor	❐
Guardian	❐	Instructor	❐
Guide	❐	Role Model	❐
Listener	❐	Sounding Board	❐
Gateway / Bridge	❐	Surrogate Parent	❐
Catalyst	❐	Therapist	❐
Goal setter	❐	Friend	❐
Networker	❐	Challenger	❐
Advisor	❐	Sponsor	❐
Facilitator	❐		

Personal SWOT Analysis

You can use a SWOT analysis as a tool to help you assess your strengths and weaknesses in a given situation.

Strengths and weaknesses apply to a person and represent characteristics over which you may have some control. Examples include your qualifications, technical and other skills, attributes, knowledge, contacts or work experience. Opportunities and threats represent things that are likely to be outside your control. Examples include employment opportunities, market forces, government policies, the economic situation or your employer's policies.

Use the table below to record your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as you see them in relation to your PhD, future career and goals. This will help you focus on where you are now and where you may want to be in the future and it will help your mentor to help you progress.

Over time, the content of your SWOT analysis will change as you develop your technical and academic skills and address potential weaknesses.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	**Threats**

Setting Expectations for Mentors and Mentees

The purpose of the questions below is to encourage both the mentor and mentee to discuss their expectations and objectives for their mentoring relationship. It is also designed to facilitate discussion and planning for both parties.

1. What expectations do you have of the mentoring relationship?	2. What are your objectives for the mentoring relationship?
3. What needs to happen to achieve these objectives?	4. What might prevent the objectives from being achieved?

Pre-Meeting Preparation

The purpose of the table below is to encourage both the mentor and mentee to prepare for their mentoring meetings, including practical things such as where to hold the meetings.

1. What are you going to talk about?	2. How will the meetings be organised, e.g. where, when and how long?
3. How are you going to structure meetings?	4. What are you going to do to keep the relationship productive?

RECORD OF MENTORING MEETINGS

Objectives of Meeting (What do you hope to achieve? Why are you having the meeting?)

Agenda (What are you going to discuss? Is there anything you need to prepare? Have you done everything you said you would?)

Action Plan including by whom and by when.

Mentor's Actions	Mentor's Actions

Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

Feedback What has gone well in the meeting, is going well in the mentoring, e.g. what are you benefiting from, what do you find useful?

What would make it even better?