

The Gutenberg Academy Mentoring Program

To give you an overview of our mentoring concept, we have summarized the essential information for you. We hope that these basics can convince you to take part in our mentoring program. We can also provide you with our German language mentoring guide which contains further information and impulses for shaping the mentoring relationship.

To us, mentoring means that a junior member – an excellent young doctoral student or artist, who has been admitted into the Academy – enters a relationship of mutual trust with a renowned person from the scientific community, business, politics or society. This personal relationship is considered to be contact between equals and non-hierarchical. The purpose of mentoring is to strengthen the mentees' competences and to support them with developing their career paths.

Premises and conditions for success

Important premises for a successful mentoring relationship are openness, trust, commitment and regularity. Essential attitudes and competences include a principal interest in the support of young academics, open and appreciative communication and the willingness to invest time and dedication. Communication and peer counseling skills as well as the willingness to pass on information regarding personal experience complement this attitude.

Shaping the mentoring relationship

The Academy's junior members and their mentors are personally responsible for shaping and arranging the mentoring relationship. Regular personal meetings (e.g. every 12 weeks) as well as an additional form of contact are recommended. The mentee assumes the active role in the relationship by requesting appointments or by preparing meetings. Nevertheless, both partners contribute equally to the success of the relationship. In personal conversations, professional, scientific or personal issues can be discussed together. In this context, it is especially important to clarify the individual conditions of this mentoring process in advance. This should be realized by a written mentoring agreement.

Tasks and functions of the mentor

The mentor's main tasks are listening, giving advice, guiding and passing on strategies, supporting and where appropriate providing access to their own network. In doing so, the mentor fulfills diverse functions, such as a career advisor and door-opener, as well as guide and conveyor of knowledge, sparring partner and promoter.

Benefits for mentors

As revealed by various studies, the mentoring process is a win-win situation for both partners. Mentoring offers mentors, among other things, the chance to broaden their counseling skills as well as their own networks, and to gain intensive insight into the current situation of young researchers. Possible benefits include the self-reflection on one's own career path and methods and, if desired, the opportunity to receive feedback on one's personal way of working and solving problems, as well as opening one's mind for new issues and opinions.