

Växa Mentorship Program, LTV faculty

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What is the program about?

The university work environment is instrumental for researchers to produce innovative, high-quality knowledge that can make a difference in our society. However, many researchers, particularly PhD students and junior researchers, feel that their demands make it difficult to do a good job in a competitive environment and to find time to reflect on their career.

The program aims to provide mentoring, supporting the personal and professional development of PhD students and junior researchers in four areas:

1) Career advice, including specific "topic-based" advice, e.g. on navigating the academic system, grant writing, becoming independent and careers after PhD and post-doc.

2) Welfare support in a competitive work environment.

3) Getting to know each other within and between departments/local universities and career stages.

4) Help with counteracting stereotypes and discrimination, providing equal opportunities for all staff.

What do we mean by mentoring?

Personal mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgmental relationship in which a more experienced individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another, less experienced colleague.

Benefits of mentoring:

Mentoring has many benefits. A mentor can help the mentee through important transitions in learning, coping, career management and personal growth. There are also clear benefits for the mentor, including the development of generic skills such as self-awareness, active listening and leadership, skills that can be used widely in the workplace.

Evaluation previous programs:

We have run the program three times before between March 2017 and May 2023. It is clear from our own evaluations, the staff survey at the LTV-faculty and recent discussions in the council for PhD education at SLU (Fur) that there is a need for mentor programs.



How does the program work?

- Mentees and mentors sign up for a 12-month period, which is recommended to involve 7-8 meetings, starting from September 2024.
- Meetings are between 1-2 h long and are recommended to take place at a neutral place, this could be on campus, or elsewhere.
- It is mandatory that meetings are strictly confidential.
- Mentees and mentors arrange their own meetings once matched by the coordinators.
- Training seminars will be arranged for both mentors and mentees.

Matching:

Mentees and mentors will be matched based on a wish list of the mentees, involving e.g. man vs. woman, academia vs. industry, language preference, work-life balance issues etc.

Activities:

- Introductory information and training seminar for both mentees and mentors to get started.
- Midterm zoom seminar for mentees, involving reflections on the mentor-mentee relationship and how to build trust.
- On the same day as midterm seminar, a workshop on academic productivity and sustainable work practices with Åsa Burman, author of the book "Finish on Time and Fell Good Along the Way".
- End meeting and evaluation of the program.

The seminars are given by the experienced consultant Katarina Billing, Indea.

How to register?

To register for the program, send an e-mail to Kristina.karlsson.green@slu.se latest the 2nd of April 2024.

