

ESA Mentorship Program Mentee Handbook

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Disclaimer

The information provided in this Mentee Handbook is intended to serve as a general guide for mentees participating in the Endocrine Society Australia's (ESA) Mentorship Program. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the content, the ESA does not guarantee that the information is comprehensive, complete, or free from errors.

The handbook is designed to support mentees in their roles and to facilitate productive mentoring relationships. However, the ESA cannot assume responsibility for the outcomes of individual mentoring relationships or for any decisions made based on the guidance provided herein. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to exercise their own judgment and seek additional advice as needed.

The ESA reserves the right to modify or update the handbook as necessary to reflect changes in program guidelines or best practices. By participating in the Mentorship Program, mentees agree to adhere to the principles and expectations outlined in this handbook, while understanding that the program's success is dependent on mutual commitment and cooperation between mentors and mentees.

Acknowledgement

The ESA Mentorship Program is an initiative of the 2024 ESA Early Career Researcher Committee (ECC). The ECC members are:

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All illustrations used in this handbook are public domain images sourced from Freepik.

Introduction

Welcome to the ESA Mentorship Program Mentee Handbook. This guide is designed to support you as a mentee, providing essential information to help you navigate your role and contribute effectively to the program. Our mentorship initiative aims to foster professional development by connecting experienced clinicians and researchers with emerging talent in the field of endocrinology.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline your responsibilities, the structure of the mentorship process, and the tools available to ensure a successful mentoring experience. By following these guidelines, you will be equipped to provide valuable guidance and support to your mentees, facilitating their growth and advancement in their careers.

We appreciate your commitment to the program and look forward to your active participation. Your role is crucial in shaping the future of endocrinology, and this handbook will serve as a valuable resource throughout your mentoring journey.



ESA Mentorship Program Structure and Duration

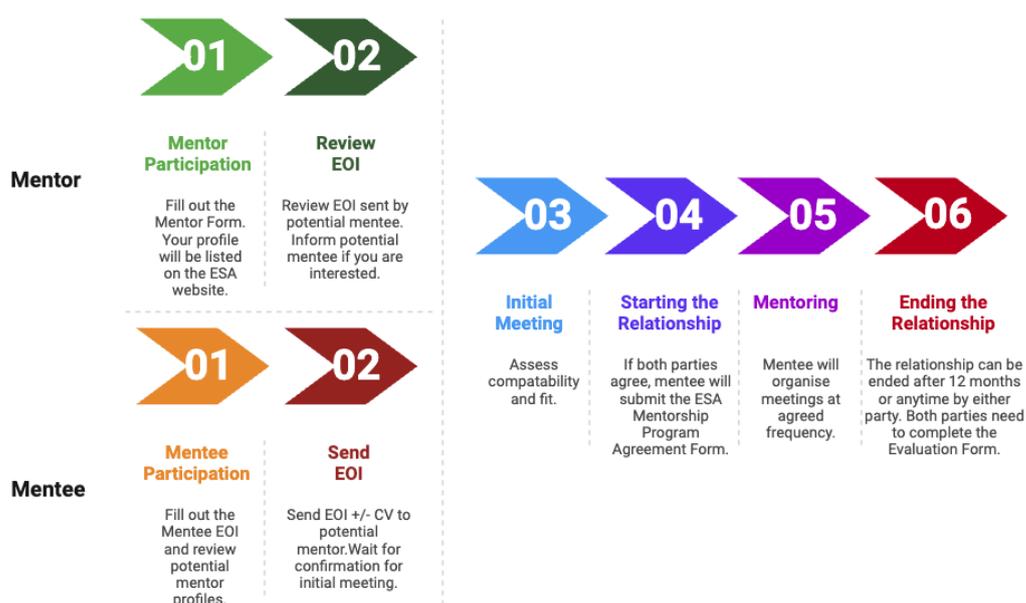
The ESA Mentorship Program is designed to facilitate meaningful connections between mentors and mentees within the field of endocrinology. Profiles of volunteers who have agreed to participate as mentors are listed on our website, providing mentees with the opportunity to select potential mentors based on their areas of expertise and interests.

The mentorship relationship is expected to be led by the mentee. This means that mentees are responsible for initiating contact with potential mentors, sending Expressions of Interest (EOIs), and organizing meetings. Mentors have the discretion to decide whether to accept an initial meeting with a mentee. It is important to note that an initial meeting does not automatically establish a mentorship relationship; both parties must agree that the match is appropriate and mutually beneficial.

Following a successful initial meeting, if both the mentor and mentee agree to proceed, the mentee is required to complete the ESA Mentorship Program Agreement Form. This form will formalize the mentorship relationship, including the agreed frequency of meetings. The mentee is responsible for scheduling and facilitating all subsequent meetings. The program is structured to last for 12 months, but either party may choose to terminate the relationship or extend it beyond the initial period as needed.

Mentees are welcome to reach out to multiple mentors to find the best for their needs. However, the ESA Mentorship Program does not guarantee successful matching due to factors such as mentor availability and interest alignment. If a match is not immediately successful, we encourage you to continue exploring potential mentors and remain proactive in your search.

ESA Mentorship Program Process



Advice provided and discussions held between the mentor and mentee must be kept confidential and not disclosed to any third party, unless mutually agreed by the mentor and mentee. Any advice, comments, suggestions, opinions or information (in either individual or combined occurrence) imparted (verbally, in written or electronic correspondence, or by a combination of these) are given with the best intentions and according to the best knowledge of the mentor involved. Whilst every care is taken to deliver accurate and complete advice, comments, suggestions, opinions or information (in either individual or combined occurrence), no liability whatsoever attaches to the mentor nor to ESA in any way as a result of giving that advice.

Essential forms to be completed by mentee:

- 1) [Mentee Expression of Interest Form](#)
- 2) [ESA Mentorship Program Agreement Form](#)
- 3) [End of Mentorship Program Evaluation Form \(optional\)*](#)

* The evaluation form is optional, but completing it helps us assess the program's effectiveness, refine its structure, and secure ongoing support from the ESA.

What is Mentoring?

Purpose of Mentorship

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a professional relationship where a seasoned individual (the mentor) provides strategic guidance, constructive feedback, and support to a less experienced person (the mentee). This process involves the mentor leveraging their expertise to aid the mentee's development in specific areas such as career progression or personal growth. Rather than dictating solutions, the mentor helps the mentee build their skills and confidence to make informed decisions and achieve their objectives effectively.

What is Not Mentoring?

Mentoring is not a one-sided relationship where the mentor merely provides answers or solutions. It is not a replacement for formal training or education, nor is it a platform for the mentor to assert dominance or control. Mentoring is not about providing unsolicited advice or making decisions for the mentee. It is not counselling, which focuses on addressing personal issues and emotional support. Instead, mentoring is a supportive and interactive process that respects the mentee's autonomy and encourages their own problem-solving and decision-making abilities.

Mentoring vs Coaching

Mentoring and coaching, while both valuable for professional development, serve different purposes and involve distinct approaches.

In mentoring, the mentee drives the relationship, setting goals and bringing forward the challenges they wish to address. The mentor offers guidance and support based on their experience, helping the mentee navigate their personal and professional growth. Mentoring is often broader, focusing on long-term career development and personal development.

Coaching is more directive. In this relationship, the coach sets the agenda, concentrating on specific performance goals or skills. The coach helps the mentee achieve targeted objectives through structured interventions and feedback. While mentoring is typically more exploratory and developmental, coaching is goal-oriented, emphasizing measurable improvements and skill enhancement.



ACHIEVING GOALS

The Different Types of Mentors

In mentoring relationships, different types of mentors can fulfill various roles depending on their approach and the needs of the mentee. Here are several types of mentors:



Advisor: Provides strategic advice and guidance based on their experience and expertise in a specific area. They help mentees navigate complex decisions and plan their career paths.



Coach: Focuses on developing the mentee's skills and competencies through feedback and practice. They often help mentees improve performance and achieve specific goals.



Protector: Supports and defends the mentee within the organization or field. They offer advocacy and ensure that the mentee's achievements and contributions are recognized and valued.



Connection Broker: Uses their network to connect the mentee with valuable contacts and opportunities. They help mentees build relationships and expand their professional network.



Challenger: Pushes the mentee to step out of their comfort zone and challenge their assumptions. They encourage growth by presenting new perspectives and fostering critical thinking.



Affirmer: Provides emotional support and validation. They help boost the mentee's confidence and morale, reinforcing their strengths and achievements.



Sponsor: Actively advocates for the mentee's advancement and opportunities. They use their influence to promote the mentee's career progression and open doors for new opportunities.

Each type of mentor offers unique benefits and perspectives. Understanding these distinct types of mentors—whether they act as advisors, coaches, or sponsors—can significantly enhance your development and help you achieve your professional goals. By appreciating the different roles mentors play, you can better leverage their expertise and support, leading to a more effective and fulfilling mentoring experience.

Tips for being a Great Mentee

For a mentorship program to achieve its full potential, it is vital that the process is guided and driven by the mentee. As a mentee, your proactive involvement and initiative play a critical role in shaping a productive and fulfilling mentoring relationship, ensuring that the mentorship experience is both valuable and aligned with your professional development needs.

Being an effective mentee is crucial for making the most of your mentoring experience. Here are some key tips to help you thrive in your role:

- 1) **Be Proactive and Engaged:** Take initiative in scheduling meetings, setting agendas, and following up on action items. Actively participate in discussions and be open to feedback. Your enthusiasm and commitment will enhance the mentoring relationship.
- 2) **Set Clear Goals and Expectations:** At the start of the mentoring relationship, work with your mentor to establish clear, achievable goals and expectations. This will help you both focus on your objectives and measure progress effectively.
- 3) **Communicate Effectively:** Maintain open and honest communication with your mentor. Share your progress, challenges, and any changes in your goals or circumstances. Effective communication will help build a strong and productive mentoring relationship.
- 4) **Be Receptive to Feedback:** Embrace constructive feedback as an opportunity for growth. Approach critiques with a positive mindset, and use the insights provided to improve your skills and advance in your career.
- 5) **Prepare for Meetings:** Come to each meeting with a clear agenda and specific questions or topics you want to discuss. Preparation demonstrates your commitment and allows you to make the most of your time with your mentor.
- 6) **Respect Your Mentor's Time:** Be punctual for meetings and be mindful of your mentor's time constraints. Show appreciation for their guidance and acknowledge their contributions to your professional development.
- 7) **Take Ownership of Your Development:** While your mentor provides guidance and support, it is ultimately up to you to drive your own career development. Take responsibility for implementing advice, following through on action plans, and achieving your goals.



Preparing for your meetings

Initial Meeting: Assessing Compatibility and Fit

This meeting aims to assess whether you and your mentor are well-suited to work together effectively. Both you and your mentor should evaluate compatibility and fit to ensure a productive and supportive relationship.

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What are my short-term and long-term goals?
- What specific skills or knowledge do I want to develop through this relationship?
- What are my expectations for this mentorship relationship?
- What are my strengths and areas for improvement?
- What challenges am I facing now that I hope to discuss with my mentor?
- How frequently would I like to meet with my mentor, and what communication methods do I prefer?
- What are my preferred learning styles and how can I effectively communicate these to my mentor?
- What are my current commitments and how will I manage my time to ensure that I can fully engage in this mentorship?

Understanding the potential mentor is crucial to ensure their skills and communication style align with your needs and goals. Before your first meeting, do some research on your mentor. Here are some other potential questions to consider.

Questions to Ask a Potential Mentor:

- Can you describe your mentoring style and approach?
- What are your primary areas of expertise, and how can they align with my professional goals?
- What do you typically expect from your mentees in terms of preparation and engagement?
- How do you usually structure your mentoring relationships, and what is your preferred method of communication?
- What do you see as the key factors for a successful mentoring relationship, and how can we work together to achieve them?
- Are there specific goals or outcomes you like to focus on with your mentees?

Subsequent Meetings: Mentoring Action Plan

While the ESA Mentorship Program is designed to provide flexibility and support without rigid formal assessments, effective preparation remains key to a successful mentoring relationship. To ensure that each meeting is productive and aligned with your professional development goals, it is beneficial for mentees to develop and maintain a mentoring action plan throughout the process.

Why Prepare?

Preparation maximizes the learning experience and helps to achieve your goals efficiently. By coming prepared, you demonstrate respect for your mentor's time and commitment, while also ensuring that each session is focused and purposeful.

Creating a Mentoring Action Plan

1. **Set Clear Objectives:** Before each meeting, identify specific objectives you wish to address. These could include discussing recent achievements, tackling current challenges, or seeking advice on particular career decisions.
2. **Review Previous Discussions:** Reflect on the outcomes and action points from previous meetings. Evaluate your progress and be ready to discuss any updates or changes.
3. **Prepare Key Questions:** Develop a list of relevant questions or topics you want to explore. This will help you gain targeted insights and make the most of your mentor's expertise.
4. **Document Progress:** Keep a record of your goals, action items, and any feedback received. This documentation will be useful for tracking your development and adjusting your plan as needed.
5. **Plan Ahead:** Consider any upcoming opportunities or challenges that might be relevant to your discussion. Prepare to share these with your mentor to get their perspective and advice.

To assist you in maximizing the value of your mentoring experience, we have prepared a selection of templates for mentees to consider. These templates are designed to help you structure your meetings, track your progress, and effectively plan your professional development.

The mentoring action plan is intended for your personal record. While you may choose to share it with your mentors if you wish, there is no requirement to send the action plan to the ESA mentorship program coordinators.



Mentoring Action Plan: Template 1

Date of meeting:	
Mentee name:	
Mentor name:	
Agenda	
Recent achievement(s):	(free text)
Progress from last meeting:	
Goals and objectives today:	1) 2) 3)
Plan	
Goal 1	Agreed action plan: Indication of completion: Estimated completion date:
Goal 2	Agreed action plan: Indication of completion: Estimated completion date:
Goal 3	Agreed action plan: Indication of completion: Estimated completion date:

Mentoring Action Plan: Template 2

Date:

Mentee name:

Mentor name:

Career vision:

Long term goal:

Short term goals	Action steps	Resources required	Timelines	Indicator of success

Example questions for Mentor-Mentee Discussions

If you're unsure about what to ask your mentor, you're not alone. To help you make the most of your mentorship experience, we've provided a set of guiding questions for each topic. These questions are designed to spark meaningful discussions and ensure you gain valuable insights and support tailored to your professional development needs.

1. Clinical Career Development

- What are the key skills and experiences needed to advance in a clinical career?
- How can I effectively seek out and secure leadership roles within clinical settings?
- What strategies can I use to stay updated with the latest advancements and best practices in clinical care?
- How can I balance patient care responsibilities with other professional duties?
- What are some common challenges in clinical career progression and how can I overcome them?

2. Research Career Development

- What are the most effective ways to build a successful research career?
- How can I identify and pursue research opportunities aligned with my interests?
- What steps can I take to develop a strong research portfolio?
- What are the most effective strategies for publishing high-impact research?
- How can I establish collaborations and networks within the research community?
- What are the key factors for securing research funding and grants?
- How can I develop a research niche or area of expertise?

3. Clinical and Research Career Development

- How can I integrate clinical practice with research activities effectively?
- What are the benefits and challenges of pursuing both clinical and research careers?
- How do I prioritize and manage time between clinical responsibilities and research projects?
- What strategies can I use to enhance my career development in both areas?
- How can I identify and pursue opportunities that bridge clinical and research interests?
- How can I leverage my clinical experience to enhance my research career, and vice versa?

4. Time Management in Clinical/Research

- What are some proven techniques for managing time effectively in both clinical and research settings?
- How can I prioritize tasks and responsibilities to ensure productivity?
- What tools or methods do you recommend for organizing and planning my work?
- How can I handle unexpected demands or changes in my schedule?
- How do you handle interruptions and maintain focus during critical work periods?
- What are some common time management pitfalls, and how can I avoid them?

5. Work-Life Balance, Burnout Prevention

- What strategies can I use to maintain a healthy work-life balance?
- How can I recognize and address signs of burnout early?
- What are effective ways to set boundaries between work and personal life?
- How can I incorporate self-care and wellness practices into my routine?
- What resources or support systems are available to help prevent and manage burnout?
- How do you set boundaries between work and personal life?

6. Networking and Collaboration

- How can I effectively build and maintain professional networks in my field?
- What are some strategies for initiating and fostering collaborative relationships?
- How can I leverage networking opportunities to advance my career?
- What are some best practices for collaborating with colleagues from different disciplines?
- How can I overcome challenges in building and sustaining professional relationships?

7. Research Promotion/Impact

- What strategies can I use to promote the impact of my research work?
- How can I effectively communicate my research findings to a broader audience?
- What are some methods for increasing the visibility of my research contributions?
- How can I utilize social media and other platforms to enhance the impact of my work?
- What are some ways to engage with the media and other stakeholders to promote my research?

8. Coping with Difficult Relationships

- What strategies can help me manage challenging relationships with colleagues or collaborators?
- How do I handle conflicts or disagreements professionally and constructively?
- Can you provide tips for improving communication and resolving misunderstandings?
- How do you maintain a positive working relationship despite differences in opinions?
- What are the key signs of a difficult relationship, and how can I address them?

9. Grant Writing and Funding Applications

- What are the key components of a successful grant proposal?
- How can I identify and apply for appropriate funding opportunities?
- What strategies can I use to improve my chances of securing research grants?
- How do I effectively communicate the significance and impact of my research in grant applications?
- What are common pitfalls in grant writing, and how can I avoid them?

10. Leadership and Management Skills

- What skills are essential for effective leadership and management in clinical or research settings?
- How can I develop and demonstrate leadership qualities in my current role?
- What are effective strategies for managing and motivating teams?

- How can I handle difficult management situations or conflicts?
- What resources or training opportunities are available for developing leadership skills?
- Can you provide advice on building and maintaining a productive team?

11. Career Transition

- What are the key considerations when planning a career transition?
- How can I effectively prepare for and manage a career change?
- What strategies can I use to identify and pursue new career opportunities?
- How can I leverage my existing skills and experiences during a transition?
- What are some common challenges in career transitions, and how can I address them?

12. Teaching and Educational Activities

- What are effective methods for teaching and engaging students or trainees?
- How can I incorporate innovative techniques into my educational activities?
- How can I develop and deliver impactful educational content?
- What strategies can I use to evaluate and improve my teaching effectiveness?
- How can I balance teaching responsibilities with other professional duties?
- What resources or support are available for enhancing my teaching skills?

13. Publication and Writing

- What are the key steps for successfully publishing research findings?
- How can I improve my academic writing and manuscript preparation skills?
- What strategies can I use to increase the likelihood of publication in high-impact journals?
- How do I effectively respond to reviewers' comments and revise manuscripts?
- What are some common challenges in the publication process, and how can I overcome them?



Handling Challenges as a Mentee

Navigating a mentorship relationship can present various challenges, including difficulties in the relationship with your mentor. Addressing these obstacles constructively is essential for a successful and productive experience. Here are some strategies to manage common challenges effectively:

1. **Communicate Openly and Honestly:** Establish clear and open communication with your mentor from the beginning. If issues arise or if you experience challenges in the relationship, discuss them promptly and transparently. Open dialogue helps prevent misunderstandings and fosters a positive mentoring relationship.
2. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Ensure that both you and your mentor have a shared understanding of goals, expectations, and the mentoring process. If there are discrepancies in expectations or if you find the relationship challenging, address these concerns early to align on objectives and approach.
3. **Be Proactive in Addressing Issues:** If you encounter difficulties or feel that the mentorship is not meeting your needs, take the initiative to address the issue. Provide specific examples and suggest possible solutions. Proactive engagement can lead to effective resolutions and improvements in the relationship.
4. **Manage a Challenging Relationship:** If you are facing difficulties with your mentor, such as a lack of support or miscommunication, address these challenges directly with your mentor. Focus on specific behaviours or instances rather than personal attributes. If necessary, seek advice from the mentorship program coordinators on how to navigate and resolve the situation.
5. **Seek Feedback and Act on It:** Regularly solicit feedback from your mentor and reflect on it constructively. Use the feedback to adjust your approach and enhance your development. Constructive feedback is a valuable tool for growth and should be viewed as an opportunity for improvement.
6. **Maintain Flexibility and Adaptability:** Be prepared to adapt to changes and unforeseen circumstances in the mentoring relationship. Flexibility in your approach and willingness to adjust your goals or strategies can help overcome obstacles and maintain progress.
7. **Document Your Progress and Challenges:** Keep a record of your progress, challenges, and any discussions with your mentor. Documenting these aspects helps track your development and provides a reference for addressing ongoing issues or assessing your achievements.
8. **Utilize Available Resources:** Take advantage of any additional resources or support offered by the mentorship program or your institution. These resources can provide guidance and assistance in overcoming specific challenges.

By adopting these strategies, you can navigate challenges effectively and maximize the benefits of your mentorship experience. Constructively handling difficulties, including those within the mentor-mentee relationship, contributes to your professional growth and enhances the overall success of the mentoring experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I find a mentor?

To find a mentor, you can browse the profiles of available mentors listed on the ESA website. If you find someone who aligns with your interests, complete the Mentee Expression of Interest Form and contact the potential mentor directly. Including a brief CV is strongly encouraged, but not mandatory.

How do I prepare for the initial meeting with my mentor?

Prepare by outlining your goals, interests, and expectations for the mentorship relationship. Review potential questions to ask the mentor to assess compatibility and fit, and be ready to discuss your career aspirations and any specific challenges you are facing.

What is the duration of the mentoring relationship?

The mentoring relationship is initially set for a 12-month period. However, both parties can choose to terminate the relationship at any time or extend it if mutually agreed upon.

How often should meetings occur?

Mentors and mentees are responsible for agreeing on the frequency and timing of their meetings. The mentee typically takes the lead in organizing and scheduling these meetings.

Is it mandatory to send my Mentoring Action Plan to the ESA?

No, the Mentoring Action Plan is for your personal record. You may choose to share it with your mentor to facilitate discussions, but you do not need to submit it to the ESA Mentorship Program coordinators.

Can I have more than one mentor from the program?

Yes, it is possible to have more than one mentor from the ESA Mentorship Program. Having multiple mentors can offer you diverse perspectives and expertise in different areas of your professional development. However, it is important to ensure that you can manage the time and commitment required for each mentorship relationship effectively.

How do I handle challenges in the mentoring relationship?

Challenges should be addressed openly and constructively. If issues arise, both parties should communicate their concerns and work together to find solutions. Remember, mentoring is a collaborative process.

If either the mentor or mentee feels that the relationship is not working, they should communicate openly and consider ending the relationship.

What should I do if I need to end the mentorship relationship early?

If you need to end the relationship before the 12-month period, inform your mentor as soon as possible. Complete the End of Mentorship Program Evaluation Form to provide feedback on the experience.

Will negative feedback impact my standing in the ESA or the Mentorship Program?

Negative feedback does not affect your standing in the ESA or the Mentorship Program. The purpose of feedback is to identify areas for improvement and to enhance the Mentorship Program.

Can I apply to be a mentee and also mentor others?

Yes, you can apply to be a mentee while also mentoring others. Many individuals find that engaging in both roles enhances their professional development. Balancing these responsibilities can be rewarding, but it is important to manage your time effectively to ensure that both experiences are fulfilling.

Who should I contact if I have further questions?

For additional questions or support, please contact the ESA mentorship program coordinators via: esamentorship@endocrinesociety.org.au



Conclusion

As you embark on your journey with the ESA Mentorship Program, remember that the success of your mentorship experience largely depends on your proactive engagement and commitment. This handbook has been designed to equip you with the essential tools, guidelines, and insights needed to maximize the value of your mentorship relationship. By taking the initiative, setting clear goals, and actively participating in your meetings, you will be well-positioned to achieve your professional development objectives.

The mentorship process is a collaborative endeavour where both you and your mentor contribute to the growth and success of the relationship. Embrace the opportunities for learning, networking, and personal growth that come with this program. Should challenges arise, handle them with openness and a problem-solving attitude.

Thank you for your dedication to personal and professional advancement. We wish you a productive and rewarding mentorship experience.

