

STARS EU Research Mentoring Programme

Deliverable 4.6



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Introduction

STARS EU Research Mentoring Programme is dedicated to research academics who wish to lift up their level of professional competence, with the emphasis on applying for sources of external financing. It is a tool used for supporting development of research academics with relatively little experience, unsatisfactory level of competence and those who feel the need to gain new knowledge and practical on hand experience. It consists of transfer of practical knowledge and experience from more experienced researchers or administrative employees (mentors) to those who are less experienced (mentees) in order to discover and developed mentees' professional potential.

The partner relationship between a mentor and a mentee should concentrate mainly on discovering and developing mentees potential. It can also include advisory and assistance services necessary to succeed in their career and to carry out their research activities more effectively.

A pilot STARS EU mentoring programme will be implemented by two STARS EU partner universities – Cracow University of Technology and University West in Trollhättan with special attention to the requirements and suggestions expressed in the questionnaires among all 9 project partner universities. The analysis of the answers is included in the attached document.

The main goal of the programme is improvement of mentees' potential in the area of grant application, project management, effectiveness of conducted research and the increase and the increase of aligning their research to the needs and expectations of social and business environment.

Definition of needs based on the survey outcomes

In June 2024, a survey regarding mentoring needs was conducted among the STARS EU community. A total of 52 respondents from 9 partner universities of STARS EU, participating in the Work Package 4 Knowledge Creation and Challenge Lab, took part in the survey. The respondents were asked about their affiliation with the partner university, age, gender, academic title, and the research area in which they would like to conduct or are conducting research.

Almost 56% of responders are females and 44% are men, most of them are masters (34%) and PhD's (25%). Most of the responders are in their 40ties and 30ties.

Respondents, indicated the most important areas, they are interested in:

1. Building interdisciplinary research teams, creating cross-sectoral consortia - 73%
2. Analysis of possible sources of financial support for the implementation of research, and commercial ideas - 56%
3. Effective grant acquisition - secret know-how - 56%
4. Project thinking, project logic - 51%

5. Creating a long-term financing strategy for projects, especially scientific ones - 42%
6. Specifics of international projects (multiculturalism, prestige) - 31%
7. Understanding market demand - which projects have a chance of funding from businesses - 25%

Next, the respondents were asked to indicate the three most important goals of the mentoring program from their point of view. The most important turned out to be:

1. Active participation in obtaining external funding for the realization of personal research goals and the developmental goals of the university - 71%
2. Establishing a platform for intergenerational and interdisciplinary collaboration both within and outside the university - 56%
3. Increasing motivation for the preparation and implementation of projects - 50%
4. Identification of the optimal career path - 44%
5. Enhancement of skills in building a strong negotiating position in the socio-economic environment, including with businesses - 36%
6. Changing attitudes toward the pursuit of prestigious grants - 25%

67% of respondents would prefer to have the option of choosing rotating mentors based on the topics covered, experts in specific disciplines, and specialists in grant preparation. 33% of those surveyed would prefer to have one permanent mentor.

According to findings above Research Mentoring Programme should aim in the specific goals:

- Increased level of absorption of external financing for research and cooperation with business entities.
- Increased level of commercial cooperation with social and business environment.
- Support for PhD students and young/inexperienced researchers in developing their Individual Career Plan
- Effective use of university human potential.
- Development of contacts network and building relation capital.
- Building Interdisciplinary teams of researchers in order to obtain and implement prestigious grants such as ERC, Horizon Europe.
- Preparation of researchers for building firm relationships with business and non-governmental entities
- Transfer of knowledge and expertise between employees' groups
- Creation of expert database whereby they can implement commercial orders

The needs to be fulfilled by the programme at the individual mentee level:

- Identification of optimal identification of Individual Career Plan.
- Increased motivation to develop and implement projects financed from external sources.
- Active participation in applying for external funding.
- Increase of competences to develop and implement projects.

- Active participation in applying for external funding.
- Increase of competences in building a strong negotiation position with social and business players.
- Building a platform for intergenerational cooperation.
- Changing attitude to implementing prestigious grants.
- Management of projects.

The program assumptions and recruitment procedure

The STARS EU mentoring programme fields/subjects shall include among others:

- Project driven thinking
- Creating multiannual strategy of research projects financed from external financing.
- Analysis of available external financing sources for implementation of research ideas.
- Effective application for grants – secret know-how
- Building research interdisciplinary and intersectoral research teams and intersectoral research teams and intersectoral consortia
- Understanding market needs to assess which research projects have a chance to be financed within joint projects with business entities
- Cooperation between academia and business (negotiations, long term relationships contracts, challenges and opportunities)
- The knowledge how to protect and commercialise intellectual property.
- Characteristics of international projects (sources of external financing, multiculturalism, prestige)
- Creation of image and expert brand (public relations for research)
- Research and society – cooperation between the university and public and non-governmental institutions
- Meeting challenges of the future – Industry 4.0 and 5.0

Underlying project assumptions:

- Programme will be pilot implemented in two partner universities: Cracow University of Technology and University West in Trollhättan.
- In each of the two annual editions with a maximum of twenty participants (10 per partner).
- Altogether there will 6 editions, two editions in each of the academic years 2024/2025, 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 in the fall and spring semester
- Each edition will offer two paths – one for less experienced researchers and the second for more experienced researchers

Mentee recruitment procedure:

Target group (STARS EU mentoring programme formal recruitment recruitment):

- PhD students
- Emerging researchers
- Research/teaching academics

In particular, recruitment shall be from among young researchers that is those who have up to five years of research career and additionally have little experience in successful grant application. Candidates for mentees will have to fill in a recruitment questionnaire (attached below) in order to be ranked by their profile characteristics listed below:

- Motivation for participation in the STARS EU Mentoring Programme
- Professional experience
- Important subjects
- Acceptance of responsibility during objective formulation

Additionally, within recruitment process for mentees their experience and achievements shall be taken into account such as projects' development implementation, publications and patents in order to assign the candidate for mentee to one of the two paths.

In the first path, for less experienced mentees, theoretical knowledge will be provided, covering a broad range of project preparation and related topics. One mentor will be assigned.

In the second path, there will be an opportunity to work on a specific application or case study, allowing for collaboration with one or several mentors, depending on the topic.

Mentors shall have comprehensive knowledge on project application for external sources of financing, project development, intellectual property and commercialization.

Two methods of recruitment can be used:

1. Open recruitment

Information about the programme recruitment shall be distributed among all of the university researchers. The mentoring programme coordinators in each university shall evaluate and qualify to participation of the programme.

2. Dedicated recruitment

It will be specifically directed to faculty deans and heads of other university research department, who, based on the target group and personality criteria shall designate candidates for mentees.

Types of the sessions:

Each mentee shall be offered the following programme methods of delivery of subjects specified below:

1. Individual mentoring sessions.

From 4-6 individual meeting with mentor/mentors in a period of 2-3 months whereby the effect shall be developing Individual Career Plan by each pair mentee and mentor. The scope of support during individual sessions includes, among others: diagnosis of individual mentee development potential with emphasis on research interests. Development of Individual Career Plan (business, research, teaching) and support network within university organizational units.

2. Project development sessions.

3-5 additional sessions for mentees interested in developing at least one specific project. With all assistance from mentor/mentors at least one research project shall be submitted to external sources of financing. Specifically, the effect shall be preparation and submission of application for external sources.

3. Group workshops

Workshops devoted to various topics from the fields related to applying for external financing and project management. There should be at least two workshops during each edition. Specific subjects shall be tailor made and best matching the needs of each mentees' edition. The choice will be from among team management, work in multigenerational teams, project management, building partnership projects and consortia.

4. Networking meetings

Meetings of project mentees from various research fields whereby they have a chance to create interdisciplinary research teams, discuss projects related issues or meet with experts from university units or external experts. In that case experts can act as meetings' moderators and lead the discussion on specific fields such as legal issues, patents and other methods to protect intellectual property, project development and implementation.

Conclusions

Participation in the programme ends with a summary session consisting of jointly prepared summary by mentors and mentees alongside with working out Individual Career Plan. Mentees' research supervisor (in the case of PhD students) or a superior (in the case of research employee) shall receive feedback on the results of mentees participation in the project.

Appendix no.1 Recruitment questionnaire for candidates for mentees

First name:

Surname:

University organizational unit (please circle)

Faculty/Department/other.

PhD student.

Researcher employed at the university.

Research/teaching employee at the university.

Please specify:

Scientific degree or title:

Main field of research:

Number of years in research institutions:

Number of years in the University:

Questions for candidates for mentees:

Comprehensive answers to questions below shall enable us to get to know your research interests, themes of conducted research as well as expectations in relation to your participation in the programme.

1. Motivation for participation in the STARS EU Mentoring Programme (a maximum of two A4 pages).
2. Professional experience, especially a list of developed and implemented R&D and other projects financed from external resources (a maximum of two A4 pages).
3. Please point to a maximum of 8 subjects from the list below that you consider most appropriate and necessary to work upon in the mentoring relationships (rating from 1

as the most important and 8 as the least important). You may suggest your own subjects.

Subject	Ranking
1. Project driven thinking,	
2. Creating multi annual strategy of financing research projects	
3. The analysis of available external financing resources for implementation of research topics.	
4. Effective application for grants – secret know how.	
5. Building interdisciplinary and intersectoral research teams and consortia,	
6. Understanding of markets' needs to assess what projects have a chance to be financed by business entities.	
7. Cooperation between academia and business (negotiations, long term relationships, contracts, challenges and opportunities).	
8. Intellectual property – protection and commercialisation.	
9. Characteristics of international projects (multi-cultural, prestige).	
10. Image and brand creation of experts (public relations).	
11. Academia – Society – cooperation with public sector or nongovernmental entities.	
12. Challenges of the future – Industry 4.0 and 5.0.	
13. Formalities of contracts – partnership contracts, consortia, intention letters with business and other entities	
14.	
15.	
16.	

4. Please submit your CV.

Candidates for mentees' declaration:

In the case of participation in the STAR EU mentoring programme I hereby declare:

1. To participate in the meetings on the dates agreed upon with my mentor.
2. To be in an ongoing contact with my mentor.
3. To implement jointly worked out assumptions of my participation in the Programme.
4. To develop Individual Career Plan.