

Mentoring Concept of TU Darmstadt

TECHNISCHE
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Mentoring for assistant professors

Background and Goals

Mentoring is a systematic approach to sustainable personnel development and the promotion of researchers in early career stages. By being accompanied by a mentor, the mentees experience support in career-relevant decisions, receive advice on expanding interdisciplinary competencies and qualifications, and gain access to networks.

The Technical University of Darmstadt offers mentoring for all assistant professors (with and without tenure track). For this purpose, the President, in agreement with the Senate, appoints a group of professors who are available as mentors. Mentors are initially appointed for an indefinite period of time but may relinquish their role at any time with appropriate notification to the University Strategy Unit (IA).

Contents of a mentoring

Mentoring can address and pursue the following contents, for example:

- Advisory support in the definition of goals, the development of individual career strategies, and the identification of challenges and opportunities for action for further development.
- Support in reflecting on one's own position, role, progress and developments to date.
- Advice and support in building networks, arranging contacts.
- Introduction to the organizational culture and informal conventions.
- Support in personal development, e.g. through seminars on the acquisition and development of career-relevant key qualifications and interdisciplinary skills.
- Exchange on career management, work-life balance, compatibility of career and family.
- Constructive and respectful collegial feedback.

Basic requirements and conditions

- Mentoring is based on the principle of voluntariness, i.e. assistant professor can decide against mentoring without any consequences, especially for tenure.
- Strict confidentiality of the discussed contents.
- Commitment to appointments and agreements.
- Openness to foreign professional cultures.
- Neither evaluation of the content nor assessment of the mentee's fulfillment of the agreement on objectives.
- Mentoring lasts for a period of time to be defined by both parties and can also be shortened or extended by individual agreement.
- Duration of the mentoring: maximum until the start of a lifetime professorship.
- Contents, duration, dates and working methods are determined by the mentor and mentee.

Criteria for the selection of a mentor

- A mentor should not be from the same department as the assistant professor. This would make it more difficult for the tenure committee to find professionally competent members from the assistant professor's department.
- The mentor must not pursue any interests (of his or her own and acting as an agent) in the development of the assistant professor.
- Professors from outside the TU, e.g. from RMU, as well as retired professors can also accept mentoring.

Process for selecting a mentor

- Each mentor agrees to mentor at least one mentee (if desired, more than one mentoring is possible for the mentor); if the mentor's contingent is exhausted, he or she informs the Strategy Unit IA.
- Within the framework of the appointment negotiation, IA informs the assistant professor about the possibility of mentoring and offers an individualized list of available mentors.
- The assistant professor selects a mentor from the available pool on his or her own initiative and based on his or her own needs and interests.
- The assistant professor informs the Strategy Unit of the name of the mentor for the purpose of an overview.
- Mentoring is between mentor and mentee only; support regarding the search or questions about the arrangement are provided by the Strategy Unit; an interview guideline for the first meeting is attached (Appendix).
- If the need for training for mentors arises, do not hesitate to contact the Strategy Unit.

Appendix

- Interview guideline for the first meeting
- List of available mentors

Interview guideline for the first meeting

The handout is intended as a possible discussion guideline to accompany the process of getting to know each other. It is completely up to the assistant professor how to design the mentoring. This guideline is only a suggestion.

1. Getting to know each other

At the first meeting, the focus is on getting to know each other, which, for example, can take the form of a dialogue between the two sides. A further aim of the meeting is to clarify expectations in terms of organization and content.

2. Clarification of the organizational framework prior to the content-related work

- Meetings: How often? Regularly or as needed? Who arranges them and when? In person or by email, zoom or phone? Where do the meetings take place (quiet, trouble-free atmosphere)?
- Contact: via e-mail or telephone?
- Is there an agreement about Conversation structure and culture?
- Are there rules that should be followed?
- Preparation / protocol: Who prepares meetings? Should a protocol be written?
- ...

3. Content expectations

- What form of support is possible?
- What do mentor and mentee expect from each other?
- What should mentor and mentee not do?
- What are possible topics of discussion? Where is the need for mentoring?
- How and when do mentor and mentee give feedback?
- ...

4. Clarification of goals

- What should the mentoring actually change for the mentee?
- What should be achieved with the help of mentoring?
- What should be achieved by when?
- Which "soft skills" and which "hard facts" are important for development?
- What concrete plans are already in place?
- ...

5. Topics: Which topics are pending from today's point of view?

- Naming of these topics
- ...

6. Feedback and further procedure:

- Short feedback after the meeting and clarification of the further procedure.

List of possible mentors (status: June 30th, 2023)

Nº	Name	Department
1	Professor Alexander Benlian	1
2	Professorin Carolin Bock	1
3	Professorin Nathalie Behnke	2
4	Professor Jens Steffek	2
5	Professor Thomas Weitin	2
6	Professor André Seyfarth	3
7	Professor Frank Aurzada	4
8	Professor Stefan Ulbrich	4
9	Professor Marc Pfetsch	4
10	Professor Gerhard Birkel	5
11	Professorin Regine von Klitzing	5
12	Professor Wilfried Nörtershäuser	5
13	Professor Markus Biesalski	7
14	Professorin Katja Schmitz	7
15	Professor Nico Blüthgen	10
16	Professor Andreas Jürgens	10
17	Professorin Beatrix Süß	10
18	Professor Lambert Alff	11
19	Professor Christoph Schüth	11
20	Professorin Bai-Xiang Xu	11
21	Professorin Susanne Lackner	13
22	Professor Boris Lehmann	13
23	Professorin Annette Rudolph-Cleff	15
24	Professorin Christiane Salge	15
25	Professor Oliver Tessmann	15
26	Professor Andreas Dreizler	16
27	Professor Stephan Rinderknecht	16
28	Professorin Jutta Hanson	18
29	Professor Christian Hochberger	18
30	Professorin Anja Klein	18
31	Professor Stefan Roth	20
32	Professor Felix Wolf	20
33	Professor Marc Fischlin	20