

Society for Reproductive Investigation Mentorship Program



Guide for Mentors and Mentees

Why this program was created:

As part of SRI's Strategic Plan, it was determined that the young investigators/In Training Members need to be a focus. It is a way to foster relationships between young investigators and senior members.

This program represents a bridge between senior and junior SRI members and/or researchers. Mentors gain personal satisfaction, growth within the field and Society, and networking opportunities. Mentees obtain advice, feedback, and an expanded base of skills, knowledge, and networking opportunities. The mentor-mentee relationship is designed to foster maximum productivity and commitment to the field of reproductive sciences through encouraging strong collegial relationships, training, support and recognition of accomplishments.

Who can Mentor / Who can be a Mentee?

SRI welcomes any current, Regular SRI member that has been a member for a minimum of 3 years, to volunteer to become a Mentor. Past President's and those that have received SRI Grants are also eligible to be Mentors.

Mentees must be current SRI In Training Members, at any stage of their career. Those further along may not be interested, but the program is not required and so they may decline.

What is a Mentoring?

Mentoring is a learning and development partnership between a professional with in-depth experience and knowledge in a specific area and a protégé seeking learning and coaching in the same area, or broad advice regarding career development. Mentors may be older or younger than their mentee.

How the Program Works

The Program will be offered to all In Training Members, including those that have applied and paid their first dues payment. They will be offered the opportunity to have a mentor from a pool of SRI members. They are then matched based on various criterion such as area of focus and location, by a member of the SRI Career Development and Diversity Committee. Mentor's will have the opportunity to request a different mentee, should they feel the match is not in the best interest of either the Mentor or the Mentee. Below are example of activities the mentor and mentee can do to get the most out of the relationship, as well as check-lists for developing and maintaining the mentor-mentee relationship.

By confirming via email that you are willing to be paired with your Mentor/Mentee, you are also agreeing to the commitment timeline below, under 'Duration of Mentor- Mentee Commitment'.

Examples of Activities for Mentor-Mentee

- Review CV and provide feedback
- Provide advice regarding service on committees
- Discuss strategies (i.e. looking for resources and collaborations) for advancement
- Discuss research strategies
- Review time management strategies
- Review manuscripts and grant applications
- Discuss teaching, advising, and relating to students
- Schedule regular professional development opportunities
- Introduce mentees to other SRI Members
- Discussions about rank, promotion, and tenure

SRI staff will make regular contact with the Mentors and Mentees to ensure there is consistent communication and the program is working as it should.

Program Evaluation

Both mentees and mentors are expected to participate in a year-end evaluation of the program. We will assess factors such as frequency of contact and the status of mentoring goals, as well as the mentee's integration with the SRI community (i.e., interest in joining a committee, Annual Meeting participation, intention to continue membership with SRI post-training). The evaluation may also include dimensions such as:

- Did you meet in person?
- Quality of information shared
- Relative comfort level enjoyed by both
- Quality of the constructive relationship between mentor/mentee
- Ongoing quality improvement
- Degree of rapport established
- Availability of mentor when needed
- Mentee's assessment of impact of the mentorship program on career development

Duration of Mentor- Mentee Commitment

The goal is to maintain the mentorship commitment for 3 years, although it is understood that if a positive connection has not been made, that after one year the Mentor and Mentee may ask to be re-matched. Additionally, mentors and mentees are free to extend their relationship indefinitely and are encouraged to do so. Continuing with the same mentee can be considered a career long support system.

Recognition for Mentors

Each mentor will receive a Certificate of Appreciation at the end of their 3 years commitment.

Mentor Checklist

- Be sure that your mentee knows how to contact you (e.g., e-mail, telephone, etc.). Request contact information from your mentee.

- Obtain and familiarize yourself with your mentee’s CV prior to the first meeting/discussion so that you already know pertinent professional information.
- Suggest potential topics for your first discussion and agree on confidentiality and no-fault termination.
- Set aside about an hour for the first meeting with your mentee.
- Discuss your expectations and your needs with your mentee. Work with your mentee on yearly goals for the relationship (communication to happen how often; what you expect of each other).
- To chart his/her success, help your mentee develop a check-list that you both can follow.

Mentee Checklist

Before the meeting with your mentor...

- Ask yourself - What are my goals? How can a mentor assist me in meeting these goals?
- Take the initiative. Introduce yourself by phone, brief letter or email. Agree on confidentiality and no-fault termination.
- Ask your primary mentor for his or her CV. Familiarize yourself with your mentor’s CV and research areas prior to the first meeting/discussion so that you already know pertinent professional information. Identify key steps in his/ her career path that seem valuable.
- Update your own CV.
- Consider the skill sets that require additional mentoring: What skills do I need to learn or improve? What do I want to change about my work style? What professional networks are important?

During the meeting...

- Discuss your short- and long-term professional goals (e.g., funding, manuscripts, courses) and work together to develop steps to reach these goals, with a timeline.
- Determine frequency of meetings. This will vary based on individual needs, but often occurs once a month, and at least quarterly. The extent of interaction can range from brief email or phone “check-ins” to lengthy follow-up meetings.
- Suggest potential topics for future meetings. (Examples: setting and achieving goals, managing time effectively in an academic environment, balancing personal and professional life, negotiating for what you want/need, completing manuscripts, etc.).

After the meeting and throughout the relationship...

- Establish your own checklist for follow up. Keep an ongoing portfolio of activities & works in progress. Check your timeline.
- Take notes on how the program is working, to later share in the evaluation.

Suggested Schedule for Mentor-Mentee Contact

- Week 1 of being matched: Mentor to contact Mentee for initial introduction
- First month: Create a plan for monthly communication, what topics the mentee would like guidance on, how often there will be emails and/or phone calls, etc.
- Annually: If possible, each should attend SRI’s Annual Meeting and plan a specific time to meet in person

- Annually: If distance allows, or the mentor/mentee attend the same meeting outside of the SRI meeting, have an in-person meeting.