

## Early Career Academics' Mentoring - Case Study – University of St Andrews

My mentoring partnership has been incredibly valuable to me throughout my postdoctoral contract. When we initially met, we decided that an informal mentoring arrangement would work well for us – a cuppa and a natter. In the two and half years since then there have been many cups of tea and plenty of chat. We have met roughly every two months, in her office (her diary is rather more packed than mine) for around an hour each time.

My mentor has been an extremely useful sounding board on a range of topics. From discussing the progress of my current research to career planning and public engagement, she has been a supportive listener, but one who asked pertinent and incisive questions. Discussing issues and ideas in a professional environment has been incredibly useful. By talking through problems with her, answering her questions and heeding her advice, I never failed to come away from meetings feeling upbeat about whatever we had been talking about.

My mentor has also been my champion. Whether it has been putting me in touch with people, acting as a referee or turning up to a show I produced about my work, she has been a constant support. Knowing that she was 'in my corner' has been very valuable to me – she has been a true professional friend.

I have also found my mentor incredibly inspirational. The diversity of her experience and her achievements, her enthusiasm and ambition cannot fail to inspire people. Talking to her about the projects that she has been involved with allowed me to see the world beyond a single research project, helping me think more broadly about my career.

There are many times in life in which I firmly believe that individuals make their own luck. On this occasion, I think that I was incredibly lucky to come to work at a university with such a well-run mentoring scheme and to be paired with such an incredible mentor. I cannot thank the scheme organisers enough and feel incredibly lucky to have met such an inspirational, supportive mentor.

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