

# Alumni Mentoring Program

of the  
Göttingen Graduate Center for Neurosciences,  
Biophysics, and Molecular Biosciences  
and its  
International Max Planck Research Schools

## Handbook



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## Mission Statement

In summer 2019 we launched the Alumni Mentoring Program for the IMPRS Molecular Biology and IMPRS Neurosciences at the Georg-August University of Göttingen. After three very successful rounds, we opened the Alumni Mentoring Program in 2022 to GGNB and are excited to welcome applications from all GGNB doctoral programs for the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> call!

This one-to-one Alumni Mentoring Program facilitates meaningful connections between experienced alumni and current PhD students of all GGNB graduate programs including its four International Max Planck Research Schools across a wide variety of academic and non-academic careers and research fields.

Focusing on career advancement, professional development and networking, this program aims to be a rewarding and inspiring experience for all participants.

We hope you enjoy this journey!

Your Alumni Mentoring Program Team



## Program Goals

Based on our mission we defined several goals how this Alumni Mentoring Program will benefit both mentors and mentees.

- **Explore** and discuss within your mentoring tandem different career paths, companies and industries;
- **Learn** about required knowledge and skills for different job profiles and which tools are needed to thrive in the competitive marketplaces;
- **Equip** the mentee with skills and tools needed to make sound and informed career decisions;
- **Assist** the mentee with establishing and accomplishing short and long-term professional goals;
- **Improve** the mentee's leadership, teamwork, creative thinking, decision making and interpersonal skills;
- **Provide** insight into the mentor's daily work life;
- **Enable** alumni to reconnect and stay in contact with their alma mater and prepare and potentially employ quality staff to their organization;
- **Facilitate** networking, character development and career advancement for both mentors and mentees.



## General Format and Timeline

### *Format*

- One mentoring cycle per year with a duration of six months per cycle excluding the application and pre-mentoring phase
- Per intake up to 20 mentees, who will be matched with their personal mentor
- Mentors are alumni from all GGNB doctoral programs including the four International Max Planck Research Schools with different backgrounds and job profiles from inside as well as outside of academia (e.g. R&D, QA/QM, product or project management, consulting, entrepreneurship, publishing)
- In addition to the mentoring tandems the mentees will benefit from
  - Introduction workshop (self-assessment, analyzing individual potential, defining personal goals for the mentoring program)
  - Individual 30 min coaching session
  - Monthly peer group meetings
  - Mid-term taking stock meetings with the program coordinator(s)
  - Kick-off and closure events

### *Timeline 7<sup>th</sup> round 2026*

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| • Call for mentee applications                             | 1 Sept – 15 Oct 2025   |
| • Selection and matching process                           | Oct / Nov 2025         |
| • Official participation confirmation for mentees          | 24 Oct 2025            |
| • Short interviews for selected mentees                    | 28–29 Oct 2025         |
| • Confirmation of mentoring tandems                        | mid-Nov 2025           |
| • Kick-off Event (in person)                               | 21 Nov 2025, 10:30–12h |
| • Introduction Workshop (mandatory for mentees)            | 21 Nov 2025, 13–17h    |
| • Individual 30 min coaching sessions (mentees)            | 4, 11 or 12 Dec 2025   |
| • Mentoring tandems and peer group meetings                | Jan – July 2026        |
| • Mid-term taking stock meetings (mentees and coordinator) | April 2026             |
| • Report and evaluation phase                              | Sept – Dec 2026        |
| • Closing event  | November 2026          |

## Eligibility Criteria and Application Process

### *Eligibility Criteria*

- **Mentees**

- Initial ideas about a future career path you would like to pursue lined out in your motivation statement
- Members of one of the GGNB graduate programs including all four International Max Planck Research Schools
- Current doctoral students with a PhD start date on 1 July 2023 or earlier

- **Mentors**

- Alumni of all GGNB programs including the four International Max Planck Research Schools
- Committed to support the next generation of your alma mater

### *Application Process Mentees*

- Mentees can apply only during the application phase (1 Sept – 15 Oct 2025).
- Submit your online application through our application portal via this link: <https://gauss-mentoring.uni-goettingen.de/>
- In addition, you need to upload your **CV** as well as your **motivation letter** (max. 1 DIN A4 page, formal letter format) stating why you would like to take part in the Alumni Mentoring Program
- Your application will be evaluated by the Alumni Mentoring Program coordinators and if selected for the program, the matching process will start based on the information you submitted and a short interview (see below)
- Selected mentees will be invited to a short interview with the program coordinators to support the matching process. The **interview is mandatory**, so **please block some time** during these days (28–29 Nov 2025).

### *Application Process Mentors*

- If you are interested to be a mentor in this program, please contact us via [alumni@gauss.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:alumni@gauss.uni-goettingen.de)

## Mentoring Program

### ***Flexibility of each mentoring tandem to decide together on the timing, format and content of meetings***

- At least one meeting per month during the entire duration of the program is strongly recommended
- The format can be flexible, e.g. personal meetings, online meetings, phone calls
- Each tandem is free to decide how they use the time together and this program is encouraging the tandems to approach mentorship in whatever style works best for both (by following our basic rules set out in the mentorship agreement)
- Potential topics for meetings of the mentoring tandems:
  - Discuss different career options and paths
  - Research “ideal careers” together, discuss next steps to land such a job
  - CV and application review
  - Conduct mock interview





### ***Mutual agreement by mentor and mentee on nature and expectations of mentoring relationship***

- Mandatory mentoring agreement has to be signed from both parties before the start of the mentoring tandems
- Framework of rules and guidance will be handed out prior to the program, which the mentor and mentee should agree on, e.g.
  - Who will take responsibility for setting up meetings?
  - What format and frequency do the meetings have?
  - Are meeting reminders necessary?
  - How to deal with arising problems? (e.g. if one party is unhappy with the relationship)
  - How is confidentiality handled?
  - How will the pair proceed if one needs to withdraw from the relationship?
  - Are there any other norms/expectations, which need to be clarified?

***Building a mutually beneficial and trusting relationship for mentors and mentees will take time, effort and patience from both sides – but it will be worth it!***



## Mentor Responsibilities

- Dedicate your time, experience, talents and energy to support your mentee to make progress towards their professional goals
- Lead by example and aim to set up a relationship of trust and mutual respect
- Be genuinely interested in your mentee, acknowledge achievements and offer positive reinforcement
- Support your mentee in maintaining a positive attitude and open mind
- Support your mentee's career growth by encouraging your mentee to seize opportunities, share your ideas, experiences and networks
- As a mentor you are not expected to offer the mentee a job, internship or job shadowing
- If you are available we would be delighted if you could join the Kick-off as well as the Closing Event



## Mentee Responsibilities

- Decide on preferred format and frequency of contact as well as duration
- Prepare well for your meetings keeping in mind that your mentor is very busy
- Be proactive in reaching out and scheduling meetings – this is the mentees responsibility
- Create an agenda for every meeting
- Establish and continuously review goals including assessing progress and set next steps
- Be open minded and seriously consider all advice and suggestions

***Mandatory participation (save the dates)***

- Short interviews for selected mentees (28–29 Oct 2025, exact slots tbc)
- Introduction Workshop (21 Nov 2025, 13–17h)
- Individual 30 min coaching sessions (4, 11 or 12 Dec 2025, exact slots will be allocated at end in November)
- Kick-off Event (21 Nov 2025, 10:30–13h, in person) and Closing Event (tbc)

