



SETAC Australasia Mentor Programme Overview and Responsibilities

Scope

This document describes the aims of the SETAC Australasia (AU) Mentor Programme and outlines the eligibilities and responsibilities of programme participants. The programme is coordinated by a SETAC AU Vice President.

Background

Feedback from the SETAC AU membership in 2013 indicated that there was a strong desire for mentoring systems in the Society. This resulted in the establishment of the Buddy System mentor programmes at the 2014 and 2015 annual SETAC AU conferences, which proved successful (26 and 27 participants in each year respectively) with 85% of surveyed participants feeling the program benefited their experience at the conference. Some partners have remained in contact after the conference and the continuation of these partnerships is encouraged and the SETAC AU Council will assist where possible. The vast majority of surveyed participants in the Buddy System indicated they would be interested in being involved in a longer-term mentoring scheme.

Programme aims

The SETAC AU Mentor Programme aims to foster a collegiate society by improving the technical and career development of members through the establishment of mentoring activities for SETAC members at all stages in their careers, including early-, mid-, late- or even post-career tracks. It is expected that mentees will benefit from the technical and professional experience of their mentors while mentors are expected to gain valuable insights into new research areas. It is also expected that this programme will benefit members in remote locations or where SETA-AU membership numbers are low, therefore increasing membership participation in the society.

Benefits to the mentee

- Assist in the transition from study to work by discussing with your mentor how the expectations may differ between employers and industries
- Provide guidance with regards to career direction by discussing with your mentor their experience in these areas
- Learn from your mentor's professional and personal experience and knowledge
- Grow your professional network
- Gain advice from the mentor to enhance your resume and job search knowledge
- Gain insights into employment within the environmental toxicology and chemistry industry sector
- Gain technical advice from your mentor's professional experience.

Benefits to the mentor

- Share your passion for your profession with a motivated student/early career researcher
- Gain exposure to students as potential future employees and collaborators
- Improve your skills in coaching and mentoring
- Give back to your professional community by sharing your insights and experience

- Stay on top of emerging fields of research through engaging in research-based discussions with your mentee
- Provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your own knowledge and work practices before advising others
- Learn fresh perspectives from the next generation of environmental toxicologists and chemists.

Eligibility and pairing

Any financial member of SETAC AU may take part in the Mentor Programme. Members wishing to be paired will be asked to complete a registration questionnaire, which will aim to gather information to enable pairing between mentees and mentors. The pairings will be conducted by at least two members of the SETAC AU Council. Participants will be contacted with information about their prospective mentor/mentee and the decision to engage in a mentoring partnership will be at the discretion of the participants.

To be eligible to become a programme mentee, participants are required to have the following:

- a willingness to communicate in a professional manner with their mentor
- a commitment to invest time into the mentoring relationship (see participant responsibilities)
- a willingness to be open and frank with their mentor regarding their expectations of the programme; and
- an understanding that their mentor will not be taking on a supervisory role of their studies/employment. A mentor in this program is not a research collaborator.

To be eligible to become a programme mentor, participants are required to have the following:

- at least three or more years' professional workforce experience in a supervisory, management or leadership capacity
- a willingness to act as a resource by sharing expertise, experience and networking opportunities
- the ability to recognise and encourage the mentee's strengths and areas for development
- a commitment to invest time into the mentoring relationship (see participant responsibilities); and
- a willingness to provide constructive and honest feedback.

Participant responsibility

It is expected that participants in the Mentor Programme contact their mentor/mentees at least once a month either in person or remotely (e.g. telephone, video conference) for at least one hour. If either participant is unable to attend a pre-organised meeting, they are to give their mentor/mentee at least 24 hours notice and re-schedule as soon as is acceptable for both partners.

If the mentor or mentee feel that the relationship is not progressing (due to diary clashes, or perhaps a mismatch of expected goals between mentor and mentee), and that an alternative partnership may be better they should contact the programme coordinator.

Timing and duration of programme

The Mentor Programme can be commenced at any time and is expected to continue for 12 months. Participants may extend their partnerships for longer than 12 months if both parties agree to the extension and inform the programme coordinator. It is natural for mentors to change over the course of the career of the mentee, as the mentees experience and directions will often change over time. A continuation of previous or future pairings resulting from the SETAC AU conference Buddy System is welcomed.