

## **Arqus Mentoring Programme for Early-Stage Researchers 2025-2026**

### Infosheet for Mentors

The Arqus Mentoring Programme for Early-Stage Researchers intends to support advanced PhDs and PostDocs by connecting them with an experienced researcher who can **provide feedback and guidance in navigating the next career stages as an academic**.

Mentors will be matched with a **PhD student or postdoctoral researcher** from their own or an adjacent discipline, from another Arqus university, to ensure enough knowledge about the field to be able to give qualified advice, but with enough distance to not be involved in the research project as such.

#### **What is the format of this programme?**

- This round of the programme lasts from October 2025 to June 2026
- During these nine months, mentor and mentee meet for a minimum of four times
- There is a Kick-Off Workshop for the mentees in September to build their peer group
- Mentees will receive online trainings in their group
- Mentors have the opportunity to join regular online Mentors' Lounges if they wish to exchange with fellow mentors about challenges or best practices

#### **Why become a mentor?**

Being a mentor to an early-stage researcher can be a very **rewarding activity**, helping them to find their footing as an academic and grow during the time spent in the mentoring relationship. It is an opportunity to build **guidance and leadership skills** and to help the next generation of scholars succeed. In turn, mentors can also learn from mentees, either by getting **insight into new research avenues** or by reflecting on the underlying structures and rules of the academic system. Mentoring also allows established researchers to reassess their own successes and strategies. As part of a European integration effort, the Arqus Mentoring Programme also offers the chance to **connect with other researchers across different academic cultures**, with potential for cooperation across disciplines.

#### **What is your role as a mentor?**

The key role of a mentor is to **offer a space to discuss ideas, possibilities and concerns regarding the pursuit of a research career** and offer guidance from your own perspective and experience. The mentee is responsible for the organisation and content of the meetings. A mentor is **not an additional supervisor** and, while of course the research topic, future research questions/fields, and related topics such as relevant journals or conferences might be discussed, the goal of this mentoring is to look broader and further at the factors that lead to a successful and satisfactory academic career. A mentor is also not a therapist, although topics such as imposter syndrome or insecurities might be addressed. The organising team will help you navigate these boundaries during the programme.

Examples of topics you might discuss with your mentee are:

- Publication strategies and navigating the peer review process
- Building and maintaining a collaborative academic network
- Crucial aspects of job applications in academia, building a convincing profile
- Insight on obtaining financing, writing grant applications and project proposals
- Teaching approaches and how to balance research and teaching obligations
- Science communication strategies and valorisation of research
- Building a structured research approach and time management strategies
- Balancing an academic career with family planning
- Challenges of living and working abroad
- Maintaining mental health while working in academia

### **How will you be supported as a mentor?**

The Arqus Mentoring Programme is guided by a **qualified facilitator** who has experience as a researcher, in research funding consultation and with leading these kinds of programmes. She will host the Kick-Off Workshop, the online sessions for mentees and the regular **Mentors' Lounges**.

Before the start of the programme, mentees and mentors will receive **guidelines, input and additional materials** on how to fruitfully make use of the time together, how to structure meetings and how to avoid common pitfalls. There will be an online meeting with all mentors and mentees to get acquainted with the team and to set shared expectations and clarify any questions about the programme. There is also the opportunity to receive advice from previous mentors in this programme, who have offered to do so.

The regular **Mentors' Lounges** offer a space to discuss challenges and successes and to get advice and feedback from the other mentors in the programme. Participation in these online meetings is voluntary, but it was seen as very beneficial by the mentors in the current round. If any questions or issues arise, the organising team will always be happy to support you in any way they can.