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## **Faculty of Science, University of Tübingen**

### **Mentoring Policy for Junior Professors and Junior Group Leaders <sup>(\*)</sup>**

Mentoring is an important component of career development for young researchers. Proper mentoring can facilitate the integration of new colleagues into the department and University. Mentoring involves a collaboration between junior and senior professionals with the primary goal being the positive development of a junior colleague's development. Over the past years, a growing number of Junior Professors and Junior Group Leaders have joined the Faculty of Science at the University of Tübingen. The intent of this document is providing recommended guidelines (not requirements) for the mentoring of Junior scientists in the Faculty of Science to enhance their career development.

The Faculty of Science mentoring program pairs a Junior Professors or junior group leaders (hereafter referred to as 'mentees') with one to two more senior professors in the department (hereafter referred to as 'mentors'). Mentors can contribute significantly to the development of their mentees' research, and teaching skills, particularly with respect to career satisfaction, career management and collegial networking. The mentoring process is intended to be informal and organized around 'chats over coffee' rather than a formal meeting where minutes are recorded. Topics discussed in the meetings should be considered confidential, unless agreed upon otherwise. Due to the intended informal nature of this, the mentoring of a junior colleague should not be considered a conflict of interest for the involvement of the mentor in mid-term or final evaluations of the mentee. Exceptions to this would occur if the mentor and mentee have co-authored publications or proposals together.

#### **Activation of the Mentoring Process:**

All new Junior professors or junior research group leaders at the Faculty of Science will be informed by the department speaker of the mentoring policy (this document) near the time of their arrival in the University. The items indicated below outline the responsibilities of the mentee and mentor so that the mentee is aware of what items they can request input on, and mentors are aware of what items they should be willing to spend time on advising mentees when they agree to be a mentor.

#### **Responsibilities of mentees:**

- Within several months of arrival in the department the mentee is encouraged to select and contact one to two persons who will function as mentors for them. One mentor should be selected in, or near to, the mentee's research expertise, and the second mentor should be outside of the mentee's expertise to provide an alternative viewpoint on career development and preparation of midterm evaluation reports.
- The mentee is responsible for contacting the department Speaker within approximately 6 months of starting their position to inform them of their selected mentor(s), or to request help in the selection of mentors.
- The mentee is responsible for contacting and scheduling meetings with the mentor(s) as needed. It is recommended that a mentee meets with at least one of their mentors once a semester (or more if needed).

### Responsibilities of mentors:

Colleagues agreeing to be mentors should be willing to meet with and provide verbal feedback to mentees on (at least) the following items if needed:

- **Career:**
  - Provide career guidance on balancing obligations between research, teaching, and professional society and University service.
  - Provide guidance with setting milestones (e.g. considering the evaluation points), that help sharpen the research profile and strengthen the mentee's CV.
  - Provide advice on future career steps, job application guidance, and on how to decide which direction to take for future employment.
  - Provide input to the mentee on the preparation of their mid-term and final evaluation reports
  
- **Manuscripts/project proposals:**
  - Provide guidance on scholarly activities related to peer-review publications and proposal preparation. Guidance could include, for example, selection of the best journal/funding scheme, reading and discussing manuscripts and grant proposals prior to submission.
  - Provide insight into funding opportunities within Germany and internationally, pointing to appropriate announcements and providing encouragement to apply when appropriate.
  - Provide guidance on how to manage research projects, e.g. realistic timelines and work plans for project success.
  
- **Teaching:**
  - Provide feedback on teaching including effective lecture preparation, lecture evaluation and appropriate course offerings to enhance departmental teaching at the BSc and MSc levels.
  - Provide guidance on how to effectively supervise student theses and dissertations. Possibly mediate between mentee and student in the case of conflict.
  
- **Networking:**
  - Introduce the mentee to academic colleagues and experts across campus, as well as helping facilitate national and international networking.
  - Introduction to, and support within, the University administrative "landscape": Introduce the mentee to the university structures and "decision pathways" and assist in contacting appropriate persons to resolve problems.

(\*) **Criteria for the status of „Junior group leader“**

1. The candidate expresses his/her interest to obtain this status.
2. The candidate regularly instructs BSc, MSc, and PhD students.
3. The candidate published in the last three years at least one original articles where he/she is the corresponding author.
4. The candidate obtained in the last five years external grant(s)\* to support, in total, at least two PhD students (total of six years) or a post-doc position# (total of three years).

\* Fortüne or other University internal programs are not considered an external grant

# The post-doc position should be an additional position and NOT the own position