



Athene Mentoring

Factsheet for Mentees and Mentors for the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Sciences

Athene Mentoring supports women* in successfully pursuing academic qualifications. The program is designed for those who see their professional future in academia, research or research adjacent fields outside the university.

The core focus is to address the specific situation of women* within the academic system and the university environment and to actively counteract structural disadvantages.

The program is structured as cascading mentoring. This means that participants can act both as mentees as well as mentors. This creates a dynamic, supportive network across all qualification levels -from Bachelor's students to full professors. However, joining the program strictly as a mentee or exclusively as a mentor is also possible upon request. Additionally, where required, postdoctoral researchers can be supported by an interdisciplinary mentoring tandem (consisting of a female mentor and a male mentor).

The program is offered in German and English.

Target groups

- BA students
- MA students
- PhD students
- Post-docs
- Junior Professors
- Professors

The Athene Mentoring approach is based on:

- Networking & Community: Cross level exchange and networking throughout the entire program
- Further training: Participants in the Athene Mentoring Program can also take part in the training courses offered as a part of the Awareness Campaign.

Examples of possible types of mentoring:

- Cascade Mentoring: Women* from one qualification level are mentored by women* from the next level up (Bachelor's students by Master's students, Master's students by doctoral candidates, doctoral candidates by postdocs, and postdoctoral researchers by professors).
- Group Mentoring: For example, a group of 5-6 mentees is continuously supported by 1-2 mentors (although smaller groups are also possible).
- One-to-One mentoring: Individualized support through direct, personal exchange
- Tandem Mentoring: Mentoring can also take place in a tandem. If desired, a male mentor can also participate in and support the mentoring process

Requirements for Mentees:

- A genuine interest in the advancement of women* in academia, research and higher education.
- Willingness to actively shape and develop the mentoring relationship.

What are the advantages of participating as a mentee?

Women* encounter specific, often systemic challenges during their studies and academic qualification phases. Individual hurdles are frequently misinterpreted by those affected as personal shortcomings, even though they are rooted in structural barriers and unconscious biases (gender biases) within the academic system.

Athene Mentoring provides a space to reflect on these dynamics, share valuable experiences and develop effective coping and career strategies.

- Certificate: Upon successful completion of the program, mentees can request an official certificate of participation.
- Change of Perspective: Mentees have the option to become mentors themselves later in the program or at a future date.

Requirements for Mentors

- Interest in supporting and promoting women* in higher education and science.
- Commitment to actively build and maintain a relationship with the mentee.
- Enthusiasm for passing on experiential knowledge and informal “rules of the game” of the academic world.

What makes a mentor?

As a mentor you do not need to be an expert in your mentee’s specific research topic. Instead, you act as an advisory companion and a peer on equal footing who is a few career steps ahead and has successfully navigated similar challenges. Your role is to listen, address questions and collaboratively look for solutions within the mentoring network.

What are the advantages of being a mentor?

Many mentors find the exchange highly rewarding for their own careers. Supporting a mentee encourages reflection on one’s own careers. Supporting a mentee encourages reflection on one’s own path while strengthening personal leadership, advising and communication competencies.

- Tackling discrimination together: The network offers a platform to make discrimination at the university visible and to take collective action against it.
- Certificate: A qualified certificate can also be requested to acknowledge the valuable commitment of our mentors.

See also the guide for a mentor on our website

Participation of Men’ as Mentors in the Athene Program

Although women are the primary target group of the Athene Program, the participation of male colleagues as mentors is explicitly welcomed.

Due to cascading structure of the program, men cannot act as direct mentors in all phases. However female scientists in the postdoc phase benefit significantly from the change of perspective and experience shared by established male colleagues. Furthermore, the program offers men a valuable opportunity to engage with gender issues and unconscious biases (gender biases).

Time Commitment

The frequency of mentoring meetings is determined individually by the participants. We recommend meeting every four to eight weeks. These meetings can take place in person, via TEAMS, by phone or through email exchanges.

The Matching Process

To ensure a harmonious and productive mentoring relationship, you can state personal interests, as well as your family/care situation on the registration form. Special requests regarding your match (e.g. the option to work in a tandem with a male mentor or preferences for specific foreign languages such as fluent French or native Spanish) can be added in the “Comments” section. Completing these fields is entirely optional.

Participants are initially admitted to the program for a one-year period. A continuation in the same constellation or a rematch is possible, depending on the availability of sufficient mentors. Leaving the program is flexible and possible at any time.

Typical Themes for Mentoring Meetings:

- The specific situation of women* in studies, research and teaching
- Balancing family life, private responsibilities and an academic career (work-life balance).
- Strategic career planning, networking and profile building
- Insights into the informal structures and dynamics of the academic system.
- Developing conflict resolution, negotiation and management skills.
- Peer counselling and active listening regarding current professional challenges

The mentoring network includes:

- Mentees
- Mentors
- Coordinators at the Gender Equality Office
- Athene Mentoring student assistants within the faculties
- Faculty and departmental gender equality representatives

Further procedure:

Registration must be completed through our website by November 30, 2026, at the latest.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact:

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Please find the contact persons for each faculty via our website:

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/de/206721>