



BioMentorship Programme Handbook

2018/19

Session 1

[February 2019 - May 2019]

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Director's Note

Welcome to MBIOS' BioMentorship Programme 2018/19!

Malaysian Bioscience Scholars (MBIOS) is an academic, innovative and inquisitive association targeted to serve the current and future generation of Malaysian Bioscience students across the globe. Founded by students for students, we aspire to perform as a cultivation hub for all students to Connect, Experience, Develop, Grow and Conduct Research as per our core pillars. Striving alongside the nation's efforts to turn the biotechnology sector into one of the key economic drivers by 2020, we endeavour to nurture young Malaysian scientists on an international scale.

The BioMentorship Programme is a mentoring scheme designed with the aim to assist members to maximize their potential and expand their network among the life sciences community. It provides a platform for members to receive guidance from senior colleagues, mainly on topics related to their field of studies or interest, thus making it in line with most if not all of our association's 5 mission pillars, as mentioned above.

This handbook has been prepared for both mentors and mentees registered on the BioMentorship programme, to help explain what the programme aims to achieve, what it involves, how it is run and to address FAQs we think participants may want clarification on.

My team and I sincerely hope that you will enjoy and benefit greatly from this program. Thank you for your interest and we look forward to welcoming you! For further inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

Aida Helena Binti Affandi
Director of Research and Development
Malaysian Bioscience Scholars 2018/19
Email: aida.helena@mbios.org (Director Contact) / rd@mbios.org (Team Contact)

Bi mentorship Programme Timeline

The BioMentorship programme 2018/19 will run across two sessions, with recruitment starting in December 2018. The first and second sessions will commence across February - June 2019 and August - December 2019 respectively.

Month	Event	Additional Details/ Links
20 December 2018	Mentor recruitment	Online Recruitment
7 January 2019	Mentor profiles published	Contact details are excluded. https://www.mbios.org/mentor-profiles
	Mentee registration & preferred selection of 3 mentors	Online Registration
29 January 2019	Assignment of pairs - Commencement of Session 1	Done via email
February - May 2019	Session 1, monthly prompts will be given	Sent in the form of emails to spark discussions eg. internship/job applications
1 June 2019	End of Session 1	
2 June 2019	Mentors can opt out of Session 2 Feedback session for mentees and mentors	Reply an email Fill out an online feedback form
August - December 2019	Session 2 of BioMentorship 2018/19	

Notes :

1. Due to previous instances of mentors who do not end up with mentees, mentee **registrations will be on a first come first serve, on a rolling basis**. Those who enrol halfway through the session (anytime between **February - April 2019**) will be welcomed to join albeit the shortened time being able to be involved in the session. **Those who register after the 15th of April 2019 will be automatically put into the waiting list for Session 2**. Nevertheless, you are encouraged to register before the commencement of a particular session instead of during, to maximize your time with your mentor and increase your chances of getting the mentor of your choice.
2. Yes, there may be instances where mentors would end up with no mentees, in the event of this occurring we encourage mentors not to be discouraged and stay in our programme as you might still receive mentees via our rolling recruitment.

Notes on Procedures

Mentor Preferences

Prospective mentees will be asked to include their top three preferences for mentors based on the mentor profiles published on MBIOS' platforms. These will aid us in allocating mentees into their mentor groups. While it is our aim to allocate each mentee based on their first mentor choice, please note that this might not always be possible due to the limited number of mentees each mentor will be comfortable having. Mentors will be allocated on a first come first serve basis. Should a particular mentor become oversubscribed, we will allocate you on to your second choice and so on. In the event that all your mentor choices are oversubscribed, we will allocate you on to the next mentor who best suits your interests. If all mentors are oversubscribed, we will put you on the priority list for session 2 of Biomentorship 2018/19.

Allocation of mentor groups

Please note that MBIOS will aim to allocate all mentees their first mentor choices. Allocation of mentor groups will be completed prior to the commencement of the session. Participants should expect a confirmation email by the end of this period. This confirmation mail to the mentees will include the names of other mentees who have been assigned with the same mentor and the mentor's email address. On the other hand, the mentors would receive a confirmation email which include short profiles on their respective mentees.

As previously noted, in the event that mentors do not receive any mentees, we will also inform you via email.

Should any participant not receive their confirmation email by then, please get in touch with MBIOS using the contact details provided at the start of this handbook.

Reallocation of mentor groups

While we hope that mentor groups will be final once they are allocated, we understand that there may be unforeseen circumstances which may prevent you from benefiting or contributing fully to the programme (e.g. not feeling entirely comfortable with your current mentee/mentor). In such cases, we request for either party to contact us as soon as possible if they would like to be reassigned to another group. Please note that reallocation of mentor groups may not always be possible and you may either be - 1) put on the priority list for session 2 if you are a mentee or 2) choose to withdraw from the programme.

Mentors and Mentees

Mentors

The role of a mentor

Mentors play a key role in the success of the BioMentorship Programme by providing a positive role model to students by sharing their experiences, challenges and insights into how they overcame any obstacles within their fields of study.

The role of a mentor may include:

- Helping a mentee articulate prior experience, e.g. in writing a job/studentship applications.
- Signposting mentees to useful contacts, resources and networks.
- Encouraging social/academic interaction amongst group members and maintaining confidentiality within the group.
- Exercising a sufficient level of reliability and responsiveness by being available to answer emails or calls from mentees (within reason)
- Willing to organise in-person meetups if possible.
- Encouraging mentees to take a leading role in driving the relationship by planning potential topics of discussion.
- Deciding on the elements of mentorship (e.g. the frequency of communication and meetings, whether social or formal).

Mentor Support

While some will feel instantly at ease in their role as a mentor, prompts containing ideas for topics of discussion will be sent out to both mentors and mentees in the form of monthly emails. These will aid with the facilitation of smooth and effective sessions.

Mentors are also encouraged to contact the R&D Director and team at aida.helena@mbios.org or rd@mbios.org

We are here to support you and help with your growth as a mentor too!

Mentor Networking

Mentors will have the chance to opt into our mentor database along with preferred contact details which will be circulated only among mentors for the planning of any future networking events among mentors.



Mentees

We hope that by the end of the programme, mentees will get to know their mentors well. This includes (but is not limited to) identifying the mentor's strengths, depth of knowledge and skill set.

Responsibilities of a mentee

To make the most out of the support offered by mentors, mentees are encouraged to:

- Take the initiative to reach out to their mentors first once the confirmation email containing mentor contact details has been received.
- Inform your mentor of your preference for the mentoring dynamic, i.e. group mentoring or one-on-one mentoring as early on as possible.
- Be proactive in planning the topics of discussion instead of just anticipating prompts from mentors.
- To share information about their backgrounds, interests, ambitions and some objectives that they would like to achieve by the end of the programme session.
- Demonstrate their commitment to the relationship by appreciating the mentor's advice and keeping any commitments made e.g. attending meetups or responding to emails.
- Display receptiveness to new ideas and feedback

Confidentiality must be respected at all times. At no point should mentees pressure their mentors into revealing personal information or discussing a particular topic if they are unwilling to do so.

Benefits for mentees

Mentees can expect various benefits through their participation. These include:

- Enhanced networking opportunities
- Academic and professional guidance
- Insight into possible career progressions and industry opportunities
- Increased self-confidence and interpersonal skills
- Increased self-reflection for future decision making
- A more personalised development opportunity
- Opportunities to explore different Life Science fields

Boundaries & Confidentiality

As free and easy as we would want mentor-mentee relationships to be, boundaries have to be established and confidentiality has to be respected. Although mentees can expect their mentor to be approachable and supportive, the mentoring relationship is best maintained professionally. Both parties are reminded to always be respectful and refrain from bringing up sensitive or offensive subjects. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, do not hesitate to make it known and contact us. Mentors and mentees will be required to fill out a non-disclosure agreement form which will be sent to you via email before the commencement of each session.

We encourage mentors and mentees to set their own rules nonetheless but here are some points to consider :

Contact details

MBIOS may request a variety of contact details. These will be stored in our internal database for future reference. It is expected that communication throughout the programme will take place across email. That being said, there are no restrictions placed on the preferred form(s) of communication of mentor groups. Other examples include Whatsapp or Facebook messenger groups or personal messages.

In-person meetings

In-person meetings are encouraged, especially if both mentor and mentees are from the same region. However we are aware that it may not be feasible to organise regular in-person meetings. The decision to initiate such meetings will fall on the agreement of both mentor and mentee.

Content of meetings/discussions

The content of the mentoring sessions should remain confidential between the mentor and mentees. Breach of confidentiality is permitted only if either party is concerned about the other's mental, emotional, or physical wellbeing. It is recommended that mentors inform mentees of this policy at the beginning of the session. To further facilitate confidentiality within mentor groups, mentors can decide if they would rather mentor all their mentees as a group or on a one-to-one basis.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1) Who contacts who first?

Mentees should contact their mentors once the confirmation emails containing mentor contact details are received.

2) How many mentees can a mentor expect to have?

The maximum number of mentees per mentor will be allocated based on the mentors' preference which would have been recorded in the registration form beforehand.

3) When will I know who my mentee/mentor is?

For this session, by the 29th of January 2019, via email.

4) Am I eligible?

Mentors would be expected to be:

- a graduate of a bioscience degree
- a current postgraduate student in the bioscience field (Master's/PhD)
- currently working in a bioscience-related industry (BigPharma, Health Management, Policy work etc including Academia)

Mentees would comprise of:

- MBIOS members
- Students of all levels including doctorate level and above

5) What if I'm not comfortable with my mentor/mentee?

We understand that the initial introductory period may be slightly awkward but we hope this will not put you off the programme. Although MBIOS encourages all participants to make the most out of their BioMentorship experience, you may consider switching mentor groups if you find yourself feeling uncomfortable in your current group. If that is the case, please contact MBIOS immediately

6) Can I change my mentor?

Although it is highly discouraged as it may be hard to reallocate you midway through the program, you may be able to subject to availability of space in your desired mentor's group. However in exceptional cases, do contact MBIOS at the first instance. A letter of acknowledgement would be sent to both parties and MBIOS would serve to re-allocate you to another group. If it is not possible, you may be either asked to stay with your current mentor if possible, choose a different mentor instead or be put on the priority list for session 2.

7) How long does the programme last?

The formal program will last between February to May 2019 for session 1. However, informal contacts may continue after, if both parties agree. Session 2 will run from August to December 2019.

8) Does the BioMentorship Programme maintain confidentiality?

Yes. Most contact details provided upon registration are solely for administrative purposes. Besides mentor profiles that will be published online, the only contact detail that will be revealed to participants is their mentor's/mentee's email addresses. Disclosure of mobile phone numbers and social media accounts will be under your own discretion.

9) Can I join the programme again if I am already on it for the current session?

Short answer, yes. Refer to Section : At the End of the Programme ; Registration for the next session

10) Can I be a mentee and also a mentor at the same time?

Mentors are also free to register as mentees within the same session using the mentee registration form. This will hopefully allow mentors of a lower academic level to benefit from the advice of more experienced mentors.

At the end of the session...

Feedback survey

A feedback form will be sent to both mentors and mentees towards at the end of the session – do check your inboxes regularly! All mentors and mentees are strongly encouraged to complete this as it will be essential for MBIOS so that we can retain elements of the programme that participants value, whilst addressing any concerns that may have arisen. The programme structure will vary slightly from session to session based on the feedback we would have received.

The survey will also include feedback on your mentor/mentee. Feedback comments provided will be sent privately to both mentors and mentees where available.

Registration for the next session

Session 2 will commence on the 1st of August 2019. New mentor registration will be in June 2019, while mentee registration will start in July 2019. Announcements will be made via the MBIOS social network pages, and via email.

For existing mentors, you have to opt out of the programme via a form sent in an email for the next session of the year, otherwise it is assumed that you will continue in the following session.

For mentees, you would have to re-register to the mentor of your choice. As you would have already established reasonable contact with your previous mentor it is not encouraged for you to continue on with the same person, as it is only beneficial to you and your mentor to network with more people. Do note that another mentee may be on the priority list for the same mentor in session 2, so you will only be reassigned to your previous mentor if space allows.

Last but not least..

Please do not hesitate to contact us at rd@mbios.org for further enquiries.

Also, to keep up to date with programme announcements, registration deadlines and other MBIOS programmes/events, please remember to sign up as an MBIOS member and follow us on all our social media accounts!

Contact Us

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