



# MBIOS

MALAYSIAN BIOSCIENCE SCHOLARS  
**BIOMENTORSHIP PROGRAMME**

## **BIOMENTORSHIP PROGRAMME HANDBOOK**

Session 2

2nd May – 25th September  
2018

Starting off with a small introduction to our association, Malaysian Biosciences Scholars (MBIOS) is an academic, innovative and inquisitive association targeted to serve the current and future generation of Malaysian students pursuing or having interest in the field of Bio-sciences across the world. Founded by students for students, we aspire to perform as a cultivation hub for all students to Connect, Experience, Develop, Grow and Conduct Research in the interest of the bio-sciences. 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 to the pinnacle of their potential through the exchange of knowledge on a global scale.

The BioMentorship Programme is a mentoring scheme designed with the aim to assist members 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.

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

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# ABOUT THE BIOMENTORSHIP PROGRAMME



The BioMentorship programme is a mentoring scheme for life science students of all academic levels including pre-university students interested in pursuing a degree in the life sciences.

The programme aims to provide mentees advice and guidance relating to career and academic concerns, expand their network and facilitate inter-year relations across the various fields of life science. This will be achieved by allocating mentees according to their mentor of choice, of whom will be from their current field of study or interest.

## THE TIMELINE OF THE BIOMENTORSHIP PROGRAMME SESSION 2 BRIEF STRUCTURE :

Month	Event	Additional Details/ Links
February 2018	Mentor recruitment	Closed now.
1st March	Mentor profiles published	Contact details are excluded. <a href="https://www.mbios.org/mentor-profiles">https://www.mbios.org/mentor-profiles</a>
10th April	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentee registration & preferred selection of 3 mentors	<a href="https://form.jotformeu.com/73074571384359">https://form.jotformeu.com/73074571384359</a>
30th April	Assignment of pairs	Done via email
2nd May	Commencement of Session 1	-
2nd May-25th September	Tri-weekly prompts	Sent in the form of emails to spark discussions
6th June-18th July	Grace period for mentors to opt out from session 3	Via email to <a href="mailto:rd@mbios.org">rd@mbios.org</a>
25th July	Mentee registration deadline	<a href="https://form.jotformeu.com/73074571384359">https://form.jotformeu.com/73074571384359</a>
End of September	Feedback & re-registration for Session 3 forms	Given via email
25th September 2018	End of Session 2	-

**Note:** MENTEE registrations are on a rolling basis. Those who enrol halfway through the session (anytime between 2nd May - 25th July 2018) will be welcomed to join albeit the shortened time being able to be involved in the session. Those who register AFTER 25th of July 2018 will be automatically put into waiting for Session 3. Nevertheless, it is 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.

More information on mentor and mentee re-enrolment for session 3 is provided towards the end of this handbook.

In the year of 2018, MBIOS would be having 3 sessions of this program which runs on a four monthly basis.



# REGISTRATION AND OTHER 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. Should a particular mentor become oversubscribed, we will exercise priority based on the academic level of mentees. This is to ensure mentees who are in their later years of study will be given the opportunity to maximise their benefits from the programme. Therefore we strongly encourage mentees to only select mentors they will be comfortable being allocated to.

Given the structure of the programme, mentees are assumed to continue for the following session upon completion of the current one. Mentor preferences will be requested again within a relevant form provided. The freedom for mentees to choose their mentors enables mentees to not only build stronger relationships by remaining with the same mentor - should they also decide to continue with the programme - but also to gain a wider exposure to other life science fields by choosing a mentor of a different field than their own.

### ALLOCATION OF MENTOR GROUPS

As previously mentioned, MBIOS will aim to allocate all mentees their first mentor choices. Allocation of mentor groups will be completed at least a week 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. 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 might take some time and you might end up without a group during this period. Hence we kindly ask for your patience and understanding while we sort the reallocations out.



# MENTORS

## 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.**
- **signpost mentees to useful contacts, resources and networks as well.**
- **encouraging social/academic interaction amongst group members and maintain 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 the topics to be discussed.**
- **Deciding on the mentoring structure (e.g. the frequency of communication) and meetups**

Fellow mentors should exhibit genuine enthusiasm for the programme as mentees are likely guided by a mentor's level of interest. Patience, persistence and a positive attitude towards the outcome of the programme is essential. Not all mentor groups are immediately successful and relationships may take some time to develop. We also expect mentors to have a good sense of fun as we ultimately hope that the programme will be an enjoyable experience!

# MENTOR SUPPORT



While some will feel instantly at ease in their role as a mentor, prompts containing some ideas for topics of discussion will be sent out to both mentors and mentees in the form of tri-weekly emails so that mentoring sessions will be as effective as possible.

## BENEFITS FOR MENTORS

Being a mentor can be very rewarding, for example :

- expanding your network
- provide an opportunity to develop skills in the areas of leadership, communication and organisation.
- Given that mentors are usually a more senior and experienced person, mentors stand to gain personal satisfaction and fulfilment by giving back to the student community that they were once a part of.
- Meeting younger like-minded people can help to facilitate the flow of new knowledge and ideas, which is incredibly useful particularly for the Life Sciences.
- Interactions between individuals of different academic and professional levels can lead to increased self-reflection and understanding between both parties





# MENTEES

It is hoped that by the end of the programme session, mentees will get to know their mentors well and be able to identify 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 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.
- remain open to new ideas and be receptive to the mentor's feedback and opinions.

Confidentiality must be respected at all times as well. At no point should mentees pressure their mentors into revealing any personal information or speaking about a particular topic if they are unwilling.

## BENEFITS FOR MENTEES

Mentees can expect to experience various benefits by participating in the programme. Of 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
- Opportunity to explore a different Life Science field



# BOUNDARIES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

One of the keys to successful mentoring is to establish some ground rules and to adhere to them. This ensures that both parties are on the same page. The mentor provides a supportive and reflective space that is also practical and motivating. It is important to make a distinction between mentoring and teaching, and mentoring and friendship.

Although mentees can expect their mentor to be approachable and supportive, and to listen patiently and non-judgmentally, the mentoring relationship is unique in that it is professional and practical. Clear boundaries should be clarified at the outset and maintained throughout the course of the relationship. This is important in minimising potential misunderstandings. Some of the boundaries it will be necessary to address include:

# BOUNDARIES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

## CONTACT DETAILS

While MBIOS may request for multiple forms of contact details, we will only be releasing email addresses of mentors to their mentees and vice versa. Rest assured that mobile phone numbers will not be provided by MBIOS so as to preserve the privacy of both parties. Email will be the primary form of communication throughout the programme. However mentors are free to share their mobile phone numbers and other contact details directly with their mentees if deemed necessary or should they feel comfortable doing so.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The content of the mentoring sessions should remain confidential between the mentor and mentees. This should be discussed in the first meeting to make sure that everyone agrees to this and is made aware that whatever they divulge will not leave the group. Confidentiality should only be breached if mentors feel that their mentee is at risk of harming themselves or others. It is recommended that mentors inform mentees of this policy at the beginning of the session. To further facilitate confidentiality within mentoring groups, mentors can decide if they would rather mentor all their mentees as a group or on a one-to-one basis.

## IN-PERSON MEETINGS

In-person meetings are encouraged, especially if both mentor and mentees are from the same region. Nevertheless this may not always be the case and it may not be feasible to organise regular in-person meetings. The decision to initiate such meetings will fall on the behalf of the mentor.

## NATURE OF DISCUSSION

There are various topics that can be discussed throughout the course of the programme, some of which may include academic guidance and whether to pursue a postgraduate degree. Participants are free to bring up whatever they feel like discussing.

Even so, 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 to request to have the topic of discussion changed.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## 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?

We aim to inform both parties of their groupings at least a week prior to the session commencing. This will be in the form of a confirmation email so do check your inboxes often!

## 4. WHO ARE THE MENTORS/MENTEES?

Mentors will consist of third year undergraduates and above, while mentees will mostly comprise of pre-university students as well as first and second year undergraduates but may also include students of higher levels of study.

## 5. AM I ELIGIBLE?

Mentors would be expected to be:

- a third year undergraduate or of higher qualifications

Mentees would comprise of:

- MBIOS members
- Students of all levels including pre-university or doctorate level

## 6. 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 at the first instance.



## **7. CAN I CHANGE MY MENTOR?**

Yes, you can. Although it is highly discouraged as it may be hard to find you a replacement midway through the program. Furthermore, this programme will only last 4 months per session. 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.

## **8. HOW MUCH TIME CAN(SHOULD) I SPEND WITH MY MENTEE/MENTOR?**

There is no specific amount of time one should spend with their mentor/mentee as this is subject to the availability of mentors. It is hoped that all participants will take the initiative to maintain the relationship throughout the session.

## **9. HOW LONG DOES THE PROGRAMME LAST?**

The formal program will last for four months per session but informal (friendships) may continue on an informal basis. Session 2 runs from 2nd of May to 25th of September.

## **10. IS THE BIOMENTORSHIP PROGRAMME CONFIDENTIAL?**

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.

## **11. CAN I JOIN THE PROGRAMME AGAIN IF I AM ALREADY ON IT FOR THE CURRENT SESSION?**

Yes, you can. You will have to re-register for other sessions and indicate your mentor preferences using the relevant forms. You may remain with your existing mentor if they have also decided to re-register for the programme.

## **12. 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.



# EXITING THE PROGRAMME

## FEEDBACK SURVEY

A feedback form will be sent to both mentors and mentees towards 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. Given that, 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. However, in the case of MENTORS, ratings shall be posted as part of their profiles on the MBIOS webpage with prior permission. This is to better assist and inform the next batch of mentees with their mentor selection. If you have any concerns regarding this, please do drop us an email. Copies of the feedback forms are available on the MBIOS website.

## REGISTRATION FOR THE NEXT SESSION

Session 3 will commence on the 2nd of October 2018. Mentor registration will be in July 2018, while mentee registration will start on the 15th of September 2018. Announcements will be made via the MBIOS facebook page and website.

**Mentors:** Existing mentors will be assumed to be continuing with the programme in the following session. However if you do not wish to be in for session 3, we would highly appreciate if you could inform us within the time frame of 6th June - 18th July 2018 via email. Existing mentors will also have an opportunity to update their profile details for the next session within this time frame. Feedback forms will be sent separately towards the end of the current session.

**Mentees:** Along with the feedback form, existing mentees will be asked to inform MBIOS if they wish to update their personal (CV) details and/or mentor preferences for the following session. A time period to inform MBIOS if they wish to DISCONTINUE from the next session will also be stated in this email. Existing mentees can decide to remain with the same mentor if that mentor has also decided to stay on for the second session.

MBIOS will assume all mentors and mentees are willing to fulfill their roles for following sessions **UNLESS NOTIFIED OTHERWISE.**

To keep up to date with programme announcements and registration deadlines, please remember to sign up as an MBIOS member!