



## **ERC MENTORING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **An internal document for UiB researchers**

#### **WHO CAN APPLY TO WORK WITH AN ERC MENTOR?**

- UiB researchers preparing a grant proposal toward an upcoming Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant deadline can apply to engage an ERC Mentor.
- NB: UiB researchers planning an application to the ERC Synergy or Proof of Concept Grants are not eligible for an ERC mentor.

#### **WHO CAN BE MY ERC MENTOR?**

- ERC mentors should be academic researchers with significant relevant disciplinary expertise and a good knowledge of the ERC instrument. This might mean that they have held an ERC grant themselves, have acted as an ERC panel member or expert reviewer or have, by some other means, significant insight into the specificities of the ERC instrument (or similar instruments facilitating bottom-up/excellent research) and what is required to succeed in the ERC competition.
- ERC mentors cannot be UiB employees. They can work at any other institution within or outside of Norway. They do not need to be European or work at an European institution.
- You do not need to know your mentor well before you begin, but it is worth taking into account when choosing a mentor that you will be sharing confidential scientific and research ideas with them and you should feel comfortable to trust them in this regard. Your mentor might be a member of your own professional network. Alternatively, suitable candidates might be recommended to you by a close colleague or trusted member of your network. It is not prohibited to engage an unknown researcher as your mentor, but it is important to note that if you do so, it is at your own risk.

#### **HOW SHOULD I ENGAGE A MENTOR?**

- Once you have identified a prospective mentor and alerted your department/institute, you should make informal contact with them directly to hear if they are willing to mentor you.
- If you receive a positive response, you should ask your local administrator (this will usually be the Head of Administration at your Institute) to make contact with them to initiate the formal process of engaging them as your ERC mentor.

#### **HOW MANY MENTORS CAN I ENGAGE AT ONCE?**

- As a rule, it is recommended that the full honorarium be paid to a single mentor, and that researchers should only engage a second mentor and split the honorarium across two mentors if there is an exceedingly strong rationale to do so. It is not envisioned that this should be standard practice. In the event that mentoring is split between two researchers, this should be reflected in their responsibilities, which should be commensurately lowered.
- Only one honorarium of 30,000 NOK should be paid per applicant.

#### **DOES MY MENTOR NEED TO SIGN A FORMAL CONTRACT?**

- Mentors will be sent a standard UiB contract to sign and return in order to receive payment. This will be managed by your department. It is important to note that this contract is general, and does not contain any details pertaining to your ERC mentoring relationship.



- NB: This means that you and your mentor are primarily responsible for agreeing up the conditions of your mentoring relationship.

#### HOW CAN I MAKE SURE I BUILD A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MENTOR?

- In advance of engaging your mentor, it is advisable to consider what type(s) of support you hope to receive from them and how you wish to work. The *Information for ERC Mentors and Mentees* document can offer ideas to help frame your thinking here.
- Once your mentor has formally agreed to support you, it is highly recommended to set up a first meeting where you discuss and agree how you will work together. Guidance on what to cover in your first meeting is shared in the *Information for ERC Mentors and Mentees* document, and includes: agreeing shared goals; setting expectations around frequency of meetings, establishing key tasks covered under your agreement; agreeing the duration of your mentoring relationship; discuss together how to protect your/their intellectual property during the mentoring relationship and beyond. You may choose to discuss any other issues that you and your mentor deem appropriate.
- It is highly recommended that a document (a simple Word document will suffice) outlining the principles of your shared agreement be developed and a copy kept by each of you. This is not legally binding, but can act as a useful reminder of your shared agreement, and can also be used as a reference to check your work is on track, or consulted if either of you wish to suggest changes later on.

#### WHAT IS REASONABLE TO EXPECT FROM MY ERC MENTOR?

Working with an ERC mentor is an individual process which should reflect both the respective needs of the mentee and the strengths of their mentor. However, certain standard practices exist. These are outlined in the *Information for ERC Mentors and Mentees* document, and include: periodical meetings; at reasonable intervals (monthly digital meetings are suggested but frequency can fluctuate); discussions around the state of the art and groundbreakingness of the ERC concept; reviewing an agreed number of proposal drafts; the offer to sit on a mock interview panel, should the applicant be invited to stage 2.

#### WHEN SHOULD MENTORING END?

- It is expected that ERC mentors will support mentees as they develop their ERC concept and write their proposals. It is therefore standard practice that the submission deadline is used as a date to conclude the formal mentoring relationship, with the understanding that limited further support might be offered if the mentee passes stage one and is invited to interview.
- NB: If you make the decision to withdraw (i.e. not to submit) your ERC application **before** the deadline, **it is your responsibility** to alert both your mentor and your head of administration as soon as possible. If your mentor has supported you in good faith for a reasonable period of time toward the deadline and acquitted their responsibilities per your shared agreement, the department should release payment at this point.

#### HOW WILL MY MENTOR BE PAID?

Once they have signed and returned the contract and tax form sent by your department, your mentor will be paid by your department.



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN  
*Division of Research and Innovation*

**DO I NEED TO SUBMIT A REPORT ONCE MENTORING HAS CONCLUDED?**

There is no longer a requirement to complete a report and the conclusion of your mentoring relationship. Unless you alert your head of administration to the fact that mentoring has concluded before this time, they will assume that the relationship concludes on the day of your ERC deadline.