

Mentorship Program

ISN Mentorship Application Guidelines

ISN Programs Chair:

David Harris, Australia

Mentorship Program Lead:

Arpana Iyengar, India

Mentorship Program Co-Lead:

Rolando Claure-Del Granado, Bolivia

Contact:

E-mail: mentorship@theisn.org

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1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The ISN Mentorship Program aims to foster expertise-sharing and expertise-building relationships in the field of nephrology. Through this program, ISN members connect with the ISN global community and build mutual learning partnerships raising understanding of the global nature of kidney health and care and the various contexts in which they occur. Mentees can work on their specific professional goals together with a mentor, while mentors can develop their coaching and leadership skills.

Through the ISN Mentorship Program, ISN members receive guidance to improve the areas they need to grow in. The following areas are just a few examples of what mentors and mentees can focus on: clinical practice, basic science, renal pathology, clinical research, research methodologies, writing and reviewing competences, leadership development, general career advice, digital skills, etc.

SOME DEFINITIONS:

Mentor: An experienced nephrologist or health worker providing guidance to a less experienced nephrologist or health worker (a mentee).

Mentee: A nephrologist or health worker seeking support and advice from a more experienced nephrologist or health worker (a mentor).

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & KEY PRINCIPLES

Both mentors and mentees must be active ISN **Members** or **Associate Members** in good standing to apply to the Mentorship Program.

- Open to all ISN Members and Associate Members from all regions (including HIC);
- No age limit for mentees and mentors;
- Priority consideration for relationships within the same region (unless not relevant).

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

Application forms (a separate form is housed for mentors and mentees) can be found on the online platform: <http://programs.theisn.org/>

One needs to sign up on the platform to access the forms.

- Mentors can apply by **March 1** each year.
- Mentees can apply by **July 1** each year.

The application platform usually opens 1 month before the deadline.

The following forms need to be submitted:

1. **Application form** includes 3 parts: Personal and Professional information / Areas of expertise (for mentors) OR Area of interest (for mentees) / Motivation & Details about the Mentorship Program
2. **Upload your CV** in pdf format.

4. HOW TO SUBMIT A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION?

The ISN Staff will first review the applications and ensure the applicants are active ISN members in good standing. The Mentorship Program Advisory Group will then review and approve all the applications (for both mentors and mentees) and give special attention to:

- *For Mentors:*
Key careers achievements (publications, career milestones), experience, areas of expertise, and motivations to be a mentor.
- *For Mentees:*
Objectives, timeline, areas of interests, and motivations to be a mentee.

Please note that in order to be approved in the Mentorship Program but also to be matched properly, it will be essential to carefully identify your expertise (in the case of the mentors) or the expertise sought after (in the case of the mentees).

For the mentee, defining clear objectives and a timeline attached to those will be key to submitting a successful application and establishing a good relationship with the mentor.

If your application is rejected, the ISN staff will contact you, give you some constructive feedback on how to improve your application and invite you to apply again.

5. MATCHING PROCESS

After reviewing each application for eligibility, the Mentorship Advisory Group will aim to establish a suitable mentor-mentee pairing for the successful applicants as based upon the responses received in the forms.

Please note that the mentees can pick 3 mentors from a list (by order of preference) that will be made available to them during the application process or are free to suggest other people as long as they are ISN members in good standing.

The matching will therefore be based on the following criteria:

- Pick of mentors (by order of preference) by the mentees (when available)
- Common area of interest & expertise
- Corresponding timelines & objectives
- Similar language & region encouraged (when possible)

Once the matching will be recommended by the Mentorship Advisory Group, the Mentors will be given the opportunity to agree to a proposed mentee before the match is made official.

If no suitable match is readily available, the applicant will remain active in our program until the time that a match can be made with a suitable partner.

WHAT TO DO IF A PAIR DOES NOT WORK WELL TOGETHER:

Despite all the precautions taken above, the mentor or mentee should simply inform the ISN staff if a relationship is not successful. The Mentorship Advisory Group will subsequently propose another matching for both the mentee and the mentor. Please note that the new matching may not be immediate and may need to wait until the next application period.

6. TIPS ON ESTABLISHING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTOR AND MENTEE

ISN facilitates the development of supportive relationships by providing a platform and pairing individuals who need to develop specific competences with experienced professionals who can offer valuable guidance and advice. ISN also provides guidelines to help mentors and mentees build a successful partnership. The success of the program very much depends on the pairs' commitment and efforts.

We recommend following these tips to establish a successful relationship:

- **Organize a get-to-know-you session** to introduce yourselves, define your responsibilities, and build an environment of trust. Another important aspect will be to agree on the basic rules of cooperation (frequency of the interaction, communication platform, etc.).
- **Establish mutually agreed upon objectives** that will be the basis for the mentoring activities. It will be important for the both the mentee and mentor to explore their goals and expectations for the relationships.
- **Set up a duration for the mentoring.** Agreeing on a timeline depending on what your objectives are will be important depending on your project. We recommend at least 6 months to a year minimum for a meaningful relationship.
- **Collaborate to solve problems.** Mentors should provide constructive feedback to mentees on goal progression, and mentees should feel like active participants allowed to choose which plan to put into action. Open, respectful, and supportive communication is essential to this process.

ROLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTORS AND MENTEES:

- The **mentors** should adjust their role to meet the mentee's needs and offer their help in different areas such as career development, networking, guidance, counselling, etc.
- The **mentees** should be fully involved and active in the relationship. They have to be aware of what they want from the relationship and able to formulate clearly in order for the mentor to be truly helpful.

Below are some qualities we are looking for both mentors and mentees:

A Good Mentor:

- Is positive, honest, patient and an active listener;
- Lets the mentee speak and does not monopolize the discussion;
- Has empathy and is open to learning from the mentee;
- Respects the mentee's cultural background;
- Admits when they cannot answer questions;
- Avoids judging and moralizing.

A Good Mentee:

- Is positive, curious and an active listener;
- Is consistent in meetings with the mentor;
- Is able to formulate clearly their objectives;
- Is open to suggestions and other points of views;
- Is willing to improve and further develop;
- Has an active role with the mentor.

7. BENEFITS

Please note that there is no financial support attached to the ISN Mentorship Program.

However, enrolling in the Mentorship Programs gives you access to some in-kind benefits:

- **Certificates**
 - Certificates will be issued to mentors when they are first accepted into the Program.
 - Certificates of completion will be provided after finishing a successful mentorship relationship (depending on the duration, 1 year for instance)
- **Priority access to ISN Programs**

Please be aware that an application is not guaranteed a successful outcome since the criteria of the Programs prevail and they remain competitive in nature. Priority consideration will be given in the review process of the following programs:

- [Clinical Research Program and Scientific Writing Course](#) supports research and education initiatives involving nephrologists, health workers, and local authorities in low and middle-income countries.
- [Educational Ambassador Program](#) offers support for a specific hands-on training by an expert for up to four weeks to advance new initiatives, skills or services.
- [Fellowship Program](#) gives physicians from disadvantaged parts of the world the opportunity to pursue essential nephrology training abroad to advance kidney care in their home region.
- [Sister Centers Program](#) provides educational support and guidance to centers in need within the developing nephrology community by pairing them with established centers to form supportive partnerships.
- [Emerging Leaders Program](#) provides early-career professionals in integrated kidney care the opportunity to work with international experts in the field to become qualified for a leadership role in the advancement of global kidney care.
- **Priority for grants to attend WCN and ISN Frontiers**
 - Mentors and Mentees are given *priority* points to receive either travel or virtual grants for WCN and ISN Frontiers Meetings. The grants are reserved for ISN members in good standing and for the benefit of physicians and scientists who are residents of low- and middle-income countries. The final decision is based on other several scoring criteria which include successful abstract(s) submission, age, and current and/or past participants in ISN Programs. Note that the maximum number of grants that any individual may receive in a lifetime is limited to 3.
 - For both WCN and Frontiers, Mentorship Program participants should directly apply to the events' organizers via the official relevant websites. The actual arrangements and confirmations are announced via a personal letter from the WCN/Frontiers' organizers.

8. REPORTING PROCESS

In order for the Mentorship Program Advisory Group to evaluate the progress of the Mentorship Program participants and the impact of the Program, the mentors and mentees are asked to submit a Progress Report approximately 6 months after the start of their work together.

The report constitutes the basis for reviewing the matched pairs' achievements, but they are mostly a tool for the pairs to record their progress and identify the needs for the future. Progress, achievements and challenges must be clearly articulated. These reports will be very short (maximum 200 words) and will address the following items:

- Names of persons involved;
- Progress accomplished vs objectives;
- Challenges;
- Plan of action.

Pictures are also welcome (but please do not enclose them in a power point or pdf file as we can't use them. We prefer to receive .jpg files with short description in the file name).

9. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAN I APPLY TO THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM IF I AM NOT A MEMBER?

No, you must be an active ISN Member in good standing to be eligible for all ISN Programs. We invite you to visit our [membership page](#) to become a member before applying again.

CAN I RE-APPLY IF MY APPLICATION WAS DENIED?

Yes, applications for a second Mentorship Program are accepted. You will receive feedback on your application if it was denied and we encourage you to apply again taking these improvements into consideration.

I CANNOT ACCESS THE ONLINE PLATFORM WITH MY ISN CREDENTIALS

This is because both platforms and accounts are not linked. You should therefore use another password to login onto the Mentorship Program Application Platform.

10. CONTACT

For more information and assistance, please contact mentorship@theisn.org

ISN Global Operations Center

Avenue des Arts 1-2

B-1210 Brussels, Belgium