WESTEM MENTORING MANUAL

for mentors and mentees

WESTEM

Welcome to the **WESTEM** Mentoring program!

This is a guide through the information and steps of the mentoring program for women in STEM. This manual describes the most relevant steps on the process, to guide the mentors and mentees as well as to serve as inspiration for others who would like to contribute to the empowerment and encouragement of women in STEM.

Visit our website WESTEM.eu.

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WESTEM Mentoring definition

The **intention of the mentoring program** is to provide a direct link between influential female mentors and mentees while encouraging the mentees to pursue tertiary education in STEM studies and career paths. This relationship is dedicated to supporting the girls' and womens' personal and academic growth over a period up to a maximum of 4 months, focusing on:

• Addressing career aspirations: connecting undergraduate students considering a STEM graduate application or exploring post-grad opportunities with current students who can provide support and guidance.
• Fostering and encouraging the mentees' growth and accomplishment of goals in their career.
• Inspiring a new generation of women in STEM.
• Create a support system for gender underrepresented students in STEM.

Characteristics of mentoring

Connection type 1:1
Private sessions online through the discord platform

Traditional mentoring style
A formal relationship is set through a mentoring agreement and implies a commitment to work under a certain period of time

Flash mentoring style
It allows for a more flexible and quicker connection as the mentee asks questions and seeks for knowledge on a specific topic

Duration of the connection
From weeks up to a 4 months program or just a single session (flash mentoring)

Frequency of meetings
Minimum required from 1 hour to 3 hours per month

Your role as a MENTOR

Your role is to **encourage and foster the personal and professional growth of the mentee** through the sharing of knowledge, skills, and experiences. Based on a mutual trust relationship, respect, and communication, involving both parties meeting regularly to exchange ideas, discuss progress, and set goals for further development.

THE MENTOR HELPS THE MENTEE BY:
• Aligning expectations: **create a safe space** for mentees to make their expectations explicit.
• Assessing understanding: work with mentees to understand what they know and are capable of and **consider what the mentees can do to further develop and achieve success**.
• Teaching the mentee about a specific issue, by sharing of her own experience and motivating the mentee to go beyond what he/she already knows.
• Helping the mentee **recognize their own talents**, develop relational skills, and set realistic expectations and objectives.
• **Facilitating the mentee's growth** by sharing resources and networks.
• Advising the mentee on study, jobs, and careers that can be relevant for them according to the mentee's objectives and desires.
• Communicating effectively, active listening, and provide timely and constructive feedback to **challenge the mentee to move beyond her comfort zone** and take risks.
• Creating a safe learning environment for addressing equity and inclusion.

MORE SPECIFICALLY:
• Learning more about STEM disciplines to discover opportunities for growth and professional development.
• Addressing existing biases and breaking down barriers and prejudices that can weaken the mentee's prospects.
• Supporting the mentee in trusting her own talents.
• Advising the mentee on the study and work paths that can be relevant for them, considering the mentee's objectives and aspirations.

YOUR TASKS COULD FACILITATE THE MENTEES BY:

• **Developing an identity** as a STEM professional.
• **Developing self-confidence and motivation** in one's ability to work in STEM.
• Help to successfully navigate in STEM culture.
• Reflecting and thinking critically about their goals, how to deal with bias, or **how to overcome anxiety** about assessments.
• Reflecting on and exploring their interests, abilities, beliefs, and ideas.
• Realizing their professional aspirations by including information about materials and strategies, goal setting, and opportunities for learning, networking, and meeting others interested in STEM.
• **Providing guidance** about financial resources (scholarships, networks, programs, and job opportunities)

As a mentor, it is important to reflect on what basic competencies that you need to have or develop through a mentoring process.

In other words, some of the characteristics that will help you to be a good mentor, rely on your capacity to connect with the mentees as your experience can guide the way to their own success.

This assessment created by the University of Winsconsin can help you to reflect on this.

Remember

BE ENTHUSIASTIC
Being passionate and excited about feeding into their lives is a great stimulant that builds rapport and foster engagement.

RESPECT
Respect your time and treat others as a valuable resource, someone who's worth investing into.

ABILITY TO SPEAK OPENLY AND HONESTLY
You should be willing to lead tough conversations and 'tell it like it is', even if it seems harsh. A great mentor will give feedback and push the mentees to go further.

LISTENING SKILLS
Even if you have many anecdotes to share, it won't always be about yourself. Ask questions, let mentees speak, and listen to them.

EMPATHY
A good mentor will be empathetic to the mentee's unique situation and work hard to understand and advise them accordingly.

Your role as a MENTEE

Your role is to discuss **your questions, doubts and curiosity** for where to start or how to continue in the STEM path.

AS A MENTEE YOU SHOULD:
- **Question yourself and reflect** on your own expectations.
- Clearly communicate your needs and expectations.
- **Show curiosity** and keep up with the commitment made to explore opportunities presented by the mentors.
- Learn about jobs, career paths, corporate cultures, and industries.
- **Show gratitude** to mentors for their time.
- Share responsibility with the mentor for the quality of the relationship.

TO HAVE FRUITFUL MENTORING SESSIONS, YOUR TASKS ARE:
- **Initiate communication** with the mentors once they accept your request.
- **Commit** to a minimum of one to two hours per month (or what you agree to under the mentoring agreement session) for working with your mentor.
- Plan and set the agenda for each meeting.
- Provide feedback to the mentor and accept feedback from them with an open mind and oriented toward growth.
- Furthermore, you can **participate in the discussions and events** that are published on the community hub. Fill in your profile in detail to let others connect with you and explore the network.

As a mentee, it is important to reflect not only on what your needs are but also, on how to get the best out of these sessions. It all starts with the right mindset; **how can you aim to set yourself up mentally for this purpose?**

BE OPEN AND RECEPTIVE
Mentors will often offer constructive feedback, suggestions, and different perspectives. To get the most from the relationship, you should be open to this input and willing to act on it. Furthermore, you should be willing to ask for help, able to show vulnerability, and open to exploring new adventures.

BE COMMITED TO DEVELOPING
This isn't just a chance to wonder about your hopes and dreams. Mentoring is an opportunity to take real action and see positive change in your career. You should be focused on setting clear goals and working towards them. You should be willing to ask questions, seek answers and try new things – even if they seem scary.

BE RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE
If you say you're going to do something, follow through on it. Remember, your mentor is making themselves available to support you. They're investing in your growth, but you need to do your part to see results.

What can I expect from a mentor?

THEY HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE
You can try to hold yourself accountable in your career. But having someone constantly remind you about your specific objectives can help you keep them at the front of mind. A mentor can prompt you to keep actively pursuing your goals and offer useful suggestions on how to do that.

THEY OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT
Life has a way of kicking you while you're down sometimes. When this happens, a mentor can help you realize that you still got this! They'll encourage you to keep going even when things look bad.

THEY CAN ACT AS A SOUNDING BOARD
Whether you're defining your career, or you are a student grad looking for ways to launch your career, having a mentor gives you someone to bounce ideas off. They can listen to your challenges, offer an unbiased perspective, and help you find solutions.

Setting up your profile on the platform

To get started with the mentoring program, you will need to set up your profile on the WESTEM community platform in Discord.

First you will **pick the role** that represents you. To increase your visibility and find the right mentor/mentee its important that you **provide some information** that could help you your potential mentor or mentee to see who you are and what you are looking for. A mentorship is about affinity of goals, aspirations, and experiences so **a detailed profile with help you to find the best suit**.
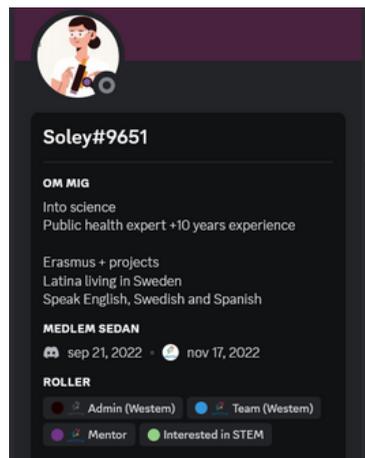

Perhaps you can add information about your area of expertise, like: Science, Tech, Math, Mechanical Engineering etc; the country you are living in, and languages you speak.

The more detailed the profile is, the better the chances are to find adequate persons in the network with similar interests to reach personal goals.
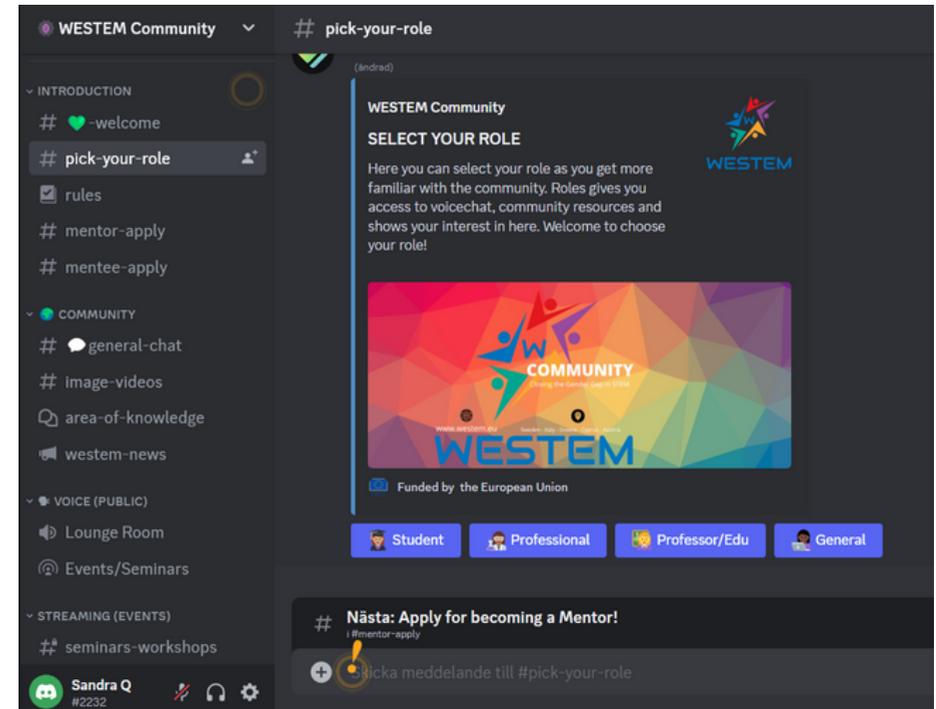
Matching process

➤ After both the mentors and mentees have filled in their profiles, the mentors will introduce themselves in the mentor-presentation channel.

➤ The mentees will then visit the channel to read the introductions of the mentors available for the program. **Perhaps you will find a profile that resonates with you!**

➤ Once the mentee has chosen a mentor, just send a request to connect.

➤ Consequently, the mentors will then be able to either accept or decline the invitation from mentees.

➤ Once the mentee has found a mentor, it is the mentees task to initiate contact and set up a first meeting!
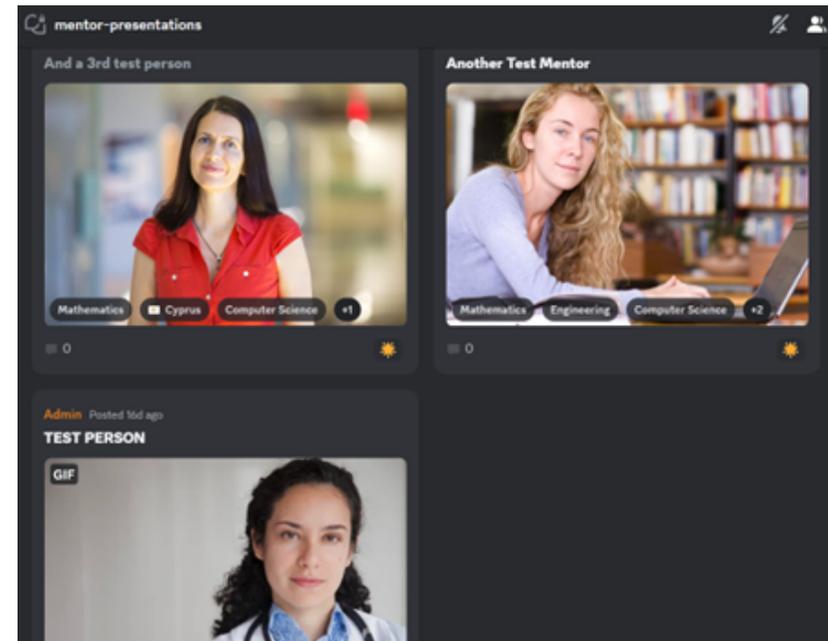
How do you find a suitable mentor?

Here is a list of things that you can keep in mind when looking for a suitable mentor.

THEY INSPIRE YOUR GROWTH

Perhaps you know exactly what you want to get out of your career. Or maybe you're yet to find your passion. Either way, a mentor will focus on your professional growth, ensure you explore new opportunities, challenge you and work to improve your skills and knowledge. They don't need to be in the same career or country as you, either. They may be someone with similar values or passions as you or someone in a similar role within a different area.

EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE

If you have specific goals maybe you need someone who's spent longer in the career than you or has skills and experience to share (this doesn't mean someone who's older than you).

Checklist for mentees

- Join the online community and sign up for the mentorship program
- Choose your mentor
- Read and accept the mentoring code of conduct
- Read the manual and reflect on what you want from the mentorship
- Reach out to your mentor for a first meeting, explore the resources available

Checklist for mentors

- Join the online community and sign up for the mentorship program
- Read and accept the mentoring code of conduct
- Read the manual and join the online prep meeting for mentors and reflect on what you want from the mentorship
- Fill in the form - mentor presentation - with your profile
- Explore the different resources available for your sessions

Mentoring Cycle

The pathway for the mentoring relationship, the so-called mentoring cycle, includes four phases.

FOR TRADITIONAL MENTORING
You will go through the entire cycle, including filling in the mentoring agreement and doing the evaluation.

FOR FLASH MENTORING
You will skip phase number 3 and focus on the other phases during the session. You can use the mentoring agreement as a resource if you want, and you do the evaluation after the session.

Preparation
Self-reflection
Build rapport
Set boundaries
Establish trust

1

Closure
Evaluate success
Capture lessons learnt
Focus on what´s next

4

Negotiation
Set expectations
Agree on timeline
Set success criteria

2

Enabling
Work towards accomplishing goals
Measure progress

3

Mentoring Life Cycle adapted from Myllyviita.fi.

Phase 1: Preparation

BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING
The mentee can reach out to the mentor for the first online meeting (or face-to-face) after the request is accepted by the mentor. Before the first meeting, it is important to **reflect on yourself** and your journey in terms of mentoring.

The mentee is invited and encouraged to keep a mentoring journal that is useful to write down reflections, commitments, and feedbacks that can be useful as input for the next meeting as well as a source for self-evaluation and evaluation of the progress.

Self-reflection for mentors:
1. Who were your mentors or the people who were there to guide, support and strengthen you and how did they contribute to your success?
2. What lessons did you learn from them?
3. What were the most satisfying aspects of those relationships and why?
4. What is the benefit of this mentoring relationship for me?

Self-reflection for mentees:
1. Have there already been mentors in my life?
2. What goals would I like to have achieved after the mentoring process?
3. How could the mentor help me concretely?

Maybe you already have a specific goal you want to work on. If not, **here are some specific subjects**, than can be discussed during the Mentoring Cycle.

· How to expand the circle of academic and professional contacts?
· How to prepare for the job market as a woman in STEM?
· How to succeed in internships interviews?
· How should I choose between academia and industry?
· How to be successful in STEM career?
· How to navigate under the gender stereotypes in STEM?
· How to gain more self-confidence in STEM studies?

DURING THE MEETING

1. Build up a basis for trustful conversations: This means creating a trusting relationship between the two of you. The mentoring relationship is characterized by **mutual appreciation and understanding**. It is about keeping the balance between establishing a relationship and learning.

The mentors can also serve as a guide for mentees' behaviours, values, and attitudes. So mentees benefit from engaging with a mentor who shares values and deep-level similarities with them.

Generally, the preparation and negotiation phase can merge and be discussed at the first meeting, or they can be split up into a second meeting. This can be designed individually.

2. Identify goals & expectations. After these steps, you can start to identify your goals and expectations of the mentoring, which are part of the **mentoring agreement**.

Examples of long-term goals:
· Affirm and expand my strengths.
· Build self-confidence for study and work in STEM.
· Standing up for oneself etc.
· Address existing biases and break down barriers and prejudices in the STEM field in my course or my work.
· Empowerment - to see a future in the STEM field.

· Get to know each other!
· Share background information and experiences about your career and how did you get where you are right now.
· Talk about your own life path.
· Take time to know the interests, wishes, failures, and fears of the other.
· Find common interests, likes, or dislikes.
· Always treat each other with respect and goodwill.

Checklist

- [ ] Arrange date for first meeting with the mentor
- [ ] Self-reflection before the meeting
- [ ] Get to know eachother
- [ ] Establish trust
- [ ] Set boundaries
- [ ] Consider goals
- [ ] Discuss the mentoring agreement

Phase 2: Negotiation

This phase usually starts in the **first meeting** (online or face-to-face) after getting to know each other and setting the basis for communication. This phase is about specific needs, expectations and goals (mentioned above).

Concerns are clarified here, and uncertainties and questions are transformed into goals. The overall goals of the mentoring agreement will be specified. In this phase, it is important to agree on a timeline.

This could be from a few weeks to a maximum of four months. This depends on the goals of the mentees. It may be that the goal can be reached after one session.

After every session, both parties can do feedback on the app, about on how the session went. This feedback is mainly to reflect on the mentoring process.

**The following questions may
be helpful for mentors and mentees at this stage:**
· What do you expect from this mentoring program?
· How long are you willing to commit to this program?
· When are your available?
· How will we work together?
· How often do we meet?
· What specific goals do I want to achieve? (Max. 3 goals)
· Define how this mentoring process can be successful.

Discuss the mentoring agreement:
· Here it is important to determine the goals & expectations as well as steps to achieve it
· Set boundaries. Point out what you can't and won't do as part of the mentoring program.
· How often do you meet and how long are you going to meet?
· Discuss confidentiality: any sensitive issues that will be discussed will be held in the strictest of confidence and if there are issues that are off limits for discussion.
· Relationship termination clause: if the mentoring relationship is unproductive, it can be interrupted by individual decisions without question or blame, just inform of the decision to the other person.

Set **success criteria** for the process.
Example of success criteria are:

As a mentor I am successful when
...I strengthen the competencies of my mentee
...I pass on my professional and life experience
...I provide insights into my professional field of activity
...I am willing to learn new things myself

As a mentee I am successful when
...I define and pursue my professional and personal goals
...I openly address and work on fears and weaknesses
...I rethink and question my actions
...I accept tips and hints from the outside
...I make decisions and act on my own responsibility
...I am aware of my strengths

Checklist

- [ ] Discuss expectations
- [ ] Agree on a timeline
- [ ] Agree on concrete goals together
- [ ] Define success criteria
- [ ] Set date for next meeting
- [ ] Agree on tasks and goals until the next meeting
- [ ] Provide feedback on the session

Phase 3: Enabling

This phase is where the main work happens. It is about **working towards accomplishing goals**. The number of meetings is agreed individually, depending on how many are necessary. In this phase the mentor and the mentee work on enabling growth. Goals are evaluated, edited, revised, etc. by both mentor and mentee at the end of the session.

This phase is the most demanding. Difficulties or challenges may also arise here. The mentoring relationship should be flexible enough to adapt to changes. Here it is important to listen actively.

> Ask regularly for feedback to provide a satisfying learning experience and keep the learning process in mind.

> Don´t be afraid of constructive criticism, it sets the reflection process in motion.

> Get information from other resources as well - you may not have the answer to all questions and that is ok.

The main work in achieving the goal lies with the mentee. The mentor provides support, feedback, and advice. But it is not only about reaching the goals. Rather, it is about developing confidence in its own abilities to achieve the goals set. It is about the process that strengthens the skills and competencies to achieve goals and empower girls and women to pursue STEM-related subjects and careers.

Here are example questions to reflect on throughout the mid-term of the process:
· How has your mentoring relationship been developing?
· Are you reaching the goals you set at the beginning of the program?
· Was this what you expected when you joined the program?
· What would make this program better for you in the future?

Checklist

- ☐ Evaluate goals
- ☐ Revise goals
- ☐ Edit goals
- ☐ Give constructive feedback
- ☐ Listen actively

Phase 4: Closure

This is the **last phase** of the mentoring cycle, it happens **when the mentee has successfully achieved its goals** with the mentor's support. The mentee feels confident to continue without the support of a mentor. It is important that both the mentee and the mentor feel satisfied with ending the mentoring relationship.

Ideally, a final meeting is arranged here again, either online or offline. In this phase, you can review the mentoring agreement you agreed on. Take the time here to gather all the insights and reflect on the entire process. Evaluate the success and the lessons you learned. **Look at what goals you have accomplished and what you were able to personally take away from the mentoring relationship.**

Also, **talk about the future**, and what will be the next steps for the mentee after the mentoring program has ended.

Guiding questions for the last meeting:
· Which goals were met?
· Which goals have not been met? Why not?
· What have I learned about my strengths and challenges?
· How am I going to apply what I have learned from this relationship?
· What have I learned about my strengths and challenges related to STEM?
· Did I identify existing biases and prejudices in the STEM field that affected my choices? Do I know how to address them?
· What impact did the mentoring have on my intentions of study/ work in STEM?

Checklist

- Review of mentoring process
- Review of mentoring agreement
- Conclusion of the mentoring relationship
- Next steps for mentee
- Fill out the feedback template

Evaluation of the mentoring

The feedback is important to reflect on the work done, how do you feel throughout the sessions, as well as to recognize achievements. You will make 2 types of evaluations.

AFTER EACH SESSION - EVALUATION:

▶ You can reflect on the work done, just go to #session-evaluation and fill in the quiz. This is just for you (mentor or mentee) to be aware of your work done this day.
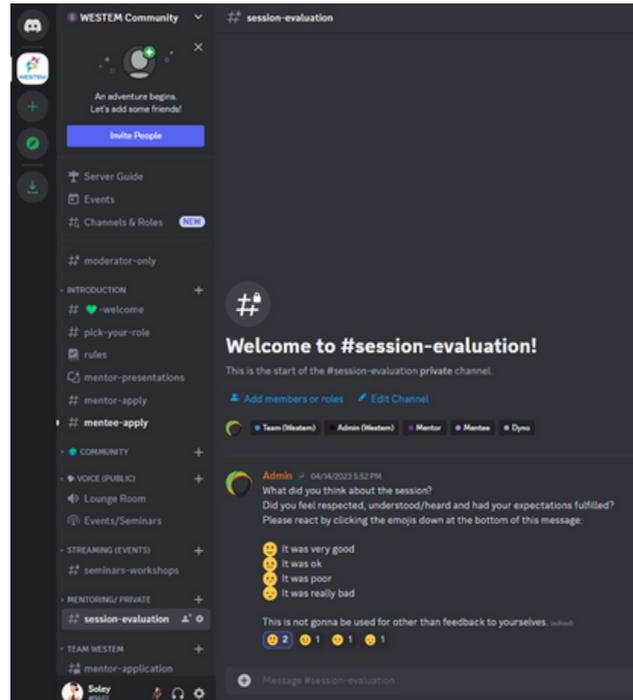
FINAL - EVALUATION:

▶ Let the admins know that you have finished a cycle.

▶ A final evaluation form at the end of the cycle will be filled in to revise in retrospective how the mentoring went and what were the personal gains after this process.

This evaluation will be shared with the project and will give us an idea of number of sessions, quality, and effectiveness of the sessions.

Materials & resources

The purpose of the mentoring sessions is to help you both, mentors and mentees, to grow and develop, as well as to keep track on the mentoring sessions. To facilitate this process, the WESTEM project has put together a number of useful resources that both mentees and mentors can benefit from.

You will find these resources in the discord community as well as on the website. Among them you will find a selection of resources that will help you to take the best from the experience of the mentoring. You will also find inspiration, materials such as the mentoring agreement as well as tips and skills for mentoring.

Some of the topics and things that you will find among the resources are:
- Articles with tips for mentors
- Skills for mentoring
- Self tests for mentoring
- Topics and things to discuss during the mentoring sessions
- Material & templates for the mentoring sessions
- Toolkits
- Articles about gender wage gaps, gender equity and society
- Texts and videos about how women in STEM can overcome the obstacles and challenges they may face
- Tips on how to be confident in your role in STEM
- Videos on inspirational and historical women in STEM
- Resources specifically aimed at universities
- Networks for women in STEM