

Academics in Solidarity

– General Guidelines –

§ 1 Definition and main objectives of the mentoring program

Academics in Solidarity is a peer-to-peer mentoring program that brings together postdoctoral researchers, who had to flee their home countries because of ongoing military conflicts and/or profound limitations to their academic freedom, with established scholars in Germany, Lebanon and Jordan. The program seeks to create a network of solidarity, strengthen the value of cross-cultural research cooperation and open up new perspectives within the academic environment of the host countries. The program offers support through peer mentoring, academic counseling, systematic network building, and funding of small research endeavors initiated jointly by mentors and mentees. It further benefits mentors by offering them special training as well as administrative and technical support both prior to and throughout the mentoring process.

§ 2 Structure and guidelines of the mentoring program

(1) *Academics in Solidarity* is a voluntary peer-to-peer mentoring program that is open for scholars of all disciplines. Applications for the program are possible at any time.

(2) Since *Academics in Solidarity* aims for a permanent re-integration of its mentees into scholarly life, only scholars with at least three years of academic work experience are eligible for serving as mentors.

(3) Mentors may conduct both one-on-one-mentoring and group-mentoring sessions. However, mentors supervising several mentees simultaneously are expected to offer one-on-one mentoring sessions at least sporadically. Group-mentoring sessions may not be offered to more than three mentees.

(4) Mentoring should endure for at least twelve months. Shorter mentoring processes are possible, but should not last for less than nine months. Mentoring relationships continuing beyond the regular twelve-month mentoring timeframe are welcomed.

(5) Prior to the actual mentoring process, mentors and mentees are expected to sign a mentoring agreement. This agreement records the contents and form as well as the duration and frequency of the mentoring process. Details of the mentoring agreement may be modified subsequently. *Academics in Solidarity* carefully matches the individual mentoring capacities of its mentors with the particular mentoring needs of its mentees in order to provide optimal starting conditions for each mentoring process.

(6) Mentors are free to make public their voluntary involvement into the mentoring program (e.g., via their personal websites). For the sake of their mentee's privacy and personal safety, however, mentors may not publicise the names and current academic affiliation of their mentees unless they were explicitly permitted to do so.

(7) Mentors and mentees alike are expected to strictly follow the principle of confidentiality within the whole mentoring process and to respect the customary guidelines for good scientific practice as provided by the German Research Foundation (DFG).¹ Violations of this principle as well as of these guidelines may lead to the immediate termination of the mentoring process.

(8) Mentors and mentees may mutually and independently agree on the specific contents and form of each mentoring session. Nevertheless, *Academics in Solidarity* regards regular counseling and academic exchange as an absolute minimum condition for any mentoring process. It is further expected that mentors assist their mentees in identifying suitable funding opportunities for long-term research projects (see § 3 for more information on requested mentoring services).

(9) Mentoring can take place on site (e.g., within the premises of the mentor's home institution) or remotely (email, phone, video chat, etc.). In general, *Academics in Solidarity* seeks to arrange local mentoring relationships that allow for regular interpersonal academic exchange between both mentoring parties.

(10) The mentoring process ends:

- with the expiration of the agreed mentoring period
- when there has been no regular contact between both mentoring parties for a longer period of time
- when the mentoring agreement has been considerably violated by one or both mentoring parties
- in case of a severe violation of the principle of confidentiality and/or the guidelines of good scientific practice
- at the request of one or both mentoring parties.

§ 3 The mentors: eligibility criteria and services

(1) *Academics in Solidarity* collaborates with mentors who

- hold a PhD (or equivalent) in any academic subject
- have at least three years of work experience in the higher education or academic research sector
- are both willing and able to provide a safe space for regular academic exchange and counseling
- are affiliated with an Arab or German higher education institution (in exceptional cases mentors may be based in other European countries).

(2) Besides functioning as regular dialog partners, mentors are requested to introduce their mentees into the academic landscape of their host countries. Although they are relatively free as to the particular methods and procedures of obtaining this task, *Academics in Solidarity* regards the following mentoring services as mandatory:

- regular academic and consultative exchange (preferably monthly)

¹ See http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/principles_dfg_funding/good_scientific_practice/ for a detailed description of these guidelines.

- assistance in academic network building (e.g., by facilitating contact to other scholars)
- administrative support (e.g., by providing access to libraries, data bases, archives, etc.)
- counseling on academic career opportunities and suitable funding options for long-term research or teaching projects.

Joint research or teaching activities between mentors and mentees are not considered as compulsory components of the mentoring program. At the same time, *Academics in Solidarity* explicitly appreciates collaborations of any kind that effectively contribute to a sustainable fostering of cross-cultural academic cooperation.

(3) *Academics in Solidarity* offers its mentors special training in regard to professional mentoring methods and collaborative research project development as well as administrative and technical support both prior to and throughout the mentoring process. Also, mentors and mentees will get the chance to exchange ideas and experiences with other program participants at annual network meetings. The support for mentors and mentees is dependent on and limited by the financial and human resources of the program.

§ 4 The mentees: eligibility criteria and services

(1) *Academics in Solidarity* is a mentoring program for scholars of all disciplines who had to flee their home country because of ongoing military conflicts or because of political restrictions that led to a severe threat to their academic freedom and existence. Admission to the program is not dependent on the potential mentee's country of origin. However, applicants must provide sufficient evidence for their status as a recognized refugee (preferably issued by the candidate's host country or the UNHCR) or as a scholar under threat (e.g., a document issued by a credible third party aid organization). In general, registering for the mentoring program marks only the first step of a thorough evaluation and selection process. Therefore, *Academics in Solidarity* is not able to guarantee admission to its program for each individual applicant.

(2) Applicants are preferably early career researchers at the postdoctoral level. In limited cases, *Academics in Solidarity* may also support advanced PhD candidates and senior researchers.

(3) *Academics in Solidarity* is mainly conceived for academics who *recently* fled their home country. Thus, the priority is given to applications from candidates who do not reside outside of their home country for more than five years.

(4) Applicants are not requested to submit a detailed research proposal. At the same time, though, they are asked to document their potential for successful re-integration into academia and the academic job market (e.g., through academic certificates, publications, teaching experience, etc.). Applicants may list the names of up to three referees that might help verify the candidate's eligibility for the mentoring program. In general, *Academics in Solidarity* only consults external referees if such a procedure does not negatively affect the personal safety of the candidate concerned. *Academics in Solidarity* ensures that both the application

and the mentoring process will be conducted anonymously and that program administrators may be contacted on a strictly confidential basis.

(5) *Academics in Solidarity* provides connections to experienced academic mentors, targeted career development training, and funding for small research endeavors initiated by mentees (possibly, in cooperation with their mentors). However, the program does not offer particular job placements or funding of academic positions. The program administration also highlights that the success of the mentoring program rests largely on the mentee's personal commitment.