



# THE ISN MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### 1. OVERALL PROGRAM CONCEPT

The ISN Mentorship Program aims to foster **expertise-building relationships** between experienced nephrologists (the mentors) and nephrologists from low- and middle-income countries (the mentees) who would benefit from guidance in a specific area(s). The program focuses primarily on mentees requiring **counsel in research and related skills**, as well as mentees who are **under 40 years of age** seeking counsel in an area not specifically related to research. Mentors and mentees are matched by the ISN Mentorship Program Committee based on the information provided in their applications.

The Mentorship Program is a joint effort between the Research Mentorship Program (RMP) Committee and the Young Nephrologists Committee (YNC).

The aim of the program is to formalize and stimulate **regular interaction** between a mentor and the mentee for a 3-year period, whereby active guidance is incited and a tangible outcome is expected.

Successful participants (based on submitted progress reports) of the Mentorship program will be given additional consideration when applying for **other ISN programs**. Similarly, participants from other ISN programs will also be given priority consideration for the Mentorship Program.

## 2. AREAS OF RESEARCH-BASED GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE

Below is a summary of key areas that the Mentorship Program wishes to specifically address. Mentors who can and are willing to provide assistance in the below areas are actively encouraged to sign-up.

- **Addressing the most appropriate and/or relevant research topic/study:**  
Mentors could choose to disseminate skills and knowledge pertaining to their own areas of interest and expertise OR choose to guide the mentee on specific research questions relevant to the particular region or community.
- **Guidance on research methodologies:**  
Mentors could guide their mentees with research methodologies as per their fields of competence, or if possible facilitate their mentees to participate in workshops on research methodologies.
- **Designing clinical research projects:**  
With abundant clinical material but limited exposure to research skills in the low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), mentors could guide these researchers towards appropriately designing and implementing clinical research projects.
- **Grant proposal preparation:**  
There is a paucity of training for grant writing, especially for young researchers in LMIC. Mentors could play a great role in this aspect.
- **Enhance skills in literature searching:**  
Mentees could benefit from being guided on how to systematically review literature and capture relevant information.
- **Manuscript writing:**  
Mentees who are facing challenges to get their research work published and need guidance for manuscript writing could be helped by a mentor's advice.
- **Responding to reviewers:**  
Following the submission of manuscripts, many researchers face difficulties in responding to reviewer comments appropriately. Mentors could share experiences and guide mentees in this regard.
- **General career advice:**  
Mentors can advise on matters relating to academic promotion, career progression, relation to collaborators/other colleagues, negotiating a new position etc.



### **3. AREAS OF CLINICAL-BASED GUIDANCE FOR THE UNDER 40s**

Guidance may be sought for any area of nephrology:

- Basic science/ Genetics
- Clinical nephrology
- Critical Care Nephrology
- Dialysis
- Epidemiology
- Interventional Nephrology
- Nephrology-Urology
- Pediatric Nephrology
- Preventive Nephrology
- Transplantation

PLEASE NOTE: Mentees under 40 years of age will be considered as a Young Nephrologists Committee (YNC) Mentee, unless their mentorship is research-based, in which case they will be considered as a Research Mentorship Program (RMP) mentee.

### **4. INFORMATION FOR MENTORS**

**Basic criteria for being an ISN mentor:**

- Mentors are ISN members in good standing.
- Mentors are members of academic medical centers with expertise in research and/or clinical nephrology.
- Mentors are willing to devote time and effort towards mentoring a mentee through regular interaction and must be able to commit to a 3-year period.
- Mentors are actively recruited from amongst those who have partaken in the Educational Ambassadors Program and from amongst YNC members, but of course all applications from other willing mentors are warmly welcomed.

**Practical information for mentors:**

- Mentors can be recruited in 2 manners:
  1. They submit an application via the online platform. They will be asked for information required to suitably match them to a mentee. Their application will be vetted by the mentorship Program Committee and they will receive a confirmation by e-mail.
  2. They will be asked directly by a Mentorship Program Committee Member if they are interested in mentoring a specific individual. If they agree they will be asked to provide some information to fulfill certain administrative requirements. The program is largely run via an online platform and so certain requirements need to be filled-out.
- Mentors are asked to provide (via the online application) their:
  1. Areas of expertise and what they are willing to provide guidance on.
  2. Preferences for interaction (Skype meetings, emails, etc)
  3. Proposed frequency of the sessions as per feasibility
  4. Language preferences
  5. CV
- Mentor-Mentee pairing will be done by the ISN Mentorship Program Committee.
- The mentor will have the opportunity to (dis)approve the proposed mentee before the pairing is made official and announced to the mentee.
- Mentors will be assigned to only one mentee. Two mentees may be assigned at a future time depending on availability/productivity. Mentors can specify in their application form whether or not they are willing to mentor two mentees simultaneously.
- The mentor has the choice to express dissatisfaction or discontinuation with the mentee depending on the progress and performance (the mentee has similar rights).
- Mentors are requested to formally assess and evaluate the mentorship with their mentee(s) and provide constructive feedback to the ISN every 6 months. This is done via an online progress report form.

## 5. INFORMATION FOR MENTEES

### Basic criteria for being an ISN mentee:

- A mentee must be an ISN member from a low or middle income country (LMIC).
- Priority consideration will be given to those who:
  - i. Require specific assistance in the domain of research and related skills (such as guidance in designing/implementing research projects).
  - ii. Are under 40 years of age. These applicants will be reviewed and matched by the Young Nephrologists Committee (YNC), unless their request is specifically related to research.
  - iii. Have been an applicant of the ISN Clinical Research Program (within last 3 years).
  - iv. Are a current/recent (within last 2 years) ISN Fellowship recipient
  - v. Are from an ISN Educational Ambassador's host center and seek to be mentored by an Ambassador with whom they have maintained good contact.
  - vi. Are from an ISN Sister Renal Centre (SRC) emerging center.

### Practical information for mentees:

- The Committee will only consider applications submitted via the corresponding online application platform.
- Mentees are asked to indicate and provide (via the online application) their:
  - i. Preferences in terms of which area(s) they require guidance for and whether their primary interest is research-based or related to other domains.
  - ii. Preferences in terms of communication tools (Skype meetings/ emails/, etc)
  - iii. Proposed frequency of the sessions as per feasibility
  - iv. Language preferences
  - v. An action plan describing specific activities that the mentee would like to initiate with the mentor, pertaining to the selected areas of focus. Discussing the action plan's implementation will form the first step in the pair's working relationship.
  - vi. CV
- Mentees should be willing to abide by the expectations of the mentor.
- Mentees are requested to formally assess and evaluate the mentorship and provide constructive feedback to the ISN every 6 months via an online progress report form. This is done together with the mentor.
- Mentees should be prepared to discuss/meet or present mentorship outcomes and deliver constructive feedback as deemed necessary by the ISN.

## 6. OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

### Application and review process:

- Mentors and mentees apply via the online Mentorship Program platform (named FluidReview) where a separate form is housed for mentors and mentees.
- Once submitted they will receive a confirmation from the system.
- The applications are screened by ISN staff following the eligibility criteria and mentee applications are designated as either RMP (research) or YNC (under 40, other than research).
- The mentee applications are reviewed by the corresponding committee whilst mentor applications can be reviewed by both.
- Applicants are personally informed about whether or not they are accepted by e-mail.

### Matching process:

- The committee matches mentees and mentors if a suitable party is available in the system. If not, they will be matched when a suitable one does become available.
- The following will be the principle matching factors: mentor's area of expertise with mentee's required areas of guidance, frequency of interactions in terms of mentee requirements and mentor availability, language preferences.
- The Committee proposes a match. The mentors will be asked to approve the proposed match with a mentee before the match is made official, and asked to provide a start date.
- If the match is accepted, the mentor and mentee will be sent an e-mail (on the start date) formally introducing them to each other and kicking-off the mentorship relationship.
- The mentees action plan will serve as an 'ice-breaker' to start discussing and implementing concrete objectives and a planning for the next three years.

### Six-monthly progress report:

- Six months after the start date, and every 6 months after that, mentees will receive an e-mail inviting them to fill out an online progress report form.
- The form is very brief. It asks about the main achievements, what was not achieved, and what can be improved.
- Once the mentee has prepared the form, they can invite their mentor into the form (a button is provided by the system) for their feedback and agreement.
- The mentor will receive an e-mail from the system with a link to the joint form.
- Discussions on content will need to take place via normal e-mail.
- When the mentor agrees, he/she can sign-off, after which the mentee can submit the form to the system.



- The Mentorship Program Committee will be sent the reports to read up on the pair's progress and assess the program's overall impact.

**End-of-training report:**

- At the end of the three years, mentees will receive an e-mail inviting them to fill out an online end-of-training report form.
- This last form is more exhaustive and asks about personal impressions of the program, overall achievements, milestones, presentations, publications, academic achievements, etc that have been favorably influenced by the mentorship program.
- This form is not a joint form.