

2019

International
Confederation of Energy
Regulators (ICER)

Women in Energy

ICER E-Mentoring Programme Overview

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The ICER 2019 E-Mentoring Programme Overview

The ICER WIE Mentoring Information Pack comprises this document (namely the ICER WIE 2019 E-Mentoring Programme Overview document) and the accompanying application forms, the “Best Books, Blogs and Broadcasts”, the “What to Talk About”, and the “Mentoring Journal”.

Background to the ICER WIE initiative

In October 2013, the International Confederation of Energy Regulators (ICER) launched its ICER's Women in Energy (WIE) initiative.

ICER's Women in Energy vision is for women to have equal opportunities, be empowered and have the self-confidence to succeed.

Our objective is to aid the career advancement of women in energy. We do this by offering practical tools to help women help themselves in their career paths and by seeking to change culture and attitudes.

The ICER E-Mentoring Programme

One practical tool is the ICER e-mentoring programme. This programme is referenced as an “e-mentoring” programme because of the unique pairing of female mentees with (male and female) mentors from all over the globe.

In 2018, we were delighted to welcome 96 participants to our 5th round of the mentoring programme.

Visit the ICER website to watch the videos and for mentoring resource material e.g. “What to Talk About” or the “Journal”. Click [here](#).

How to join the 2019 mentoring programme

Prospective mentors and mentees must submit a completed application to wie@icer-regulators.net (see separate mentor and mentee application forms attached) before **4 February 2019**. The programme runs from March 2019 until the end of February 2020, allowing participants the benefit of a full 12-month mentoring relationship.

Who can join the ICER mentoring programme?

The ICER mentoring programme is run by regulators for the benefit of the staff of ICER's energy regulatory authorities. The mentoring programme is open to staff of ICER's national/state energy regulatory authorities, of the Secretariats of ICER's members (the regional regulatory associations) and FERC and ACER.

- **Only women** can be **mentees**.
- **Both men and women** are invited to be **mentors**.

We hope to create a cycle whereby former mentees soon become mentors themselves. Particularly interesting for senior women is the opportunity of peer to peer mentoring.

What can you expect from the programme?

The programme benefits both mentees and mentors. Feedback from participants of the past programme has been very positive.

In terms of their reasons for joining the programme, mentors placed emphasis on encouraging more women to pursue senior positions. One mentor succinctly states *"I was able to share my knowledge, training and experience"*. Mentors considered the experience of joining a formal mentoring programme as a personal development opportunity to develop their own coaching skills. One peer-to-peer mentor valued the *"networking and being able to brainstorm ideas with a peer"*.

One mentee said *“The mentoring programme provides the opportunity to seek professional advice from someone outside of my immediate working environment”*. Another said *“the „mentoring has been extremely encouraging and uplifting.”*

A wide range of benefits were identified. A majority of mentees stated that they had followed a training/self-development programme whilst mentors listed a wider range of achievements including applying for job promotions, speaking at public events and writing papers.

One mentee concretely stated *“The main benefit has been an increase in my self-confidence because of the feedback I have received from my mentor and support for my professional goals. Session by session I have been identifying the best options, taking into account the experience of my mentor.”*

Another mentee said *“...I appreciate having someone who supports me from afar and is cheering me on professionally.”*

A mentor (whose mentee received a job promoted during the course of the programme) attributed *“feeling like I was able to help someone”* as the main benefit to him as a mentor.

All mentees said they would be interested in participating again.

For more testimonials (and a mentoring video) visit the [ICER website](#).

Timelines for the 2019 Mentoring Programme

Deadline for Applications for mentors and mentees:	4 February, 2019
Notification of with whom you are paired:	1 March, 2019
Webinar 1 (<i>ICER 2019 Mentoring Programme</i>):	26 March, 2019 (date tbc)
Initial check that pairings are working	April 2019
Webinar 2 (<i>What We Learned as Mentor & Mentee</i>):	July, 2019 (date tbc)
Programme End and Final-Programme assessment:	February 28, 2020

Completed applications and the pairing process

The ICER WIE Mentoring Programme seeks to pair mentees with mentors who will aid and support the mentee's professional goals and objectives. To ensure that the best possible matches are made, please take time to complete this application form and provide as much information as possible. Providing a CV (in English) is mandatory.

Upon completion, this form should be submitted (along with your CV) electronically as indicated below. Handwritten copies cannot be accepted. Please maintain a copy of your completed application form. Participants will be notified before the end of the year if they have been accepted onto the programme and with whom they have been paired.

Mentoring Programme Assessments

Participants are required to complete a short questionnaire. This will help ICER assess whether the mentoring programme is meeting participants expectations and ICER's women in energy goals. Your feedback is needed to improve the programme going forward.

Guide to Mentoring

What is a mentor?

A mentor acts as a guide, to help you define, understand and pursue your goals. Mentoring is a vehicle for learning, but the mentor is neither a teacher nor a coach.

Mentoring used to occur when an older, more experienced person passed on their wisdom to a younger and less experienced person, but these days mentoring relationships are often more reciprocal in nature. Mentoring relationships in the 21st century tend to be partnerships, where both parties work collaboratively on achieving mutually defined goals.

A mentor is someone with whom you may:

- Discuss your career aspirations;
- Formulate goals and plans;
- Explore options for your ongoing development;
- Talk about workplace issues and problems; and
- Test ideas and obtain feedback on possible strategies.

What are the Key Features of a Successful Mentoring Relationship?

Reciprocity

Both parties can gain from a mentoring relationship. Mentors gain access to fresh perspectives and broadening their network in a different sphere, better knowledge of the experience of people at lower levels, as well as the opportunity to develop their coaching and counseling skills. Mentees gain a source of feedback and information and a sounding board to assist them to identify and pursue career goals.

Focus on development

The mentoring relationship has a prospective focus. It involves discussions about how to achieve goals in the future with a particular emphasis on implementing development strategies on the job.

Mutually defined goals

Both parties agree the goals of the mentoring relationship. The mentee should have clear objectives for their involvement and the mentor should be honest about how they wish to and can contribute. As a result mentoring is unlikely to be effective if one party has been co-opted.

Relationship

Effective mentoring relies on having a sound and trusting relationship between the two parties. Both parties must feel comfortable to be able to share information without fear of being judged, or confidentiality being breached.

Collaboration

Successful mentoring relationships are built on collaboration. There is no assumption that the mentor knows better than the mentee – the relationship is one of discussion and consensus, challenge and feedback to identify a range of options from which the mentee needs to choose.

Clarifying Expectations from the Programme

The ICER 2019 e-mentoring programme is set up for the primary purpose of the mentee – that brings with it a responsibility to make the most of the potential opportunities it brings.

Most importantly you need to have realistic expectations – this is more likely to engage your mentor and achieve your goals. You probably already have some ideas, and we will use the first webinar (where Mentoring Programme participation feedback is mandatory) to further develop these.

Realistic goals for a mentoring relationship include:

- Identifying professional and development goals;
- Engaging in career, training and development planning;
- Making decisions based on pragmatic assessments of strengths and resources;
- Devising workable strategies to solve problems;
- Debriefing events to extract learning and other response options; and
- Guiding the development of leadership and other skills.

ICER Support Tools for successful mentoring

A number of support tools are available to ensure all the benefits of the programme are realized and to facilitate mentor and mentee discussions. This includes a Mentoring Journal, “What to Talk About”, our recommended “Best Books, Blogs and Broadcasts” and a confidential support network for (new) mentors.

Webinars

Please note that it is essential that you attend the introduction to the mentoring programme webinar briefing (8 March) to ensure that you get the most out of your mentoring relationship.

In order to check that each mentoring relationship has taken off, participants must confirm, by end April 2019, that they have succeeded in making initial contact and have had their first meeting(s). The initial meetings are particularly important for goal setting and building trust in the relationship,

Mentors and mentees embark on this journey together. The July webinar is an opportunity for pairs to share how their mentoring relationship is evolving, if it meets with their expectations and to learn from other pairs.

Technology and social media

The geographic diversity alone will prove to be both exciting and challenging during the programme. ICER, therefore, recommends that mentees and mentors connect and engage using technology (Facetime, Skype, etc.) and social media tools such as our [ICER Women in Energy LinkedIn group](#) (e-mail wie@icer-regulators.net for access to this restricted LinkedIn group) to aid in the development of a robust mentorship relationship.

This year we also ask mentees and mentors to provide their social media accounts, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Online Resource Library

A number of support tools are available to ensure all the benefits of the programme are realized and to facilitate mentor and mentee discussions. This includes a Mentoring Journal and a confidential support network for (new) mentors. With your help, we are building a library of your most valued reading material (books, articles, blogs), social media sites and videos (e.g. TED Talks). New this year is the list of topics to talk about e.g. goal setting, career planning, confidence in public speaking, management etc. This list is a useful starting point from which mentors and mentees develop their objectives and development plans as they begin their mentoring journey. Visit the [ICER website](#).

Meetings

Frequency of meetings

Participants in the WIE Mentoring Programme are expected to maintain frequent contact (e.g., monthly or every other month), particularly as contact is established and the mentor/mentee relationship is formed. Frequency of contact is more important than the communication method.

The First Meeting

Remember, your first few conversations will be primarily about getting to know each other, building trust and agreeing on objectives. So here are some topics for your first conversation. Start today.

1. Get to know each other – share your CVs if possible and talk through some of the significant events in your career. Talk about your personal situation and how it impacts on your attitude to your work and career.
2. Talk about mentoring – discuss your motivation to participate in the ICER WIE Mentoring Program and what do you hope to gain from it.
3. Discuss some of the practical dimensions of the relationship – how will you set up and arrange meetings? Frequency of contact (monthly)?
4. Discuss your assumptions and limitations – what experiences or beliefs may be shaping your expectations or participation in this relationship?
5. Discuss your personal styles – if you have completed a behavior or personality tool, discuss the results and how you prefer to interact.
6. All of this should be discussed and preferably recorded in a mentoring agreement (see a sample form is at the end of this document).

The Second Meeting: Progress!

During this conversation, or at the next one, you should also take time to discuss:

1. Ground rules for our meetings – e.g. times, duration, location, initiator, agendas, interruptions, cancellations, communication, confidentiality and boundaries.
2. The mentee's goals in detail – what do you want to achieve in your career and what are your criteria of success, both for your career and for this mentoring relationship. Note that identifying the mentee's specific career and professional development goals will be the focus of the first workshop, to be conducted in a few weeks.

Keeping a Mentoring Journal

A mentoring journal can be a very useful source of information for later reference. It can help you to identify the extent to which you achieved your goals, help you to reflect on and be able to draw on your experience to explain what you learned from the experience of mentoring. This may be important if you are interviewed later.

The journal also works as a register for ideas for learning activities, reflections and projects. It gives you an ongoing record to pick up and discuss with the mentor at a later date, or activities to do on return to work as part of your development plan, and allows you to monitor your ongoing progress.

Tips on journaling

- Write about facts and feelings, past and present
- Write after each mentoring meeting, and in between as well
- Make time to write in your journal – otherwise you'll keep putting it off
- Review what you've written every few months
- Some things you could write about each meeting could include:
 - What we talked about
 - The key takeaway message
 - How I'm going to apply it
 - Key challenges or barriers I might face
 - Further questions for my mentor

Communication Skills for Mentoring

1. Effective feedback
2. Quality questioning
3. Active listening
4. Reframing

Effective Feedback

Many staff and supervisors find giving, receiving and asking for feedback difficult. The following tips are provided as suggestions for making feedback discussions a little easier and more meaningful. The tips can be used when providing feedback to colleagues, managers or people that we supervise.

Feedback works best when both people trust each other. Create an environment where feedback is part of the way you work together by:

- developing positive working relationships that are built on trust;
- communicating openly – sharing information that helps others do their jobs and engaging others when making decisions that affect them;
- encouraging feedback – ask for feedback and give it regularly;
- role modelling an openness to feedback – accept positive feedback graciously; and
- acting on feedback – even if you don't agree with the feedback you may need to work on changing the other person's perception.

How to Give Feedback

Choose an appropriate time and place.

- give feedback as soon as possible (within 24 hours of a specific event or instance if you can) and in person where possible.
- consider what else is happening at the time – make sure you and the person are both able to discuss properly at the time you provide the feedback
- never give “negative” feedback in public.
- never give feedback when either of you are angry, upset or stressed.

Give feedback directly to the person. In some cases feedback comes “down the line”. When this is the case ensure that you have enough information to make it meaningful and accurate.

Be prepared. Plan how you intend to give the feedback and have specific examples and other evidence available before you begin.

Before Giving Feedback

Consider how the other person may prefer to receive feedback. For example:

- do they find praise or positive feedback uncomfortable when given publicly?
- do they prefer feedback to be given directly and to the point?
- do they need time to reflect on the feedback before they are ready to talk about improvements or next steps?

Identify your objectives for giving the feedback:

- what do you want to achieve?
- what are the key points that you want to get across?

Reflect on what you want to talk about and what you will say:

- be specific and use examples; and
- if you are seeking change or improvement clarify exactly what you want.

What to Avoid: Specific Advice for Mentors

There are four behaviors that can be harmful to a mentoring relationship. These behaviors are:

Changing and cancelling meetings

This should go without saying, but it bears reference just the same. We understand that as a senior executive you will be busy and unexpected events crop up from time to time. However, cancelling meetings can be seen by your mentee as indicating a lack of commitment, particularly if a meeting gets postponed more than once. If an unforeseen serious event arises that you cannot escape, then do your best to give plenty of notice and make a new time at the time that you cancel.

Criticising

When we criticize others, it's usually done with the best of intentions – the intention to help. But criticism is both evaluative and judgmental; it generates defensiveness rather than motivates change.

That doesn't mean that you can't give feedback if you think the mentee's behavior or plan is not appropriate. Try to give evaluative information, rather than neutral information. Describe what you see and the result it produces, don't appraise it.

Giving advice

What's wrong with advice? Many mentors think that is their role. The problem with advice is that it can set up a destructive pattern in a relationship. This is described by one psychologist as the "why don't you? – yes, but" game. The request for advice can create a mindset of rescuer-victim, but what can happen is that the advice is rejected (usually with reasons) each time it's given, leading the mentor to eventually conclude that the person doesn't really want to solve the problem, and the relationship is damaged.

Rescuing

Rescuing a mentee at best reinforces helpless behavior and at worst can create a victim mentality and dependency. Your role as mentor is not to rescue your mentee from unpleasant or negative situations.

So what's the alternative? Information is the alternative. Give information about what you see, what the options are, and then assist the mentee to work through the options systematically to make a decision.

What to Avoid: Specific Advice for Mentees

For the mentee, there are three behaviors that can harm a mentoring relationship. These behaviors are:

Changing and cancelling meetings

This should go without saying, but it bears reference just the same. Your mentor makes time available to help you and you should do your best to make the appointed time. If an unforeseen serious event arises that you cannot escape, then do your best to give plenty of notice. Make time for any preparation needed.

Reacting poorly to feedback

An important skill for your development is to be able to hear feedback without getting defensive, to clarify alternative behaviors, and then being able to apply that feedback. If you respond poorly to feedback then others will stop giving it to you, and your development will stagnate. Responding poorly includes rejecting the feedback, arguing with the mentor, ignoring it, getting defensive, blaming others, or making excuses.

A closed mind

Your mentor has been chosen as someone who can offer you a range of alternative perspectives. Be open to ideas and don't reject them before you have given them due consideration. Find something you can use in everything your mentor says – this is an attitude that will ensure you make the most of the mentoring relationship.

References and Further Reading

Brockbank, A. & McGill, I. (2006). Facilitating Reflective Learning Through Mentoring & Coaching

Meggison, D. (2005). Mentoring In Action: A Practical Guide for Managers

Shea, G. F. (2002). Mentoring how to develop successful mentor behaviors

Zachary, L. J. & Fischler, L. A. (2009). The Mentee's Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You

Zachary, L. J. (2011). The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relation

See also our ICER resource library for tips on “what to talk about” and resources recommended by our current and past ICER mentors and mentees

Appendix: Sample Form of a Mentoring Agreement

This agreement is between:

and

on (date):

We have agreed on the following objectives for our mentoring relationship:

To ensure our relationship is mutually rewarding and achieves its objectives we agree to:

Meet regularly:

How often will we meet?

Who will make contact?

How much time will be allocated?

Follow our agreed ground rules

Which are...

We will regularly review how we are going and at the end of the year-long e-mentoring programme on these dates:

Review 1

Review 2

Final review

Signed (mentor):

Signed (mentee):