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Academy to expand mentoring support

The Academy of Medical Sciences has announced that participation in its acclaimed mentoring scheme will be expanded to basic scientists and scientists working in industry through new agreements with the Medical Research Council (MRC) and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

The mentoring scheme helps researchers tackle the many challenges faced when developing an independent research career, offering guidance on topics as diverse as starting up a research group, balancing work and family commitments and developing a research niche. Mentees are paired with Academy Fellows who are well-placed to help them navigate obstacles and build their confidence in the workplace.

Professor Sir John Tooke PMedSci, President of the Academy, said: *“Despite having already cleared the hurdle of completing a PhD, the pathway from postdoc to independent researcher is far from straightforward. Non-clinical researchers, just like their clinical counterparts, benefit from a supportive, senior and independent mentor, who can act as a sounding board for their questions and concerns.”*

Since 2002, the Academy’s mentoring scheme has supported over 300 Clinical Lecturers and Clinician Scientist Fellows. From June 2013, any researchers holding a postdoctoral early or intermediate MRC personal Fellowship will also be eligible to join the scheme, specifically Career Development Award (CDA) fellows and Strategic Skills Fellows.¹

¹ Strategic Skills Fellowships include Biomedical Informatics, Economics of Health, Methodology Research, Population Health Science and CDA in Biostatistics

Professor Sir John Savill FMedSci, the MRC's Chief Executive, said *"MRC Fellows are outstanding individuals who have won prestigious awards identifying them as research leaders of tomorrow. However, a recent survey of our Fellows told us that they would value more support making the challenging transition to an independent research career. MRC's partnership with the Academy will provide MRC Fellows with access to new mentors to support this critical career stage and help to broaden their networks to establish an independent career."*

The Academy has long recognised the need for greater mobility of scientists between industry and academia. Through an agreement with GlaxoSmithKline, the Academy will now also be able to provide mentors for academic clinicians working on drug development at the GlaxoSmithKline Academic Discovery Performance Unit in Cambridge.

Patrick Vallance FMedSci, President Pharmaceuticals R&D for GSK said, *"A secondment with GSK provides academic clinicians valuable insight into what it takes to turn first class science into a medicine. The breadth of experience that Academy mentors can offer will help secondees to get the most from their time in GSK and give real-life context for their future career."*

A recent evaluation of the Academy's mentoring scheme found that the vast majority of participants were satisfied with the scheme reporting a range of benefits including greater confidence, achieving career goals, developing collaborations and gaining research independence.

A booklet summarising the scheme and its impacts can be downloaded from <http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/p260.html>

Videos explaining more about the mentoring scheme from the perspective of mentors and mentees can be viewed on the Academy's YouTube channel at <http://ow.ly/lmrd1>.

You can also follow the mentoring team on Twitter to find out the latest news by visiting <http://www.twitter.com/AMSMentoring>

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Notes for Editors

The Academy of Medical Sciences is the independent body in the UK representing the diversity of medical science. Our mission is to promote medical science and its translation into benefits for society. The Academy's elected Fellows are the United Kingdom's leading medical scientists from hospitals, academia, industry and the public service.
<http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk>

The Medical Research Council has been at the forefront of scientific discovery to improve human health. Founded in 1913 to tackle tuberculosis, the MRC now invests taxpayers' money in some of the best medical research in the world across every area of health. Twenty-nine MRC-funded researchers have won Nobel prizes in a wide range of disciplines, and MRC scientists have been behind such diverse discoveries as vitamins, the structure of DNA and the link between smoking and cancer, as well as achievements such as pioneering the use of randomised controlled trials, the invention of MRI scanning, and the development of a group of antibodies used in the making of some of the most successful drugs ever developed. Today, MRC-funded scientists tackle some of the greatest health problems facing humanity in the 21st century, from the rising tide of chronic diseases associated with ageing to the threats posed by rapidly mutating micro-organisms. www.mrc.ac.uk

The MRC Centenary Timeline chronicles 100 years of life-changing discoveries and shows how our research has had a lasting influence on healthcare and wellbeing in the UK and globally, right up to the present day. www.centenary.mrc.ac.uk