



Mentoring



**J. Heyrovský Institute
of Physical Chemistry**

Mentoring at the J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry

The J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences is a center of fundamental research in physical chemistry and chemical physics. Besides its main focus on research, the Heyrovský Institute is also involved in education. We cooperate with Czech universities, organize scientific and popularization lectures, summer schools, open doors days, laboratory visits, we participate in the Open Science project of the Czech Academy of Sciences and other educational programs and activities.

The Heyrovský Institute is now introducing an individual mentoring program, in addition to group mentoring, which has a long tradition in our organization. We believe that individual mentoring will support not only young people, students who are getting familiar with basic research in our laboratories, but also those who have already decided on a scientific career. This brochure offers basic information about our mentoring program, as well as information on how you can join the mentoring.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a way to share experience and advice with early-stage researchers to help them find their potential and become successful in the academic or application sector. The goal of mentoring is to support young people at the beginning of their scientific career in their development to become experts.



Mentors

They support, give advice, shares their life experiences, help younger and less experienced students in their studies and professional growth. The mentor shapes the personality of the young researcher.

The word originated in ancient Greek refers to a wise counsellor, an experienced friend. Many supervisors are mentors at the same time. Alternatively, people fulfil the role of a mentor without naming it.

All our researchers owning a PhD degree (or equivalent), who are interested in mentoring, can formally participate in the mentoring program of the Heyrovský Institute. To become a mentor, just contact our coordinator at mentoring@jh-inst.cas.cz.



Mentees

Students in bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs, high-school students and researchers who seek insight and support from more experienced colleagues on the path of their early-stage career. Anyone willing to take the initiative in her or his professional and personal development can become a mentee.

When can I apply for a mentor?

Anytime. You can ask for a mentor at the beginning or during your studies, but also shortly before your title defence. Contact our coordinator at mentoring@jh-inst.cas.cz. The coordinator will discuss your mentoring expectations and will recommend the most suitable person for you. The ongoing academic year is not an obstacle. You can also write to us during the holidays.

What can mentoring help me with?

Studying at a university might bring a number of tricky situations. Similarly, to choose a direction after completing a master's or doctoral study is not an easy task. If you have ever found yourself in a situation where you would like to advise on something that someone has already gone through before you – successfully from the long-term perspective – the mentoring can be the solution.

In general, mentoring can give you a broader insight into the field you are working in or related fields, or clarify how to best use your potential and strengths in your beginning scientific career. More concretely, it can help you answer practical questions that many of us cannot avoid.

For example, how to better manage stress during public presentations? How not to panic if your repeated measurements do not work out as you expected? How to balance time spent studying textbooks and time spent in the lab? Sometimes, it might come in handy to talk about topics that interfere with your personal life. How to decide whether to travel abroad for an internship, and if so, for how long? What long-term perspective brings research work in the Czech Republic? What is the main difference between a career in the academic and application sector? How to balance work and family life? All of this, and much more, the mentoring can help to answer.

For the sake of completeness, let's mention you can contact a mentor with questions or difficulties that you do not wish to discuss with your supervisor, when he or she cannot help you, or if you wish to take into consideration another, unbiased opinion.



How does mentoring happen?

Over the cup of coffee, via email or video call. The form of contact is entirely up to you and your mentor and depends only on what suits you two best, or which compromise you choose. Each type of contact has its pros and cons. Replying to an email is usually faster than finding a matching date in your calendar.

Cultivating mutual trust will probably go better at a personal meeting. If you live in another city or country, you may want to use a phone or video call. The ideal form of communication is always the subject of mutual agreement.



How long does mentoring usually take?

This is very individual. You can ask for support for a few weeks, during which you will focus intensely on a specific topic, e.g. where to travel abroad for a postdoc after you finish a doctorate, or a mentor can accompany you for several years and then help you to choose the best direction for your scientific career.

The Heyrovský Institute will support you if you are interested in mentoring for any period.



How often should we meet / call / write?

There is no universal rule in this case. In general, a meeting once a year could be considered as a purely formal ‘mentoring’. On the other hand, even your supervisor probably will not have the time for you every other day. The ideal frequency of contact may also depend on the character of the topic you want to solve, or how urging this topic is. Keep in mind that the mentor is here for you and trying to help you. At the same time, be considerate if he or she needs you to wait a while.



What if it does not work?

An essential aspect of mentoring is that both participants are involved voluntarily. This proactive approach usually leads to trying to meet the other one halfway. Nevertheless, it can exceptionally happen that ongoing mentoring does not meet the expectations of the mentor or mentee. Or they just do not get along.

We are only humans, sometimes it can happen. If you are in such a situation, contact our coordinator as soon as possible at mentoring@jh-inst.cas.cz. She will help you change the situation without unnecessary fuss or delay.



Are you interested in mentoring?

If you have read this far, our mentoring program probably caught your attention. Our mentoring coordinator, Ing. Zuzana Musilová, PhD., Project manager of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers project, will gladly provide you with more information. She will also help you choose a suitable mentor directly from the Heyrovský Institute or another Czech or foreign research organization.

Contact us

All you have to do is contact us at the following email mentoring@jh-inst.cas.cz.



Partners



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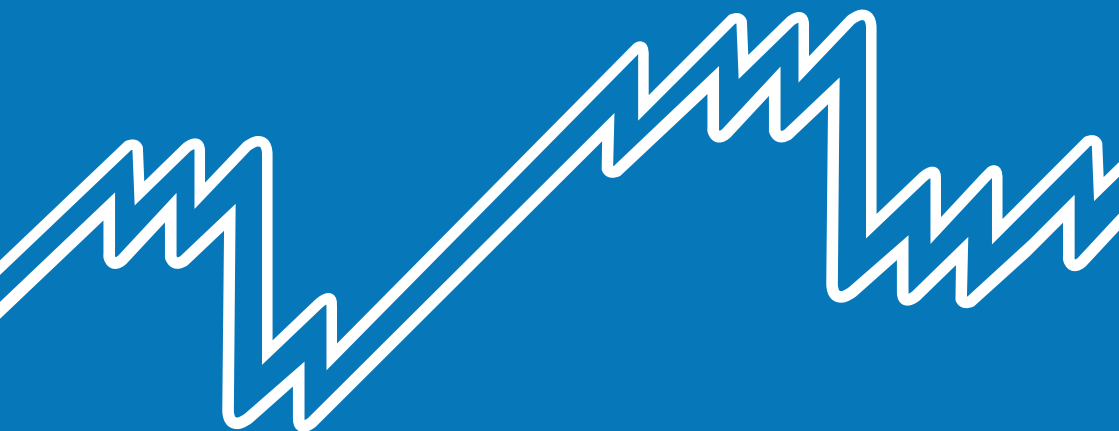


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J. Heyrovský Institute
of Physical Chemistry



J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry of the CAS, v. v. i.
Dolejškova 2155/3, 182 23 Prague 8, Czech Republic
Phone No.: +420 266 052 011
Email: director@jh-inst.cas.cz