

MENTORING

within the *International Teaching Professionals* program

The *International Teaching Professionals* (ITP) program is designed to advance the careers of internationally-oriented early-stage researchers. Applicants selected to participate in the program receive the opportunity to acquire strong teaching competencies and network with other international researchers.

The program consists of university-level didactic training, teaching an actual course covering 1 to 2 SWS, teaching observations among the program participants, opportunities for exchange in the “ProTeaching” forum, and mentoring by experienced university instructors. The program’s workshops at Potsdam Graduate School provide participants principles with which to design and/or optimize their courses. In order to put theoretical ideas into practice, program participants will teach their own courses at the University of Potsdam. This course will be held at one of the departments of the university and is planned for the summer semester. Practical support in the subject field is provided by the mentors.

1. Why are mentors important?

Mentors will supervise the selected participants on their way through the program. Mentoring gives the established university lecturers the opportunity to pass on their experience and knowledge gained from teaching activities to the next generation of researchers and lecturers. Mentors will advise the participants, not focusing primarily on the subject matter, but rather on the mentees' didactic qualifications as appropriate for the respective discipline. Mentees will benefit from their mentors' wealth of experience and one-on-one advice.

The subject knowledge of the experienced university teachers will aid the mentees in developing teaching competence and pedagogical concepts.

The mentors themselves may likewise benefit from the consultations, e.g. by expanding their advising capabilities and using the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching.

2. How are mentors selected?

Each potential program participant will identify one mentor with whom s/he has (or wants to build) a close relationship based on her/his subject knowledge and teaching experience. Essential requirements for mentors include a broad teaching experience as university-level instructor and the willingness to provide feedback on the design and execution of participants' courses.

3. Which tasks await ITP mentors?

In addition to sharing experience, mentors should complete the following tasks:

(a) Organizational support:

Participants will teach a 1-2 SWS course during the summer semester as part of the program. Mentors advise on the integration of the course into the institute's existing curriculum and take responsibility for adherence to existing formal requirements (e.g. exam requirements, etc.). If it is not possible for participants to offer their own unique course, they may teach one of their mentors' courses.

Giving a lecture, 1 semester hour will be sufficient. Seminars should cover 2 semester hours. If the teaching project is a practical course, a related lecture must be held as well. An internship mentoring alone is not sufficient for the practical teaching project.

(b) Course design support:

Mentors should support their mentees in the course design process by offering their personal teaching experiences and subject knowledge, and providing feedback on the teaching concept. Mentees must of course satisfy all formal degree and exam requirements. Thus, for example, final grades and exams may need to be evaluated jointly by the mentor or another instructor.

(c) Feedback:

Mentors are requested to provide regular feedback on their mentees' courses. This should take place in the form of conversations between mentor and mentee, as well as with the students.

(d) Observation:

Mentors should observe mentees during course instruction. Ideally, observations will consist in (i) a meeting prior to the observation clarifying the goals of the course, (ii) a visit to one class period, and (iii) a follow-up discussion. The Potsdam Graduate School provides "Observation Guidelines" to assist in structuring the observation, which should take place at least once over the course of the program.