



## **For Women in Science Mentoring Scheme**

In 2017, the Australian L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science program launched a mentoring scheme, in which the FWIS Alumni (past and present Fellows) will become mentors to passionate and ambitious PhD students.

We are incredibly proud of our Fellows who have established themselves as exceptional researchers, communicators and leaders within their scientific fields and therefore have acquired a wealth of knowledge and experience. We know how important it is for female role models and champions of change to exist to inspire and instil confidence into other women, especially in the early stages of their career.

By fostering a mentoring scheme where our Fellows can share advice and guidance to budding female scientists, we aim to provide an invaluable opportunity to develop integral knowledge and skills, and to instil passion and a sense of empowerment into our future women leaders.

### **Rationale**

Females are currently underrepresented within the senior and leadership positions within science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM), irrespective that they contribute to half of our PhD graduates and early career researchers (Higher Education Research Data, 2014). Therefore, we are losing our female researchers and half of the world's brightest thinkers, as the enormous potential of women's contribution to STEMM are not being exploited fully. Combating this gender inequality is both a national and global priority of the For Women in Science program, and we are always striving to develop the program in order to provide more tools and resources to help women become our future leaders, as part of a larger cultural change.

The FWIS team acknowledges that pressure experienced by students throughout their PhD degree can be significant and can lead to increased stress and anxiety. Therefore through regular meetings/forums between the FWIS team, mentors and mentees we aim to develop a support network for our mentees.

### **The program**

Female STEMM PhD candidates based in Australia will be asked to complete an application to be part of the program, including a short essay indicating how they would benefit from our mentoring program, addressing the areas/skills they wish to develop or improve. These key areas may become a key focus from their mentor, and may include: public speaking, scientific writing, negotiating skills, teaching, grant-writing, priority setting, communicating your research, strategic planning etc.

Mentors and mentees will be matched based on the mentor's skills and experience and the mentee's ambitions and focus (not specific scientific disciplines).

The formal program will involve regular meetings between mentor and mentee

- Mentor and mentee will be required to attend one meeting per month via phone, skype, email or in-person.

Additional support will exist through regular meetings between the FWIS team and mentees

- FWIS team and mentees to meet (via skype) every 2 months.

At the conclusion of the 6-month program follow up communication between our mentors, mentees and the FWIS team will occur to understand the impact of the program.

Key requirements of the mentor:

- To listen
- To share knowledge obtained from their experience (and wisdom from their mistakes)
- Be available to connect once a month (minimum) via phone, email or in-person
- To encourage their mentee

Key requirements of the mentee:

- To initiate contact with their mentor
- Consider their own strengths and weaknesses and attempt to discuss and potentially address these with their mentor
- Describe their career aspirations and set goals
- To use this opportunity to learn

Mentee eligibility (females only):

- Must be currently enrolled as a PhD student (either full-time or part-time) at an Australian university or research institute.
- PhD candidates must have completed at least 1 year of their candidature (confirmation)
- Eligible scientific research fields include life sciences (including medical sciences), physical sciences, computer science, engineering and mathematics. Psychology, science education and social sciences are not eligible for this mentoring program.

PhD candidates will be selected based on the following key selection criteria:

- Clearly identified strengths and weaknesses.
- Addressing any relevant ambitions or goals for your future and how a mentor could facilitate your success in achieving these.

***Women in Science have the power to change the world***