



# Displaced Scholars Peer Mentor Program

## Program Guide

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## 1. Program Overview

The Displaced Scholars Peer Mentoring Program aims to support early career scholars who have experienced displacement and are working or studying in the field of refugee and forced migration studies. This Program is for individuals undertaking postgraduate study or other research-related activities who have experienced displacement themselves. Participants in the Program may be refugees or may have experienced other forms of displacement. Participants do *not* have to have formal refugee status to apply.

Displaced scholars frequently face considerable barriers in accessing traditional scholarly opportunities and fora due to financial constraints, interruption to education or limitations imposed by legal status. This Program aims to contribute to increasing representation of refugees and other people with lived experiences of displacement within the field of refugee and forced migration studies, where there is a critical need to better understand and incorporate perspectives of displaced people.

This Program establishes **peer mentoring partnerships** between displaced scholars and other early career scholars. Individual displaced scholar ‘mentees’ will meet virtually with their early career scholar ‘mentor’ **once per month** using online platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp or Skype. Through these partnerships, displaced scholars will receive **one-on-one support** to pursue their academic and/or research goals. These goals may include:

- Research and writing for publication;
- Developing academic networks;
- Navigating academic environments;
- Applying for research-related funding and employment; and
- Pursuing opportunities for research collaboration.

The initial phase of the Displaced Scholars Peer Mentoring Program will run for **six (6) months** from April to September 2021.

## 2. Eligibility for the program

### Displaced scholar 'mentees'

The Displaced Scholars Peer Mentoring Program is open to individuals residing in any country who:

- a) are undertaking postgraduate study or other research activities relating to refugee and forced migration studies, *and*
- b) have experienced displacement.

Mentees will normally be enrolled in, or have completed, a postgraduate research degree (for example, Masters or PhD). However, other applicants will also be considered if they can demonstrate their interest in and commitment to forced migration research and scholarship. Participants may be recognised refugees, but the Program is also open to individuals who have been internally displaced, or who have been displaced across borders but not obtained formal refugee status.

### Early scholar 'mentors'

Mentors for the Program will be early career scholars in any discipline undertaking research in refugee and forced migration studies. Mentors will normally be enrolled in, or have recently completed (within the previous 7 years), a PhD on a relevant topic. Mentors may be located anywhere in the world.

## 3. Applying for the program

### All participants

All potential participants in the Displaced Scholars Peer Mentoring Program – including both displaced scholar mentees and early scholar mentors – must submit an application for the Program using the online application form. The application form requests basic personal information and details regarding educational background, research-related interests and other achievements. Prospective mentees are requested to submit a writing sample on a topic related to refugee and forced migration studies.

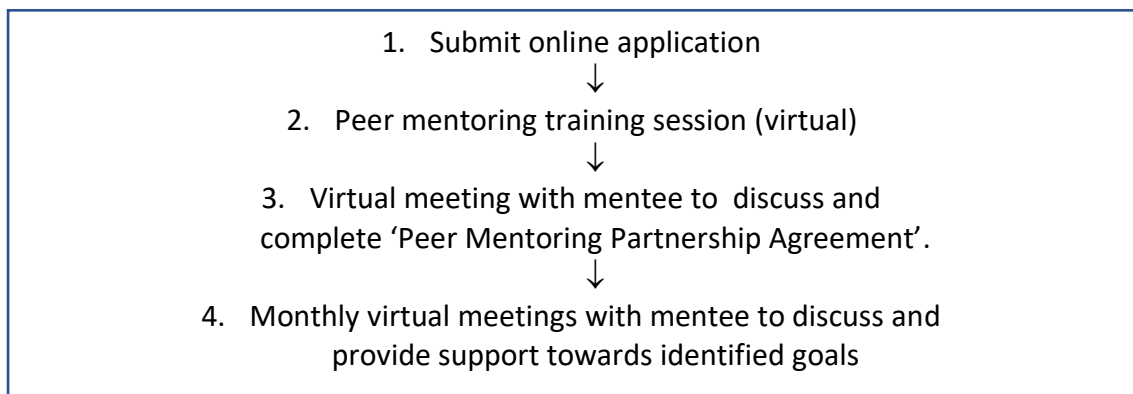
Selection of **mentees** for the Program will be based on applicants' demonstrated commitment to refugee and forced migration research, and on the availability of suitable peer mentors. Selection of **mentors** for the Program will be based on relevant experience and the needs and preferences of mentees.

## 4. Process

### Displaced scholar 'mentees'



### Early career scholar 'mentors'



## 5. What commitment is required?

### All participants

All participants – including displaced scholar mentees and early scholar mentors – are asked to commit to the Program for a period of six (6) months. Mentees and mentors will complete a 'peer mentoring agreement' at the beginning of the program to assist with establishing expectations, scheduling meetings and identifying mentees' goals and needs.

### Displaced scholar 'mentees'

Displaced scholar 'mentees' are expected to participate proactively in the program. Mentees are required to:

- participate in selecting a suitable peer mentor from a shortlist provided by the Program;
- identify their own goals and needs within the peer mentoring partnership\*;
- meet once per month with their mentor for six months;
- communicate regularly with their peer mentor;
- keep a record of their peer mentoring meetings;
- actively monitor their own progress towards identified goals; and
- communicate with the Program Coordinator about any questions or concerns that arise during the Program.

\*Mentees will be assisted to define their goals and needs during an initial meeting with the Program Coordinator, and to review progress towards their goals at the end of the Program.

### Early career scholar 'mentors'

Early career scholar mentors are expected to commit to the Program for six (6) months. Mentors are required to:

- attend a virtual peer mentoring training session (1-1.5 hours) prior to commencement of the Program;
- assist their mentee to articulate their goals and needs within the peer mentoring partnership^;
- meet once per month with their mentee for six months;
- communicate regularly with their mentee;
- support their mentee to pursue their identified goals, including by assisting them to connect with other individuals, institutions or resources where appropriate; and
- communicate with the Program Coordinator about any questions or concerns that arise during the Program.

^See Appendix for Peer Mentoring Partnership Agreement template.

## 6. Other support for displaced scholars

### Workshops with senior refugee and forced migration scholars

In addition to monthly meetings with their early career scholar 'mentor', displaced scholar 'mentees' will be invited to join a series of two-three (2-3) virtual workshops with more experienced scholars in the field of refugee and forced migration studies. These workshops will provide displaced scholars with opportunities to:

- develop core academic skills, such as research, writing and presentation skills;
- workshop their research ideas with experienced scholars; and
- expand their academic networks.

The exact topics and format of these workshops will be determined in consultation with mentees during the initial stages of the Program.

### 'Resource bank'

Displaced scholars participating in the program will be supported to identify and pursue research and employment opportunities via a volunteer-run 'Resource Bank'. The Resource Bank includes information about research-related employment, research funding opportunities, conferences, workshops, publication opportunities and research-related skills training.

## 7. Contact Details

Program Coordinator – Displaced Scholars Peer Mentoring Program

Dr Tamara Wood

[tamara.wood@unsw.edu.au](mailto:tamara.wood@unsw.edu.au)

Please contact the Program Coordinator with any questions or concerns relating to the peer mentoring program.

Executive Manager – Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW Sydney

Frances Voon

[frances.voon@unsw.edu.au](mailto:frances.voon@unsw.edu.au)

Please contact the Kaldor Centre's Executive Manager if you have any questions or concerns about the program that cannot be addressed with the Program Coordinator.

## APPENDIX – Peer Mentor Partnership Agreement Template

At the first meeting, displaced scholar ‘mentees’ and early career scholar ‘mentors’ should discuss and agree to the basic terms of the peer mentor partnership. This includes the scheduling of monthly meetings, the goals of the mentee and the type of support to be provided by the mentor. This template has been developed to assist you to draft your own ‘Peer Mentor Partnership Agreement’ at your first meeting between mentee and mentor. You are very welcome to adapt or expand on this agreement as you wish.

### Peer Mentor Partnership Agreement

**Mentee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. MENTEE GOALS

Mentees will identify their specific goals during the application process and meeting with the Program Coordinator. The first meeting provides a space for the mentee to expand upon these goals further with their mentor, and to discuss what kinds of support they would like in pursuing these goals.

Suggested text:

[\_\_\_\_\_ has identified his/her key goals for the peer mentor program are \_\_\_\_\_.  
By the end of the 6-month program he/she would like to \_\_\_\_\_.]

#### 2. SUPPORT BY PEER MENTOR

The first meeting also provides a space for the mentor to discuss the types of assistance that he/she can/cannot provide in supporting the mentee to achieve his/her specific goals. For example:

- Can the mentor provide general advice and a ‘sounding board’ for ideas?
- Can the mentor introduce the mentee to other scholars/contacts who may be able to assist?
- Can the mentor review written work (e.g. draft article, application) or view practice oral presentations?

Suggested text:

[\_\_\_\_\_ will support \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. However, \_\_\_\_\_ is unable to \_\_\_\_\_.]

#### 3. MONTHLY MEETINGS

We suggest that mentors and mentees agree to a regular meeting day and time each month, to help facilitate consistent and regular communication. You might like to consider whether you will keep and share a brief summary or notes of your meetings.

Suggested text:

[\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ will meet on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of each month at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm via Zoom/WhatsApp/skype.]

#### 4. OTHER COMMUNICATION

Participants should communicate clearly their expectations and availability for communication between meetings. Beyond the commitment of one meeting per month for six months, mentees and mentors may engage with each other as often or as little as they wish. We recognise that many early career scholars are very busy, juggling multiple professional and personal responsibilities at once. It is therefore helpful to be clear at the outset whether, and how often, you are available between meetings. You might like to discuss:

- Frequency (how often are you willing/able to respond to communication between meetings)
- Preferred contact method (phone/email/SMS)
- Types of communication (are you willing/able to review written work or other materials between meetings)

Suggested text:

[\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are available/not generally available to be contacted via email/phone between monthly meetings. \_\_\_\_\_ will respond to any communication as soon as possible/within 3-4 days/at the next meeting.]

#### 5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality within the peer mentoring partnership is extremely important. The following text is required for all peer mentor partnership agreements.

Required text:

*[All information provided between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ remains confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party without the consent of both mentor and mentee.*

*However, both mentor and mentee agree:*

- *To contact the Program Coordinator if any problems/concerns arise within the peer mentor partnership to arrange an in confidence discussion;*
- *To provide general feedback to the Program Coordinator to facilitate evaluation of the program.]*

**This Peer Mentor Partnership Agreement has been agreed by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on [DATE] 2021.**