

Dear SIT members,

This document has been developed to serve you as a guide during the process of choosing a mentor or becoming one. We hope you find it useful,

Best Wishes,

SIT Committee

What does good mentoring mean?

The origins of mentorship have roots in ancient Greek history, when the poet Homer wrote *The Odyssey*. When Odysseus sailed to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted his friend *Mentor* to care and educate his son Telemachus. The word “mentor” eventually evolved to mean trusted advisor, counselor and friend [1].

Mentoring has been defined as a “nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person” [2].

As your SIT committee, we believe that a good mentor is a crucial part in a young researcher’s development and thus can greatly influence your career. For that reason, we have prepared a collection of essential aspects of “good mentorship” extracted from the nomination letters for the Mentorship Award, as well as from our personal experience and published literature. Keep in mind that in general undergraduate studies are characterized by team-work, while graduate studies are a more independent journey toward ones’ professionalism. Thus, the choice of a good mentor might depend on your career stage and will be critical for the preparation of a lifelong scientific career.

The information presented in this document has been collected from several sources and adapted for the SIT audience of the Radiation Research Society.

Good **mentors** are **ARTISTS**:

- **A**dvisors, who have career experience, provide guidance to set research in perspective, and share their knowledge and know-how,
- **R**ole models, who are looked to by others as an example to be imitated. They exhibit the qualities and ethical values that an academic should possess, such as persistence and patience,
- **T**utors, who give critical feedback of one's performance while fostering independence,
- **I**nspirational, who believe in you, and motivate you to push further, try new experiments, and develop new skills
- **S**upporters, who provide emotional support and encouragement while showing kindness and empathy,
- **T**rainers, who teach about professionalism, transmit enthusiasm for research and reward good work,
- **S**ponsors, who are sources of information about career opportunities and assist students in obtaining them.

Finding a mentor who fulfills all these characteristics could be a difficult task. Thus, selecting a good graduate committee could be the key. A combination of senior and junior faculty may give you the most appropriate complement of experience and new knowledge in your field.

REFERENCES

- [1] School of Public Health, U Maryland: *Mentoring: Advice for Doctoral Students*, Weblink: <http://sph.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/mentoring.pdf>.
- [2] E. Anderson and A. Shannon: *Toward a conceptualization of mentoring*, Journal of Teacher Education **39**, 38 (1988).