

**ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY
RESEARCH
COUNCIL**



ATRC STEM Youth Mentorship Program

Program summary
guide for mentees



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Program purpose

The ATRC STEM Youth Mentoring Program will be the flagship research & development-focused mentoring scheme in Abu Dhabi. The program will support students interested in STEM and provide them a sense of direction to further their educational and professional experiences. Secondary and university students will be connected with mentors who are industry professionals across Abu Dhabi's research, development, and innovation ecosystem.

Mentors can support students by providing academic and career guidance, coaching on development areas, offering advice, and serving as a sounding board for career decisions. Through the mentoring program, we aim to inspire students to continue their journey in STEM, develop critical thinking skills and confidence, and inform students of the transformative opportunities in the research, development, and innovation space in Abu Dhabi.



Program structure

Program format and time commitment

The program will include 1-on-1 mentoring sessions with your mentor and occasional group events. The format of the sessions (online versus in-person) will be agreed upon between you and your mentor and suggested topics are available to help guide the mentoring sessions. We want you to get the most out of the mentoring program, so please feel free to engage with your mentor on various topics to ensure your development needs are addressed.

You will meet with your mentor at least once every 6-7 weeks (minimum of six sessions per academic year) and attend group events when possible.

Program timeframe

The mentorship program will run throughout the academic year (Please check mentorship.atrc.ae for program dates). The intake size will depend on mentor availability for each intake.

Benefits of the program

There are many benefits to having a mentor. Mentors can inspire, motivate and support you to achieve your goals. Mentoring is an excellent way for you to:

- Be more informed about undergraduate, postgraduate and career options (including alternative career paths)
- Gain more practical insight into how to use the skills you learn at school / college
- Access to advice and perspective from someone who has been in the same position as you
- Develop networks before entering the work environment
- Increase your confidence in networking and professional communication skills

Participation eligibility and selection

To be eligible for the ATRC STEM Youth Mentoring Program, students must:

For high school students:

- Submit an **application form** on mentorship.atrc.ae
- Be a student in a grade between 9-12 in an Abu Dhabi-based school
- (If under 18) obtain parents' permission to participate in the mentoring program

For university students:

- Submit an application form on mentorship.atrc.ae
- Be enrolled in a Abu Dhabi-based university or be a UAE citizen enrolled in an overseas university
- Be actively enrolled in a Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Technologies, Bachelor of Engineering, or an equivalent degree

We strive to pair every student who signs up with a mentor. However, depending on mentor availability, we may be unable to match all students with a mentor in each intake. The program team will be using the following selection criteria principles to select our mentee intake:

- Demonstrated academic excellence
- Demonstrated passion and interest in research, development, and innovation
- Development areas that can be targeted through the mentoring program



Participation responsibility and roles

For you to make the most out of the program as a mentee, we recommend you follow the best practices below:

Be proactive

Be sure to reach out to set up the first session with your mentor. Take the initiative to drive the mentoring sessions - ask your mentor questions and let them know your goals and interest areas.

Always come prepared

To make the most of your sessions, take some time to think about the suggested discussion topics. When possible, send questions in advance so your mentor can take the time to think through them.

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Prioritize communication throughout this program. Communicate your goals and what you hope to get out of the program upfront. If these goals change, communicate them to your mentor. Mentors are here to support you, but they need your help to with targeted advice and guidance.

Honor your commitment to the program

Mentors have volunteered to take on the added responsibility of mentoring on top of their daily jobs, so please be appreciative and respectful of their time. Be on time for mentoring sessions and communicate in advance if sessions need to be replaced.

Expect support, not miracles

You can expect advice and support from your mentor, but they are not here to solve problems or do work for you. Mentors can offer coaching and feedback, serve as a sounding board, or connect you to others who can help.

A thank you goes a long way!

Don't forget to thank your mentors after each session and at the end of the program for their commitment to your development and dedication to the program!



Mentorship session guidelines

The following section is a suggested approach for you and your mentor to develop your relationship. Every mentoring relationship is different, so we encourage participants to take this approach as guidance and build something that works for both parties:

Stage 1

Meeting your mentor and setting up your first meeting

Being well prepared is the first step for a successful relationship with your mentor. Also, never forget that, even with his / her career success, your mentor is a human like you and is here to help you.

To get the best out of your first session, we recommend you research your mentor as if you were going to an interview. You can check your mentor's LinkedIn profile, see his / her career progression and find common interests and passions. Prepare a list of open-ended questions, ranging from professional to more personal questions. The objective is to take advantage of this privileged time to build rapport by showing interest in your mentor. Even though you should be well-prepared for your sessions, don't forget to leave space for a more natural conversation with your mentor.

We also recommend you prepare and work on your elevator pitch. You should be able to present yourself in a succinct manner and clearly state what you are hoping to get out of this mentorship program. Mentors usually like ambitious mentees, so don't be afraid to dream and think big.

Stage 2

Establish mentor / mentee relationship and discuss development needs

The best way to build this mentoring relationship is to be yourself and be honest. Of course, have confidence to mention your strengths, but most importantly, show humility by stating your weaknesses. If you are in this program, you probably are an overachiever, but perhaps you're not the best team player, communicator, or presenter. By showing your vulnerabilities, you will strengthen this relationship since it will enable your mentor to assess your development needs. Your mentor was in your position when he/she started her studies or career, so don't be afraid to be open so your mentor can identify with you.

Discuss clearly what your goals are and establish objectives. Follow the SMART principle and state your goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. A good practice is to write your goals on a piece of paper and sign them. Et voilà, by doing so, you and your mentor can commit to work on building the best version of yourself.

After the program, you will check this paper and be proud of all the improvements you have made throughout the program.

Stage 3

Develop and sustain the relationship

All relationships require time, dedication, and transparency – and a mentorship relationship is no exception. For this reason, the rules of the game should be clear. In order to do so, defining the answers to these following questions can be very helpful:

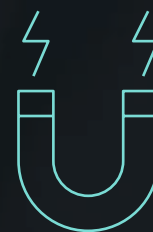
How often will you meet and for how long?	How / Where will you meet? (Online, in-person or a mix of both)	Who sets the agenda? How will this be managed? (e.g. will the agenda be sent a week before the meeting to give both parties time to prepare)
What topics do you want to discuss? What do you want out of this relationship?	What expertise and advise are you seeking?	How open are you to feedback / to giving feedback, including constructive criticism?
What are the boundaries of this relationship?	What don't you want to talk about? (e.g. personal life, job applications, etc.) Note: this may change during the course of the mentoring program)	What is a successful outcome?

Answers to these questions will help you set and manage mentoring expectations. Even though the answers to the questions should be clear, it is not advisable to create a rigid structure as this could remove the human connection aspect and put too much pressure on you and your mentor. Sometimes, one of you may not be able to attend a session, so try to be flexible.

However, it is advisable to be a bit more structured than not, as there is always the risk of losing interest due to confusion and lack of direction.

Never forget that when a mentoring session is done, the relationship continues outside the session. Do not be shy to update your mentor on your achievements to ensure you celebrate every win, no matter how small. Chances are that it will spark up a conversation.

Depending on how close you are to your mentor, you can propose to meet outside the sessions for a coffee or lunch together. As a mentee, you can still take that initiative. It is also your responsibility, and in your best interest, to show your willingness and motivation to pursue the relationship



Rules of the program

The STEM Youth Mentorship Program follows several rules to ensure a welcoming mentorship environment:

Fostering a community

Mentors can have more than one mentee.

Attendance matters

If attendance falls beyond a certain level (2/6 missed session even with an excuse), participation in program will be reviewed.

Budgeting

Allotted expense budget for mentor / mentee lunches and dinners are allowed.

Commit before complaining

If you want to change your mentor / mentee assignment, you should raise this to the STEM Youth Mentorship program coordinator by sending an email to stemyouthmentorship@atrc.gov.ae and we will find the best solution to meet your goals as a mentee.



Appendix

FAQs

How can I apply to the program to become a mentee?

By submitting the application form on mentorship.atrc.ae and following the requirements mentioned earlier in sections: **Program Eligibility and Selection.**

What is the required time commitment for the program?

There is a minimum time commitment of 6 mentorship sessions per academic year. Count around 10-12 total hours.

How do you decide which students are matched with a mentor?

Based on the information you submitted in your application form at mentorship.atrc.ae, the matching criteria will mainly depend on your interests, career preferences and overall needs to support you in developing your skills.

Can I choose my mentor?

You cannot specifically choose your mentor, but we will try our best to find the right match for you based off of your mentor preferences. Our mentor pool consists of some of the best STEM and R&D professionals in Abu Dhabi.

I want a mentor from a particular background / industry / gender - is this possible?

You can submit any preferences you would like, and we will work to find the best matching mentor for you.

What is ATRC?

ATRC is responsible for defining Abu Dhabi's research strategy across academia and industry, consolidating, and facilitating efficient investment funding, and driving policy and regulation for agile decision-making.

How can I get involved in STEM-related research, development, and innovation?

Mentors will provide academic and career guidance to get you involved and exposed to research, development, and innovation in Abu Dhabi. Mentors will also be able to share their own experiences working in research, development, and innovation

How close should the relationship be?

The extent of closeness in your mentorship relationship is entirely up to you, based on your personal boundaries and preferences (as well as your mentor's). Your mentor should be the go-to person for any doubts or questions regarding your career future, and they may also offer personal advice on other topics if needed.

What if I can't attend a session with my mentor?

If you are unable to attend a session with your mentor, kindly notify your mentor of the scheduling conflict at least 24 hours in advance, allowing for the opportunity to reschedule the session accordingly.



Key program dates

Kindly check mentorship.atrc.ae for announcements of key dates

Contact us

If you have any additional questions about the program, please contact the mentoring program team at stemyouthmentorship@atrc.gov.ae

Please expect **48 hours turnaround time** to your query. We look forward to having you in the program!



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