



## CASE STUDY: ALONA ROITERSHTEIN

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### What initially excited you about the Career Pathways Mentoring Scheme? What did you hope it would help you to explore further?

When I entered the third year of my PhD course, I started thinking more carefully about my career after the PhD. I was looking to explore how the variety of my skills and experiences can be combined into a meaningful career within and outwith academia.

Here at the university, we are well supported and informed regarding our academic opportunities and can speak with the academic staff about career development process, network in academic conferences, work on publications and try out teaching and demonstrating.

However, the Career Pathways Mentoring Scheme seemed like a great opportunity to explore career opportunities further and wider, with help from someone who can advise, share experience and give structure to career planning efforts.

### How was your experience participating in the CPM Scheme? What have you learned or experienced that has been valuable to you?

I found participating in the CPM Scheme very useful, motivating and positive. I made an invaluable connection with my mentor, who is experienced, passionate and helpful. When discussing my aspirations, doubts, concerns and progress with them, I received feedback, tips and reassurance, which boosted my confidence and motivation to go on. My mentor and I connected really well, and the conversations came naturally, I didn't feel any power imbalance or need to impress, which I think is crucial to build a trustworthy and valuable relationship.

I have learnt to be more confident about my achievements and restrain that perpetual imposter syndrome. I found out about many tools and resources for opportunities after my PhD, that I didn't know before. I saw the career path my mentor took, and learnt that possibilities are much wider than a full-time post in academia, and learnt more about how to set goals and develop skills to reach them. I also found it very useful to meet other mentees in the first session, and make connections outside my own university.

### How did you approach your sessions with your mentor? What did you discuss?

Most of our sessions were unplanned, and I was invited by my mentor to talk about whatever I thought was important at that time, and that was anything from projects I am working on and how can they contribute to personal and career development, mental health, PhD writing. We talked a lot about LinkedIn, networking, imposter syndrome and creating a personal brand - all super helpful things. And sometimes we would just have a general chat about life, which is also helpful to share some thoughts with someone without any judgement. After every session my mentor would follow up with an email with some useful resources, relevant to what we talked about at that session, which again is super useful.

There was only one session that I planned the topic for discussion in advance, and this was the Vitae RDF planner. I thought it would be useful to have it as a basis for discussion, to see what areas I need improvement in, and ask for any advice on that. I think this would be a good place to start the series of meetings, perhaps even in the first meeting, so the mentor will know where the mentee stands in term of professional development.

### What would your advice be for someone considering an application to the programme?

I would advise people not to hesitate and recommend that they submit an application. The programme is very useful and does not take up much time, apart from an hour or so a month, plus any activities that might be agreed between mentor and mentee. It is important to see your own progress and aspirations from an objective point of view.

The programme resulted for me in unbiased feedback, tools and resources, and helpful advice - along with a meaningful connection with a professional and experienced person, which is always valuable.