

UniMento – Mentoring and Career Support

University of Augsburg

UniMento is the cross-faculty mentoring program for women at the University of Augsburg. The project was founded in 2008 as an initiative of the university's gender mainstreaming program. Next to multidimensional support measures specifically designed for each target group, accompanying research related to practice is also conducted.

The mentoring concept includes two different mentoring modules for female students and female scholars based on the specific needs of each target group. Female students can participate in a one-to-one mentoring program whereas female scholars can participate in a peer mentoring program. Next to the individual mentoring experience there is also a supporting program with workshops, training, specialist presentations and informal networking events.

1. Mentoring for female students

The project's purpose is to contribute to the elimination of gender-based stereotypes in career. Therefore female students from areas of study with a low percentage of women receive individual career planning support.

Based on university statistics there is a much lower percentage of women in the fields of mathematics, science, engineering and economics. Hence female students with a background in those areas were identified as core target groups. In order to also contribute to the elimination of vertical segregation and to enhance the chances of management careers for females in all professional fields the program is open for application for female students of all areas of study.

For a period of 12 months 20 students are being paired with a Mentor from a background related to their own. Mentors are experienced specialists or managers from companies in the Augsburg area. They provide support and together with the Mentee they reflect on all topics regarding the Mentee's career objectives. The complementary program includes workshops where both Mentees and Mentors are being prepared for their role in the program, training and coaching for analyzing strengths and weaknesses and training to prepare for the job application process. Both Mentees and Mentors are also provided with various options to enhance their professional network.

By this holistic approach students shall be supported to effectively plan the first steps of their career outside stereotypical, gender-based expectations.

2. Mentoring programs for female scholars

The target groups are female Master students with an interest in starting a scientific career and female PhD students who are seeking support, career advice and peer networking during their PhD studies. Applicants must have a genuine interest in forming a supporting network with their peers.

The program also supports female postdoctoral scholars interested in personal development through peer networking and coaching to enhance their further academic careers.

The participants are being organized in cross-discipline and even cross-faculty peer groups of three to four Mentees on the same qualification level. The Mentees receive specialist and personal support from the group by discussing all topics related to their career and career objectives, sharing their personal experience and giving advice to each other.

During this process the group is also supported by an experienced Mentor from the professorate of the University of Augsburg. In addition to regular group meetings, one-to-one meetings with the Mentors are also possible.

The complementary program includes individual workshops where the peer groups are getting prepared for and reflect on their role in the program. Additional training and coaching for analyzing strengths and weaknesses and workshops for getting familiar with career paths within German Universities as well as alternative career paths for scholars are as well part of the program. There is also the option to undergo individual coaching or group coaching on any topic related to career or personal development.