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INTEGRATE: Reimagining Data Science Careers in Biomedicine

PEER MENTORING PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: 1679349

1. Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a peer mentoring scheme pilot study to help improve interdisciplinary knowledge and skills exchange between data scientists and the wider biomedical community. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

2. Why is this research being conducted?

We have been funded by the MRC (Medical Research Council) to investigate how to improve support, reward and integration of data scientists and those using computational, mathematical and statistical skills in biomedical research. Our previous work identified that biomedical data scientists can feel isolated or unsupported with in their environments and we want to investigate this further to enable funders and institutes to reform their practices. We are working with UK funders, universities and industry to accelerate the impact and progression of these talented individuals and skills within biomedical research through supportive career paths within the UK research system.

3. Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part because you are currently working in biomedical science and/or data science as an early career researcher (post-doctoral level) and have expressed an interest in participating in our peer mentoring scheme.

4. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. You can withdraw yourself from the research, without giving a reason, and without negative consequences – by advising us of this decision. The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is 31st December 2029, at which time all personal data will be deleted from University of Oxford computer systems. On request to withdraw from the study, we will identify your responses using a unique identifier code and ensure all personal data is fully deleted from University of Oxford computer systems. Any data that has been fully anonymised and aggregated for publishing purposes cannot be deleted after publication, but will not contain any personally identifying information.

5. What will happen to me if I take part in the research?

If you agree to take part, we will ask you to fill out a consent form which will outline the activities we will conduct as part of the scheme. Before you sign the consent form, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions to the project team. At this stage, you will be assigned a unique study code which will allow up to keep your responses anonymous, and withdraw any data if you decide to withdraw from the study. You are free to withdraw consent at any time by contacting a member of the study team using the details provided at the end of this document.

Upon agreeing to take part in the scheme, we will ask you to fill out a short survey outlining your contact details and reasons for wanting to take part, which will help facilitate the matching process. We will also ask you to share a short biography about your career and background which will be shared with other members of the peer mentoring scheme. Each participant will receive the full list of biographies and will have the opportunity to meet with other scheme participants in the opening workshop before being asked to rank their top three preferences for matching. The scheme facilitators will then match you into pairs or groups of three. We will do our best to match people with their choices, however this may not always be possible and we would like to stress that, even if you do not get matched with your first choice, there is still a high likelihood that you will have valuable insight to offer each other. We would encourage participants to meet with their pairs/groups for a 10 minute ‘chemistry check’ in the first meeting to make sure that all participants are happy with their matches. If there are any problems with initial matches, please contact the scheme coordinators who will attempt to find new matches if necessary.

At the beginning of the scheme we will host an online opening workshop to help outline timelines and expectations for the scheme, and to give the mentoring cohort the opportunity to connect with each other. Through this workshop we will help to provide you with resources that will help support your peer mentoring journey. After this, we expect that mentoring pairs/groups will be responsible for organising regular meetings (approximately once per month) at a suitable time. We will organise two further workshops (mid-scheme and end of scheme) to help facilitate communications between the cohort, and also to reflect on the usefulness of the scheme and how it would be improved. 3-6 months after the end, we will send out a final evaluation survey with the aim of capturing the usefulness of the scheme in supporting the personal/professional development of the participants.

The workshops and surveys will help us to evaluate the success of our scheme and potentially support its continuation if successful so we would greatly appreciate your participation and feedback through these channels. We intend to publish the data from these evaluations to help provide evidence to funders and decision makers in research institutions about how similar schemes might be run/improved. We will protect the personal information of all participants in these reports and keep identities anonymous unless express permission has been given for the attribution of specific quotes. We will seek express consent for the use of any quotes (either directly attributed or anonymised) and confirm prior to publication.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

There are limited risks surrounding involvement in this study, however we appreciate that some of the experiences you share with us may bring up negative feelings and emotions. We would like to assure you that we are committed to protecting your data privacy and that we will anonymise all data before publication unless consent is expressly given to attribute quotations directly. You are not obliged to answer any question which may make you feel uncomfortable and may withdraw at any time with no expectation of explanation.

7. Are there any benefits in taking part?

We are hopeful that participation in the scheme will provide you with the opportunity to connect with a wide network of others at a similar career stage who will be able to share experiences which support your career development and progression. Regardless of outcome, the scheme will provide valuable information to funders and decision makers about the effectiveness of this approach at connecting communities and improving interdisciplinary skills, which will help the community to make researcher-informed decisions.

8. What information will be collected and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research objectives?

To facilitate matching, we will ask your consent to share your name and email address with your prospective partner, but we will not share this information outside of this purpose. We will only ask about experiences relevant to your career development and this specific programme. We are aware that you may wish to share personal stories which may include sensitive information as part of this process, and would like to assure you that we are committed to ensuring the privacy of all of our participants and will not share any information (attributed or anonymous) without your express consent, which you are free to withdraw at any time in line with GDPR. Any data you share will be securely stored on OneDrive according to University of Oxford data protection guidelines and personal data will be handled in full compliance with GDPR regulations.

Access to identifiable transcripts/recordings will be restricted to the Project Lead, Lead Researcher, and Project Manager who will fully anonymise the data where possible. In some cases, data cannot be fully anonymised (e.g. quotes). In these cases, quotes will be attributed to a unique code which identifies the participant, and any personal identifying information will be redacted from quotations. This list of unique codes and identities will only be seen by the Project Lead, Lead Researcher, and Project Manager, and will be kept in a secure location separate to the main data. After personal information has been removed, processed data may be shared with the wider project team (or external collaborators) over secure channels in accordance with university of Oxford data protection policies and UK law to aid with analysis and reporting.

Consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet prior to digitisation. After digitisation, paper copies will be destroyed and digital copies will be stored in a restricted access and encrypted folder. Each consent form will be linked to a unique identifier code so it is possible to withdraw data from the study. We regret that it will not be possible to withdraw data from the study after 31st Dec 2028, at which point all personal data will be deleted in line with GDPR guidance.

9. Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research may be written up for publication, or for use in other media e.g. conference publications, reports to funding bodies, blog posts or published on our website. Published data will not be identifiable and quotes will not be directly attributed unless consent is expressly given to do so.

Data outputs will be deposited in the Oxford University Research Archives at the end of the study. Only non-identifiable data will be made publicly available in the archive to facilitate any future research. The participant identifier list will also be archived to facilitate removal of information from any participant who wishes to withdraw from the study in accordance with GDPR, however this list will not be made publicly available.

10. Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from the University's Information Compliance website at https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

11. Who is funding the research?

This work has been externally funded by the Medical Research Council.

12. Who has reviewed this research?

This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: 1679349**)**.

13. Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, please contact Charlotte George (charlotte.george@imm.ox.ac.uk) or the INTEGRATE team (integrate@imm.ox.ac.uk), and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the University of Oxford Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance (RGEA) team at rgea.complaints@admin.ox.ac.uk or on +44 (0)1865 616480.

14. Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

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