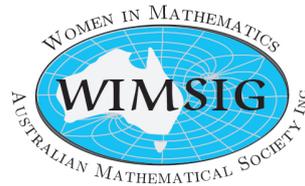


# WIMSIG Mentoring Survey 2017



September 24, 2019

In 2017 WIMSIG conducted a survey to ascertain the desire and support for a mentoring scheme. The Survey Monkey summary of results may be obtained via the link [https://www.austms.org.au/tiki-download\\_file.php?fileId=476](https://www.austms.org.au/tiki-download_file.php?fileId=476); note that questions on location of respondents have been deliberately excluded to avoid identification of respondents, while questions for which respondents provided written comments were not included in the Survey Monkey summary. The survey showed a strong desire among WIMSIG members for a mentoring scheme.

A total of 85 responses were received of which 70 were complete responses. Some overall statistics are as follows:

- 82% of responses were from employed people,
- 14% of responses were from postgraduate students,
- 95% of responses were from people in academia,
- 78% of respondents had a PhD qualification,
- 78% of respondents were female,
- 54% of respondents were interested in being mentored.

Respondents could choose to complete the survey as a person that

Group 1: desired mentoring,

Group 2: was willing to provide mentoring,

Group 3: desired mentoring and was willing to provide mentoring.

All respondents were presented with some questions while other questions were targeted at those desiring mentoring i.e. prospective mentees (hence Groups 1 and 3) or those willing to provide mentoring, i.e. prospective mentors (hence Groups 2 and 3). Below we consider the desires of prospective mentees as found from the survey results for Groups 1 and 3, and prospective mentors as found from the survey results for Groups 2 and 3.

### **Prospective mentees, Groups 1 & 3**

Group 1 respondents gave highest priority to receiving advice about future careers prospects, help with job applications and feeling connected to other female mathematicians (Q8); Group 3 respondents gave highest priority to advice about future career prospects, help with promotion applications and help with grant applications (Q22). Curiously, advice on balancing career and family was not scored so highly by either group.

Thirty out of the forty-nine respondents from Groups 1 and 3 desire one-to-one mentoring, only two desired group mentoring and the rest had no preference (Q10, 24). In general mentoring in person, via skype and via email was seen as suitable (Q11, 25); telephone was seen as suitable by less than half of the respondents. Overall prospective mentees desire monthly meetings (24 out of 43); the next largest group (15) are happy with meetings every two months (Q12, 19). Regarding the mode of mentoring forty-three of fifty-one considered the match of mentor with what the mentor hopes to gain as more important than mode of mentoring (individually or in a group) or communication method (face to face, skype, email, phone) (Q13, 27).

### **Prospective mentors, Groups 2 and 3**

From Group 2, respondents felt most qualified to give help with grant, job and promotion applications but, in general, seemed to feel reasonably well qualified to provide mentoring in all identified areas (Q15). From Group 3, respondents felt most qualified to give support for being a female in a male dominated environment and providing connection to other female mathematicians. This group feels less able to provide assistance with promotion, grant and job applications (Q29).

Most prospective mentors in Group 2 have no preference for one-to-one or group mentoring (Q17) while those in Group 3 prefer one-to-one mentoring (Q31). In general in-person, Skype and Email communication is seen as a suitable method for meeting with mentees; telephone is less favoured though certainly not out of the question (Q18, 32). Thirty-two of fifty-two prospective mentors prefer monthly meetings (Q19, 33). In general (44 of 50 respondents) are willing to assist with activities like reviewing grant applications (Q20, 34).

Most (43 of 71) prospective mentors have not had any experience in an organised mentoring scheme while 24 of 71 have had some experience (Q36).

### **Conclusions from the survey**

The survey responses demonstrated a strong desire among its membership for a mentoring scheme. It indicated that, in general the mentoring program should offer

- one-to-one meetings between mentee and mentor unless all participants agree to group meetings;
- at a frequency of about once per month;
- in person if circumstances permit but, otherwise, via skype or by email according to the wish of the mentee(s).