The African
Academy of Sciences

AESA AN INITIATIVE OF THE AAS & AUDA (AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY)

The AAS Mentorship Scheme

Through the AAS mentorship scheme, African rising research leaders receive guidance and support from experienced professionals towards achieving their desired career development goals.
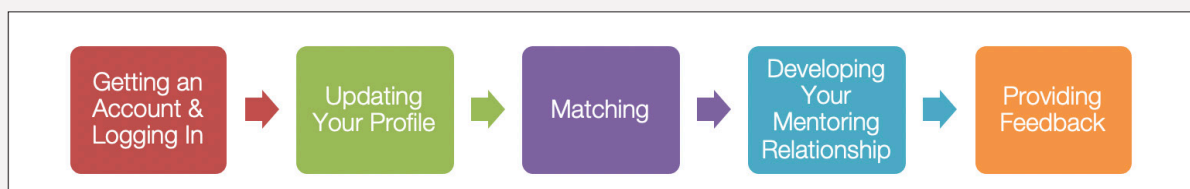
"Quick Start" Guide

Version 1.0 - July 2020

Contents

1.0 Introduction

Welcome to AAS Mentornet, the online platform for the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) Mentoring Scheme. This guide is intended to give you the basic information you need to get started.

There are five main phases which are described in this document:

2.0 Getting an Account and Logging In

1.1 Getting an Account

There are two possible ways by which you can get an AAS MentorNet account:

a. The Administrator may have created an account for you

If this is the case, you will have received an automated email with your login details where you will edit/confirm your profile.

b. You may be asked to 'self-register' on AAS MentorNet

If you have been asked to self-register, then you should go to the following URL and follow the self-registration process:

https://aasciences.sfgmentornet.com

Once you have submitted your self-registration details, you will be sent a confirmation email with your account details and you then need to wait for the Administrator to authorise your account. This normally takes 2-3 days and you will be sent another automated email once your account has been authorised. You can then login and access your account. Note you will not be able to access your account until the Administrator has authorised your account and you have received the email confirmation.

2.2 Logging In

Once you have your login details (see above), you can log in to AAS MentorNet as follows:

1. Go to https://aasciences.sfgmentornet.com/ the login page:

2. Enter the username and password that you chose during the self-registration process, or which you were sent in the automated email.

3. On your first log in, you will be asked to read and sign the Privacy Notice and Consent Agreement before you can access the system. These notices tell you what your rights are under data protection legislation; they explain how your personal data will be used and who you can contact if you want to correct any mistakes or withdraw your consent. Nobody can access any of your personal data, and you cannot access MentorNet until you have accepted the Privacy Notice and given your consent.

4. Once you have logged in, you will see a screen similar to the one below:

5. Any fields which have the padlock symbol (🔒) against them are 'private' fields – this data can be seen only by you and by the Administrators. Other users cannot see this information.

Once you have logged in, update your profile as per Section 3.

2.3 Smartphone Users

You can also access the MentorNet site through a smartphone. Just go to your standard smartphone browser and use the same URL and user details as above (ie https://aasciences.sfgmentornet.com/.

You may find it helpful to add a shortcut to MentorNet on your home page; if you're unsure how to do this then you'll find instructions for various types of smartphone under the Resources Section of MentorNet ('Training Documents') on the left-hand side of the screen. Look for the document titled: "Setting up MentorNet on a Smartphone".

3.0 Updating Your Profile
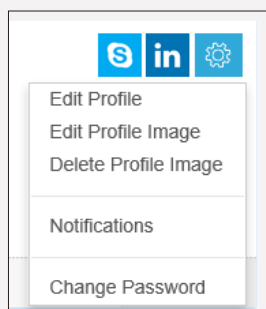
Most functions to edit your profile are available by clicking on the ⚙ icon on the top-right of your user profile screen – clicking on this icon will bring up the following drop-down list of options.

3.1 Changing Your Password

In order to keep your personal data secure, you should change your password to a secure password that only you know. Do this by selecting the "Change Password" option above. Passwords are required to be a minimum of 8 characters in length containing at least 1 uppercase character and 1 number.

3.2 Adding a Profile Photo

It is highly recommended that you add a profile photo to make your profile more personal and to help others to identify you. Choose a recent image and where your face is visible. Click on the "Edit Profile Image" and choose an image file to use. You can preview the image and crop/zoom the image to fit. Click "Upload Image" when you are happy with the image.

3.3 Editing your User/Mentoring Profile

You user/mentoring profile is what enables the platform to find you an appropriate match.

If the Administrator has created your account for you then you will probably need to add more information to complete your profile. Or you may just want to edit/update information you have already added.

Choose the "Edit Profile" option from the drop-down list above. This gives you the following headings:

You can expand each heading and edit the details within.

3.4 Skills & Expertise

The **Skills & Expertise section** is used to help describe what skills you are looking to gain (as a mentee) or to offer (as a mentor) during your mentoring relationship, and they will be used to help with the matching process.
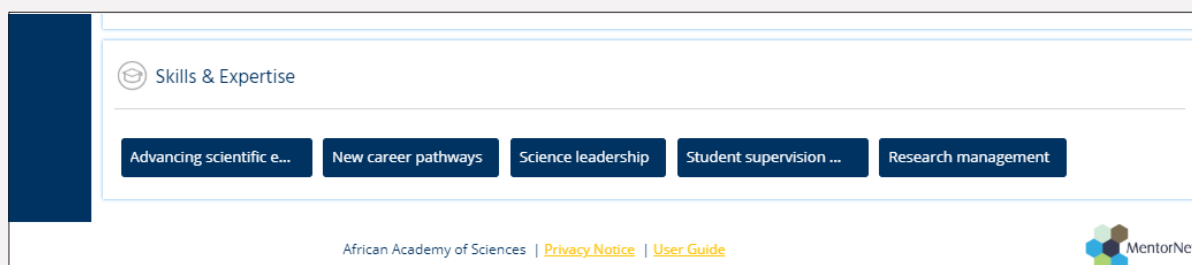
This section has a drop-down list containing keywords and phrases that describe the skills you are looking for. Select keywords/phrases from this list that capture skills that you wish to gain during your mentoring relationship. Choose as many as you like from the list.

There are two ways in which you can add skills & expertise:

    a. Click on the [?] icon and a drop-down list of words will appear.

    b. Start typing in the input box and the list will start filtering depending on the text you have entered.

With every keyword you select please click the [Add] icon. Once you have finished adding your skills, click the [Save] icon at the bottom right of the screen.

Don't forget to click [Save] when you have finished all the above edits!
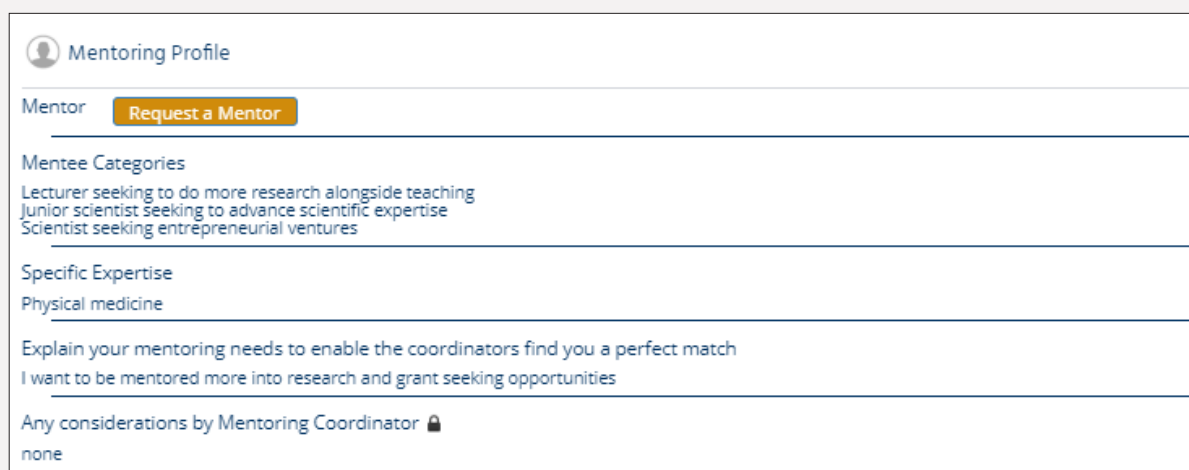
4.0 Matching

This being a developmental model of matching, mentees take lead in selecting preferred mentors upon which the administrators complete the matching based on the availability of the mentor.

4.1 Mentees

You are able to search for and request a mentor. Your mentor choice is then reviewed by the Mentoring Coordinator. Your request may be approved or rejected based on the compatibility of your needs with the competences of the mentor, as well as their availability at that particular time.

It is possible to view the user profile of any mentor by clicking on a name under the **"People"** menu, but it is normally more effective to use the search function to search for a mentor based on keywords and skills. To use the search engine:

    a) Click on the **"Request a Mentor"** button under your "Mentoring Profile" heading:

b) This first search will use the skills you have entered against your profile to find suitable mentors. It will list all the mentors who are offering the skills you added to your profile, and the list is ranked in order of the number of matching skills
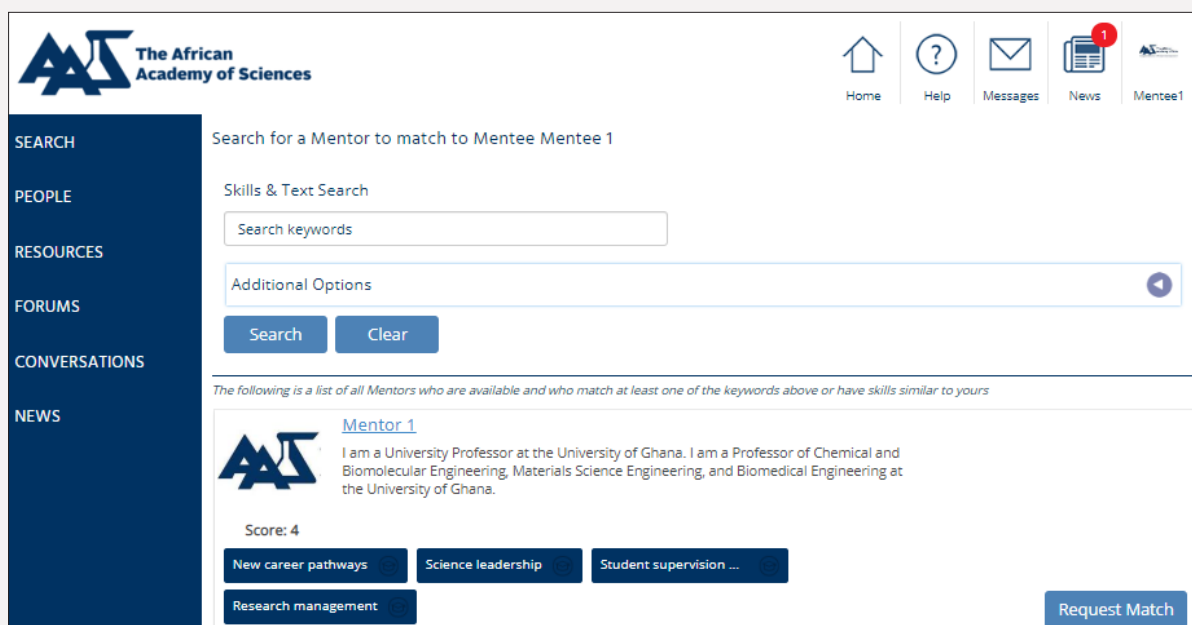
c) If this 'skills-based' match does not provide a good quality list (perhaps because you haven't entered your skills yet) then it is also possible to type keywords into the Search box. Using the keyword search will search the entire user profile of all available mentors (not just the skills) and will find all mentors who have these keywords anywhere within their user profile (e.g. job title or industry).

d) Once you have chosen your preferred mentor, click the **"Request Match"** button. A new screen will pop up, allowing you to provide additional information.
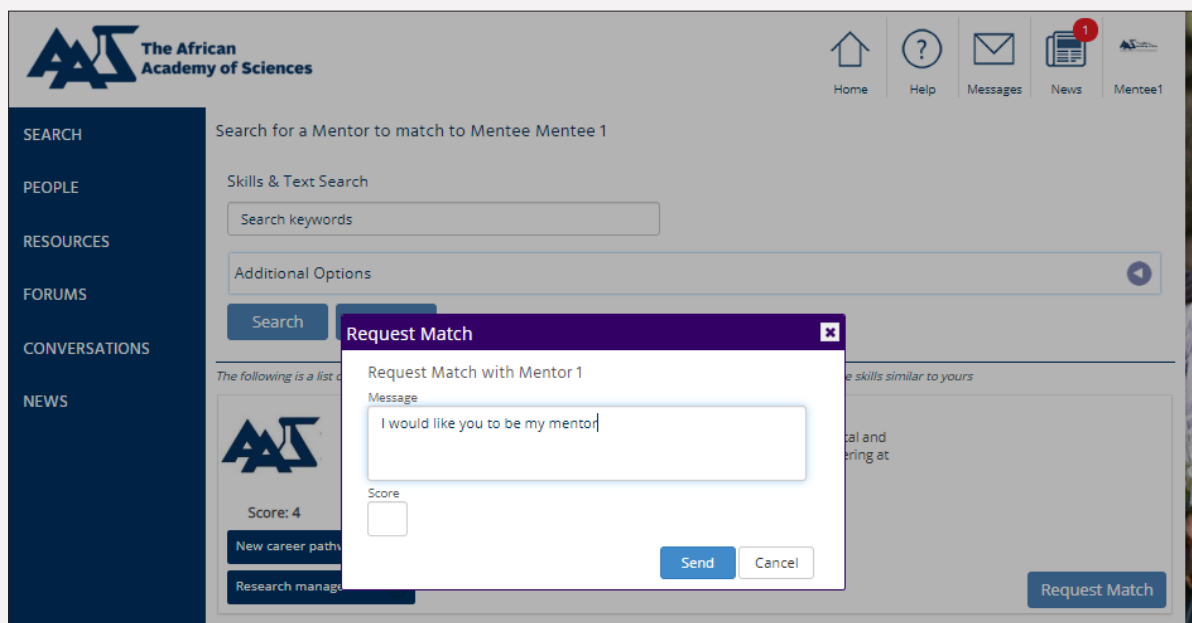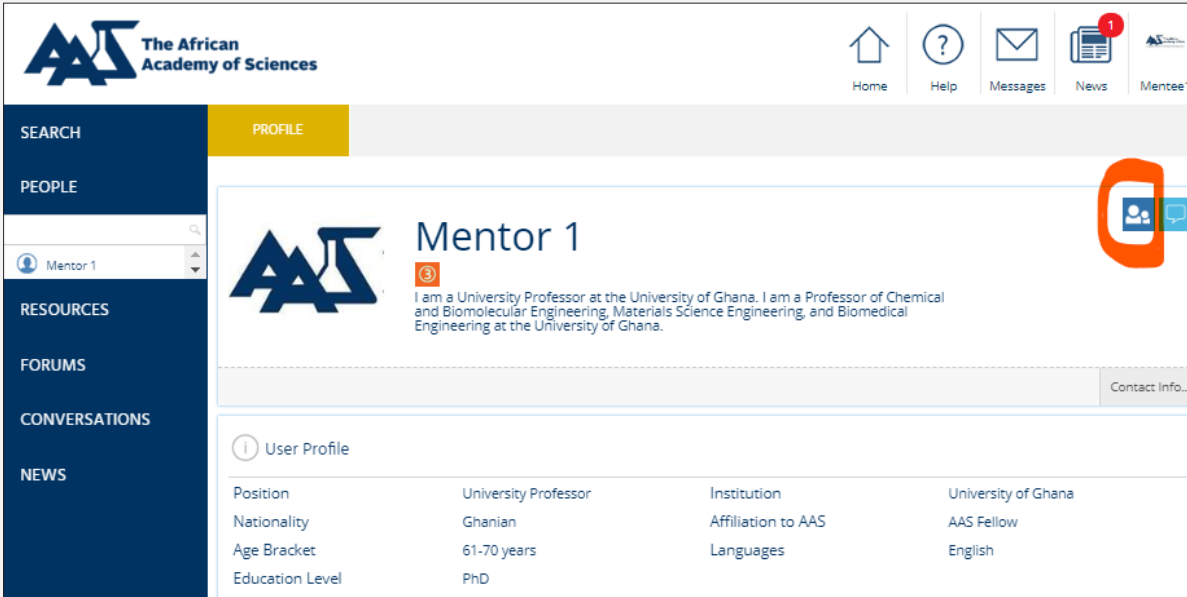

e) You may type in some information about your requested match, perhaps to explain why you have chosen that mentor. You may also type a number in the 'Score' box to indicate a preference if you are selecting multiple mentors.

Your request will be sent to the Administrator who will then either accept or reject the match request. This process can take up to 3 days. Once your match request has been accepted, you will receive an automated email confirming that your match has been accepted. If your match is rejected, then you will also receive an email informing you of this and requesting you to select other matches.

Alternative Way of Requesting a Match

If you are viewing the profile of a mentor with whom you'd like to request a match (e.g because you have found the mentor under the "People" heading), you can request a match directly from the mentor's user profile screen. Simply click the **"Send mentoring request"** icon at the top-right of the mentor's user profile – see below.

4.2 Mentors

When filling in your user profile, you are able to select the number of mentees you wish to mentor on the platform. The Administrator will aid in finding you the best match based on your competences, availability and the mentees' requests.

Once a match has been identified, you will receive an email from the Administrator informing you of your mentees name. You can then log in, view their profile and start communication.

5.0 Developing your Mentoring Relationship

5.1 Your Mentoring Agreement

Upon matching, it is the responsibility of the mentee to make the first contact with the Mentor and request a first meeting where they achieve the following:

a) Get to know each other well in order to build a rapport

b) Discuss and agree on their mentoring goals, mentoring timeline, and frequency of mentoring sessions.

After this first meeting, either the mentee or mentor may fill in the Mentoring Agreement as below:

Once uploaded, the other person should be able to view this Mentoring Agreement under their 'Activity Log' section.

With your mentoring goals and a timeline set, you may find the following features useful in building and developing your mentoring relationship:

5.2 Messaging

Messaging on the AAS MentorNet works in much the same way as messaging in most social media apps. The key difference is that you are assured of confidentiality and security within the MentorNet system.

To access your messages:

    a) Click on the [envelope icon] icon at the top right of the screen. The number highlighted in a blue background indicates if you have unread messages.

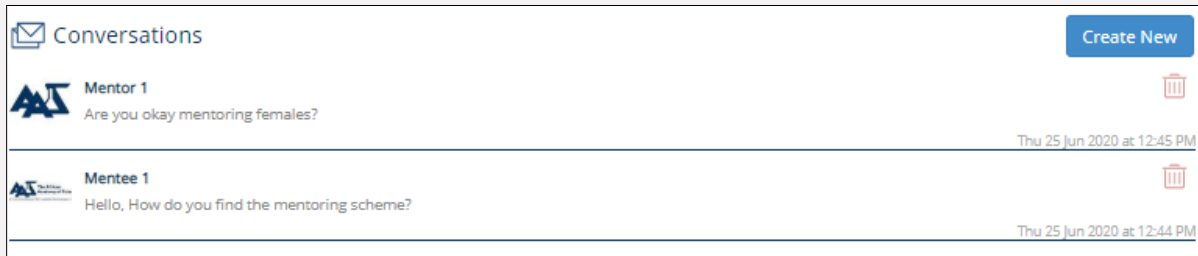   b) You will see a list of all the conversations you are having with other users under "Conversations". If you click on the conversation, you will see a list of all the messages with that user, and you are able to reply.


Notes:

    a) You can type a draft message, save the draft, and return to it at a later date without sending it

    b) Remember you can send/receive messages on your mobile device (see above for instructions on how to setup MentorNet on your phone)

    c) You will receive email notifications when you receive a new message. Email notifications can be configured so that you can change the frequency of the notifications.

5.3 Activity Logs

We recommend that you keep records of your mentoring sessions/meetings/conversations. You can do this in the AAS MentorNet by creating an 'Activity Log'.

To view an existing Activity Log:

    a) Go to your profile and click on the **Activity Log** tab:
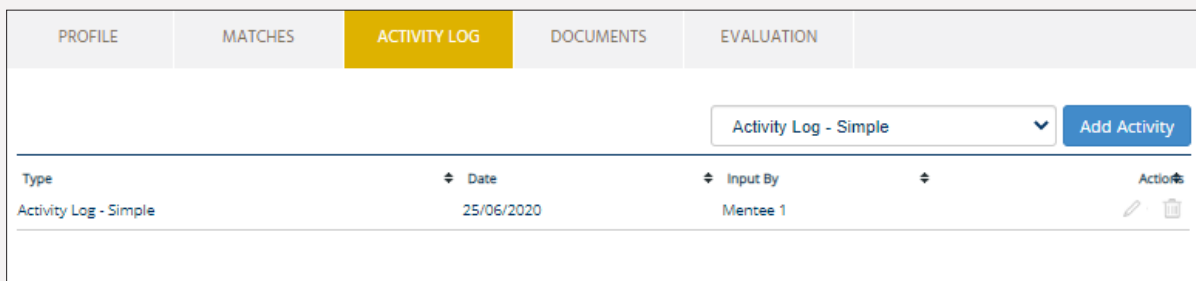
    b) You will see a list of any activity logs that have already been created about you and you have the option to add a new activity.

    c) You can view/edit an existing activity log by clicking on the pencil ([pencil icon]) icon at the far right of the activity log entry.

To create a new Activity Log:

    a) You can either create a simple activity log, or a detailed activity log. Select the appropriate template from the drop-down list and click "Add Activity".

    b) An example of a Simple Activity Log template is as follows:

5.4 Sharing Documents

You may want to share documents with your mentor and other users, perhaps so that they can review the document and you can discuss it at your next meeting.

To upload and share documents:

    a) Go to your profile and click on the Documents tab:

    b) You will see a list of any documents (and photos) that you have already uploaded, and you can add new documents by clicking "Upload File".

Note: Documents uploaded here can be viewed only by you, your mentors and mentees, and Administrators.

5.5 Resources

The AAS MentorNet has a 'Resources' section where you can find documents that your Administrator has made available to you. These might be training materials, templates, best practice documents, policies, etc.

You can access these by clicking on the "Resources" heading on the left-hand side.

Note: mentors and mentees are welcome to suggest materials to the AAS that can be uploaded to this section. Email them to mentoring@aasciences.africa

6.0 Providing Feedback

AAS is keen to learn from your experience of a formal mentoring scheme like this one. We administer an entry questionnaire, a progress survey every six months during your mentoring relationship, and an exit questionnaire at the end of your relationship.

We highly recommend that you respond to these evaluations as the feedback is continually used to improve the mentoring scheme.

Your evaluations can be accessed on the Evaluations Tab as below.

7.0 Common Problems

7.1 General

If you have any problems or questions about use of the AAS MentorNet system, or about AAS Mentoring Scheme you should contact the Administrator on mentoring@aasciences.africa.

7.2 Unable to Log In

If you cannot login to your account, the most likely reason is that your username or password is incorrect, or your account has been locked. For example, if you enter your password incorrectly 5 times then your account will be locked, and you will need to ask the Administrator to unlock your account.

If you cannot log in then check you are using the right username and double-check your password is correct (check caps lock is off and check any upper/lower case characters – sometimes a lower case "L" can look like the number "1" or the letter "I"). If you still cannot get logged in, then contact your Administrator.

7.3 Forgotten Password

If you forget your password, click on the "Forgotten Password?" link on the Login page. You will be asked to enter your username and to confirm the email address held within the system. A new password will then be sent to the email address registered within the AAS MentorNet. If this is the incorrect email address, then you will need to ask an Administrator to reset your password.

7.4 Not Receiving Automated Emails

If you aren't receiving any of the automated emails, the most likely reason is that they are going into your spam/junk folder. Check the following:

    a) Check the email address on your user profile is correct

    b) Check your spam/junk folders

    c) Check your Notification settings

You should also add the MentorNet email address (noreply@sfgmentornet.com) to your 'safe senders' list in your email system to ensure future messages aren't sent to your junk/spam folders.