



Mentor a business to help it Innovate to Grow

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a critical role in growing Australia's economy, but the concept of translating an idea into an innovation through research & development (R&D) can be an overwhelming and daunting task if you haven't experienced it before.

CSIRO's Innovate to Grow program is a free 8-week program helping businesses to build their skills and refine their novel ideas into a tangible R&D opportunity with commercial applications.

The program is delivered virtually using Practera's online ed-tech platform and facilitation services.

What is the role of a mentor?

A highlight of the program is to connect SMEs with mentors, to help them understand:

- How to convert their business idea into a research question
- How to work with publicly funded research organisations (including general information about timing and expectations)
- Connect SMEs to relevant researchers for expert advice and project discussions
- Work collaboratively with the other mentors and innovation team to assist the SME group.

Who can apply to be a mentor?

Researchers or people working with research teams within CSIRO or at Australian universities are encouraged to become mentors.

Benefits of being a mentor

- Support the increase of industry R&D knowledge
- Work directly with exciting and innovative Australian SMEs
- Develop mentorship and advisory skills like communication, problem solving and networking with support from the CSIRO program facilitators
- Practice translating scientific knowledge and expertise into industry language
- Increase professional networks through new connections in the program
- Receive a certificate for your participation.

Mentors are assigned 3–4 SMEs to work with but will be introduced to the whole group and work as a team with other mentors. We estimate you will need 2 hours per week across the 8-week period.

What previous mentors have said

“This is an excellent opportunity to participate and hopefully contribute to a very important part of the Australian commercial and technological landscape.”

Berto Pandolfo, University of Technology Sydney (Adv Manufacturing program)

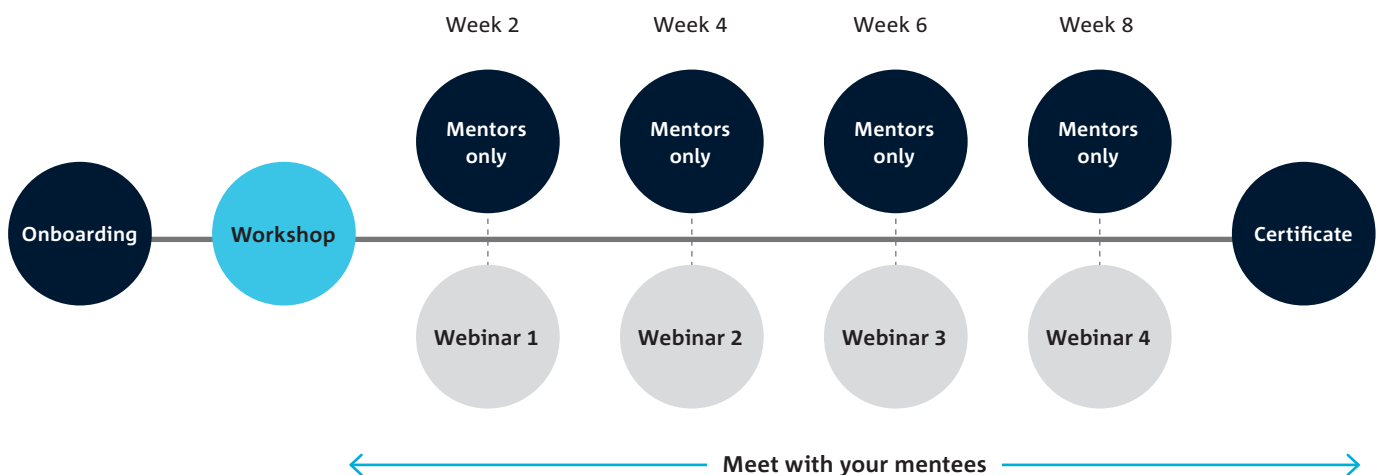
“The program provides a perfect platform to communicate with SMEs and understand their dynamics. This experience can be heavily beneficial for the mentors in future interactions with SME-based industry partnerships.”

Chamikara Mahawaga Arachchige, CSIRO’s Data61 (Cyber security program)

“The mentor program provides an excellent platform for engagement between industry and researchers. The training materials in the Practera are great and it is very helpful to improve my communication with the industry. This program also helped me to engage with researchers from other universities.”

Dr Feifei Bai, Griffith University (Energy program)

Innovate to Grow program – mentor timeline



- **Essential** – attend workshop mentor session (40 min) and organise meetings with your mentees
- **Highly desirable** – attend onboarding (1 hr) and fortnightly meetings with program team and mentors (30min)
- **Optional** – attend participant webinars (1 hr) and full workshop (4 hrs)

Apply to become a mentor today!

To apply, or for more information, email InnovateToGrow@csiro.au

Please include your sector of interest or area of expertise.

As Australia’s national science agency, CSIRO is solving the greatest challenges through innovative science and technology. CSIRO. Creating a better future for everyone.