

Guidelines for implementing mentoring arrangements.

The key to successful implementation of mentoring is sound preparation including planning and design, an effective communication strategy and regular feedback with a readiness to adapt as necessary. These guidelines, distilled from experienced sources¹, provide a checklist of key issues and tasks that contribute to successful outcomes.

1 What is mentoring at UQ?

As a part of the staff development framework, the underlying philosophy for mentoring is self-managed learning. The University mentoring policy 5.80.19 defines the concept as a private, non-reporting relationship that enables developments in knowledge, work or thinking mainly through dialogue and reflection.

Mentoring relationships should be based on trust, acknowledgment of mutual benefit and a balanced responsibility for conduct with attention to the confidential nature of the relationship as well as University policies on code of conduct and equity issues. Supervisors and line managers have no direct role in mentoring relationships arranged for their reporting staff so should not expect to receive information that is confidential to the relationship. Mentoring cannot substitute for good quality performance management or all other forms of training.

2 Why should we do it?

Reasons for mentoring include but are not limited to induction, career advancement, diversity management, professional development, retaining talent, supporting returning staff, succession planning, managing change, leadership and management development and as a training support strategy.

2.1 Benefits to individuals

The mentor can experience enhanced self-esteem, better fulfilment of own developmental needs, organisational recognition and an extension of influence in and on the organisation. As a bonus, the relationship may bring exposure to new ideas, other perspectives and intellectual stimulation.

The mentoree gets support in targeted development activities and help in avoiding mistakes. Benefits should include access to an informed second opinion, gaining insight into own performance through a 'critical friend', identifying personal development needs and opportunities as well as learning from the experience of the mentor.

2.2 Benefits to organisations

These can include better use of existing skills, development of additional competencies and happier staff. At UQ this may also spin off improvements to productivity and quality in research, teaching and services. Where mentors are external to the unit opportunities increase for cross-disciplinary knowledge and collaboration.

3 How to do it well

Successful programs most often have the following characteristics:

- A clear statement of program goals.
- A clear statement of roles, responsibilities and limits to expectations for all involved.
- The same information accessible to all staff whether involved or not.
- A program sponsor with access to resources for the program.
- A coordinator with responsibility for day-to-day management of the program.
- Voluntary participation for both mentors and mentorees.

¹ See the implementation guides listed in the reference section under resources.

- Selection of mentors based on published criteria consistent with program goals.
- Mentorees are given responsibility and training for managing the relationship.
- A procedure for fault-free re-arrangement of match in the case of mismatches.
- On-going qualitative evaluation backed up in the longer term by some effort to link this with individual and organisational outcomes as part of normal review processes.
- Support is provided for mentors and mentorees with encouragement to improve mentoring skills using existing training modules plus occasional specific workshops, seminars and other events supported at central level.
- All party agreement on how to feed outputs from mentoring partnerships into the performance review system if desired by the mentoree(s).

4 Planning a mentoring scheme

4.1 Preparation

This should identify the level of support among potential participants, including program sponsors, as well as the risks involved in setting up a program. It will make it easier to set effective program objectives and establish the mentoree target group.

4.1.1 Why do you need a mentoring program or other mentoring arrangements?

Verify the needs of the staff and the organisation (unit) as well as the applicability of mentoring as the solution. Base your case on solid internal research.

4.1.1.1 What do you want to achieve?

You will probably have a good idea of why your unit may need a program but if there is no enthusiasm at senior level seek alternate solutions to meet that need. For example, if junior staff members are not getting adequate support the most appropriate solution may not be a mentoring program for them. Refresher training for senior staff in supervision skills with a mentoring component to support practical application may more effective as a first stage in a longer term strategy to provide mentor support for other groups.

4.1.1.2 Who will be mentorees and what can they expect?

Once you are clear about the needs and objectives, the target group for mentoring is often quite obvious. Sometimes it is too obvious, such as the junior staff in the example above. As a thought experiment, switch the group or groups you have in mind as mentors and mentorees. What can they offer each other? Who is going to ask for a mentor and why? How can the program meet their needs and will this actually achieve your objectives?

4.1.1.3 Who will be mentors and what can they expect?

There is no ideal mentor “profile”. However, as with any position description, identify key areas of experience, competence and attitude both as a professional and as a person that should meet potential mentoree needs and the program objectives. Mentors need not come from within the unit. There are substantial benefits to be gained by all parties in recruiting from elsewhere in the University or even outside the organisation.

4.1.1.4 Who will support the program?

Mentoring programs, even informal arrangements, are not resource-free although enthusiasm and innovative approaches can reduce the financial requirements. Will executives and supervisors commit their own time, provide the resources and support the strategies needed so that the program can achieve its goals e.g. internal and external advocacy, workload re-arrangement, recognition? How many people will volunteer as mentors or mentorees?

4.1.2 Who will develop the program?

Sharing ownership is a good principle for encouraging support.

4.1.2.1 Who should be involved in developing it?

Bring in at least a few potential mentors and mentorees and one or two supervisors. These people will become your first line marketing staff.

4.1.2.2 Who will sponsor the program?

The program sponsor need not be one person, it could be a pair or small group of senior executives. The critical issue is commitment to providing essential resources, influencing strategies and promoting for success.

4.1.2.3 Who will coordinate the arrangements?

Programs, even informal ones, require someone to send out information, recruit participants, arrange training and support events, monitor relationships, evaluate progress and provide a point of support.

4.1.3 What are the logistical issues including time lines?

These points may change during program design but you need preliminary answers in order to cost your proposal:

- When would the program start?
- How long is needed (ie when can people get together) to develop the program?
- What lead-time is required for marketing the program?
- What materials will you need?
- What orientation events and other training will be necessary?
- You will also need to have some ideas about where, when and how often participants are going to meet.

4.1.4 How are you going to measure your outcomes?

Measuring mentoring outcomes is not a simple task. There are existing quality indicators at the University relating to human resource management as well as other strategic areas. If not already available for your unit establish baseline data for those that link directly and indirectly to the program objectives. Supplement annual indicators, after the program start, with qualitative evaluations as the program progresses.

4.1.5 How are you going to market your program?

This is about making the program a desired but normal part of daily life in your unit rather than heavy advertising and a big launch. Personal recommendation, good word-of-mouth reputation and no leaks in confidentiality are your aim. Develop a communication strategy and implement it.

4.1.6 What will it cost and where will the resources come from?

Costs	Possible source of funds
<i>Capital investment:</i>	
Preparation	Use existing leadership and team-building exercises Internal publicity (PR) budget
Program design	
Publicity materials	
<i>Recurrent costs</i>	
Coordination & support	Staff development budget
Ongoing publicity	Internal PR budget
Training for new participants, extra skills	Fewer recruitments, better retention of high-flyers and good managers
Mentor time	Better performance in own area of responsibility
Mentoree time	Cost savings from avoiding mistakes and alternate training costs
Networking and other events linked to scheme	Internal PR budget
Evaluation & scheme amendments	Marketing budget

4.2 Design

Your proposal together with information from the support package in section 6 below can provide initial resources. Get your design/ development team working on the questions below.

4.2.1 What are the specific objectives of the program?

Try to keep these simple and measurable.

4.2.2 What and how will you evaluate?

See the resource section for suggestions.

4.2.3 Who and how many do you hope will participate?

This is your target group for mentoring. You may have to return to this after you have looked carefully at the availability of suitable and willing mentors.

4.2.4 What degree of formality?

The more administrative control you impose the less up-take you're likely to get. Complete informality may leave participants without adequate support and program goals unmet.

4.2.5 What sort of model is appropriate?

Don't forget there are a number of alternative models available.

- One-to-one need not be senior-junior, it could be peer or junior-senior. The key point is which experiential differences are most appropriate in light of mentoree needs and program goals.
- A pool or panel of mentors is an option when short on mentors or dealing with varying mentoree needs.
- Group or team mentoring may be a useful option particularly in research areas or projects. Further details are available in the references listed in section 6.

4.2.6 Characteristics and skills needed in the mentor?

The specific experience sought in a mentor depends on the aims of the program and the needs of the mentorees. Other important characteristics are:

- Listening with empathy
- Sharing experience and learning
- Being a sounding board.
- Providing professional friendship.
- Developing insight through reflection.
- Being interested in the development of others.

4.2.7 What individual goals are appropriate for mentorees?

These may be obvious but write them down and use them in your briefings and other program information. Individual ideas on what mentoring is and can do vary a lot. Manage expectations from the start.

4.2.8 How will you recruit?

This covers both mentorees and mentors. Will you call for nominations as well as or instead of personal application? How are you going to persuade people to join up? Check that your recruiting messages are tailored to the groups that you are targeting.

4.2.9 How will you screen and match?

Leave some choice available to both mentor and mentoree in deciding partnerships. Make sure they know how to end the relationship without blame if the match doesn't work.

4.2.9.1 How will you deal with the "feel equal" factor?

This includes mentoring partnerships that cut across gender, culture, language, disability and/or generation as well as experience. Some points to bear in mind:

- Cross-gender relationships can provoke gossip if not handled openly.
- People often feel more at ease with mentoring partners of the same sex, culture or generation.
- Partners who differ in one or more of these characteristics may be unable to provide the exchange sought by their partner, because priorities and experience are too far apart.
- Dependency arises more easily when the "feel equal" factor is low.

On the other hand

- These differences in experience and perspective can provide insights not otherwise obtainable.
- Matching too closely for personal characteristics may leave you with few if any mentors or a demand for a mentor "profile" that previously did not exist.

4.2.10 What procedures do you have for handling partnerships that don't work as intended?

One suggestion is to arrange that mentoring partners meet with or feedback to the coordinator after their first or second meeting to confirm that the partnership feels positive and that learning goals have been agreed. If this is not the case, the coordinator should propose and arrange meetings with alternate partners emphasising that personal fit is a priority for all involved.

4.2.11 What is your orientation and training plan?

A standard orientation package is available from the *Staff Development web-site*. There is an information pack (Module 1: "Mentoring – what is it?") that can be sent out prior to your local program orientation (Module 2 gives outline help for your presentation). Module 3: "Getting the most from your mentoring relationship" contains the material for a one-hour workshop. This can be run separately for mentors and mentorees or may be a joint session in

part or full depending on the needs and numbers of your participants. See Resources section for a list of other staff development courses that may be suitable for some or all of your participants.

4.2.12 How will you support participants?

This covers support for the coordinator as well as mentors and mentorees. It could be informal networking opportunities or more formal sessions where a particular group e.g. coordinators or mentors can get together to discuss common issues and possible solutions.

4.2.13 What is your communication strategy?

Some suggestions:

- Encourage your development team and program sponsors to spread the word.
- Provide information (e.g. fliers, posters).
- Pre-program orientations and progress events.
- Mention regularly at staff meetings (a point on the standing agenda is good) and in other staff circulars.
- Ensure that supervisors are kept aware of the program, its goals and progress.

5 Putting it into practice

5.1 Is your communication and marketing strategy ready to go?

Double-check that all resources in place prior to start date.

5.2 Troubleshooting

The most common problems arise because people have inappropriate expectations (adapted from Lacey, 1999).

Problem	Possible cause	Possible solution
Managers use mentoring to deal with poor performers	Don't understand program goals, avoiding alternate action	Discuss program goals, role of mentor versus supervisor
Time-management issues	Program is placing unrealistic demands on participants, lack of commitment, program not an integral part of the human resource strategy, orientation and training takes too long	Review program expectations Review HR strategy and the place of mentoring in this.
Lack of immediate visible result	Unrealistic expectations, Not enough time available for participants to work on relationships and goals	Allow reasonable time before judging outcomes, provide time for participants to allocate to the relationship
Few people want to participate as mentors or mentorees	Inadequate advertising and promotion, lack of support for participants, too many other work pressures	Review communications strategy, Clarify goals Provide adequate resources
Unsuccessful matching	Personality clash, difference in styles or standards, poor selection and or matching	Review selection and matching procedures, allow no fault divorce
Discontent among non-participants	Jealousy for not being selected, misunderstanding of program goals	Increase opportunities for appropriate matchings, promote program goals more widely

Problem	Possible cause	Possible solution
Mentoring partnerships not operating according to guidelines e.g not taking their role seriously, failing to provide or accept feedback, one party taking credit for the other's work, the mentor using the mentoree as member of staff	Role expectations not clearly established, poor training, inappropriate selection	Renegotiate expectations, provide adequate training, renegotiate partner

6 Resources

6.1 Selection forms

A variety of examples are available in the references and web-links listed in the last section. Apart from contact details, qualifications and current manager, questions for both mentor and mentoree could look as follows (Lacey, 1999):

- What do you consider to be your most significant achievements to date?
- What do you hope to achieve by participating in the mentoring program?
- What skills/ knowledge/ expertise can you offer your mentoring partner?
- Do you have any particular constraints or requirements we need to consider when making a match?
- Please indicate any of the following competencies you would like to use as a focus for your own development (insert a list of competencies that are compatible with program objectives)
- Please describe any previous involvement in formal or informal mentoring relationships

Mentorees should also be asked what experiences they would like to have during the mentoring program.

If you plan to take nominations from others for staff to participate you'll also need a nomination form. Apart from contact details, for themselves and the nominee, and space to indicate what role the nomination is for, ask

- What their relationship is with the nominee?
- What their reasons are for nominating the person?
- Have they discussed this with the nominee?

6.2 Training

6.2.1 *Existing courses and resources, available from time to time, that may be appropriate:*

- The Better work life program has
 - ♦ "Positive workplace communications" - a four-hour module (no 2).
 - ♦ "Listening skills lunchbox session" - a one-hour module (no 4a).
- The Customer Service program also offers
 - ♦ "Communication skills designed to get results" - a four-hour module.
- Fundamental management series
 - ♦ "Communication skills" - 2 day workshop
- Leadership and management development series
 - ♦ "Advanced communication - negotiation/ conflict resolution" 2 day workshop presented by outside consultants two or three times per year.

- Training videos on active listening, questioning and conflict resolution are also available through the University Library.

6.2.2 Mentoring training package (Outlines and materials for 3 modules in the basic package)

Mentoring Module 1: Mentoring – what is it?

Target audience: all

Duration: May be sent out as an information package prior to Module 2. Alternately may be presented independently (30 minutes) and/or supplemented by a discussion session depending on local requirements and context.

Aim:

To broaden understanding of mentoring beyond the traditional one-to-one, senior-junior informal teaching and sponsoring model.

Objectives:

- To promote the University's preferred definition of mentoring.
- To explore alternate roles for mentors and mentorees.
- To raise awareness of risk management issues.
- To increase awareness of alternate models such as panel, team, peer and reverse mentoring.
- (Optional) To provide examples of how mentoring can support different staff and organisational development needs.

Content:

- An information package (available from web-site) on mentoring including the University policy, information on roles, models and behaviours.
- Optional discussion of where and how these may apply locally and those benefits and risks that could apply.

Mentoring Module 2: Local program orientation

Target audience: all local staff – mentors, mentorees, line management, senior management and support staff.

Duration: approx 30 minutes

Aim: To brief staff on the program “facts”

Objectives:

- Ensure that everyone shares a common understanding of what the program involves, why it is being run and who will be involved.
- Encourage suitable participation and support from everyone else.
- Establish the foundation for expectation management, covering acceptable goals and roles for mentors, mentorees and supervisors.

Content:

- The purpose and objectives of the program as well as who can apply.
- Expected benefits to participants and the organisation unit (could come from an interactive discussion).
- The people behind the program (sponsor, development team, coordinator etc).
- The scope of the program – how many people are or will be involved and what roles will they have, how will it affect others.
- How and from where the mentors will be recruited.
- Time frames – when will it start, how long will it run, how long are relationships meant to last? When evaluated?
- Organisational and administrative details of the program – eg application and evaluation procedures.

Mentoring Module 3: Getting the most from a mentoring relationship

Target audience: mentors and mentorees (separately or together depending on context)

Duration: approx 1 hour

Aim: To provide participants with the essential resources to manage their mentoring relationship and achieve positive outcomes.

Objectives:

- To ensure that participants are aware of the rules of conduct such as confidentiality and equity issues.
- To introduce one or more methods for developing goals.
- To raise awareness of the need and some ways to proactively manage the relationship

Content:

- Code of conduct, confidentiality and other rules of engagement.
- Setting goals and limits for the mentoring relationship.
- Behaviours to avoid.
- Handling problems in the relationship and constructive challenge.

6.3 Evaluation

On-going formative evaluation should help you troubleshoot the program proactively and ensure quality as well as provide a check on how well the program objectives are being met.

6.3.1 What are you going to measure?

- Is the program meeting its objectives?
- Is it functioning as it should?
- How are the administrative and other procedures working?
- Are all the procedures actually necessary and well received/ helpful to everyone?
- How are the relationships working?
- How is the program affecting those not directly involved?
- What issues are mentors having difficulty with?
- What issues are proving difficult for mentorees?
- Have you covered everyone's training needs?
- How is your communication strategy working?
- What can you improve?

6.3.2 How are you going to collect this information?

It is probably worth using several different methods:

- Interviews or feedback sessions (singly or as groups) with mentors, mentorees and line managers at appropriate intervals on their perceptions of the program and its outcomes.
- Self-report questionnaires from mentor and mentoree – annually if the relationship is to be long-term or at the close of shorter-term relationships.
- Assessing personal development or learning plans against outcomes (this could be done jointly by the mentor and mentoree and delivered without personal names attached).
- Statistical measures in line with mentoring objectives (e.g. alterations in productivity, staff turnover, promotions awarded, skills acquired).
- Document changes that occur in the organisation and its environment during the life of the program.

When the program comes to an end a summative evaluation can then draw on the on-going evaluations to help answer the question: has the program achieved its objectives?

6.4 Information on Individual roles

6.4.1 The role of University Executives

- ♦ Ensure that knowledge of the University mentoring policy is disseminated at staff meetings and other normal channels on a regular basis.
- ♦ Include mentoring as a topic at every appropriate opportunity.

- ◆ Arrange a few suitably spaced discussions or briefing events for colleagues and staff and participate yourself.
- ◆ Volunteer as a mentor or mentoree in someone else's program and encourage colleagues to do so.
- ◆ Participate in mentoring training events.
- ◆ Keep informed of developments at central and local level and offer personal support to orientation and recognition events as well as recruiting efforts.
- ◆ Be seen supporting the policy in practice e.g. become program sponsors if requested.

6.4.2 The role of a Program sponsor

- ◆ Provide the resources necessary to design and implement the program.
- ◆ Oversee progress in both design and implementation.
- ◆ Act as a sounding board and provide ideas and suggestions as necessary.
- ◆ Ensure that internal strategies regarding recognition, workload planning and training work for the program.
- ◆ Receive and discuss evaluation reports for example as a member in the steering group if there is one or with the coordinator if there is not.
- ◆ Participate in all main orientation and recognition events.

6.4.3 Coordinator role

- ◆ Action and manage the communication strategy.
- ◆ Arrange orientation, training and other support events.
- ◆ Accept and deal with applications from mentors and mentorees.
- ◆ Keep participants informed of progress in matching.
- ◆ Monitor mentoring partnerships to ensure they are proceeding smoothly and in line with codes of conduct.
- ◆ Undertake on-going evaluation and provide regular feedback to the program sponsor, steering group and participants.
- ◆ Provide or arrange support for participants experiencing difficulties in their mentoring partnerships.
- ◆ Ensure that all involved are and remain clear about roles and limits to expectations.

6.4.4 Mentor role

The principal role of a mentor is to:

- Support mentorees in discovering and defining their own development needs.
- Share expertise and experience to help mentorees develop their talents.
- Foster independent learners.
- Provide a safe space for mentorees to raise and talk about their issues.
- Listen, clarify, reflect back and, when called for, challenge.
- Help mentorees reflect on their beliefs, thoughts, feelings and behaviours and to view issues from a variety of perspectives.
- Enable mentorees to gain confidence in analysing and solving problems and become effective decision-makers.

Mentoring can involve acting in a variety of capacities depending on the needs of the mentoree and purpose of the mentoring arrangement. During the course of a mentoring relationship² a mentor may act as:

- A catalyst by being a sounding board, confidante or role model.
- A broker by opening doors, helping the mentoree network or acting as a sponsor.
- A solutions guide by listening, facilitating or advising.
- A problem solver by tutoring, training, coaching or teaching.

² Adapted from L. E Mellish, "Appreciative mentoring", Mellish & Associates, Chelmer, Qld

- A professional friend by offering emotional support, showing respect and admiration as appropriate.

Mentors need to be able to:

- Spend time with mentorees.
- Be accessible and positive.
- Give and receive constructive and honest feedback.
- Be non-judgemental.
- Respect confidences.

6.4.5 Mentoree role

The principal role of mentorees is to:

- Take responsibility for identifying and achieving their own development goals.
- Initiate meetings with the mentor, manage meeting dates and times and set the agenda for the partnership.
- Share expertise and experience.
- Listen, clarify, reflect back and, when called for, challenge.
- Be open to and appreciate different perspectives.
- Learn how to find their own solutions.

During the course of a mentoring relationship³ a mentoree may act as:

- A conduit by sharing own useful knowledge and facilitating the mentor's insight into the organisation.
- A broker by networking and opening doors for the mentor
- An advocate by publicly giving credit to the mentor for useful ideas and speaking up on behalf of the mentor as a developer of people.
- A professional friend by offering emotional support, showing respect and admiration as appropriate.

Mentorees need to be able to:

- Spend time with their mentor.
- Be accessible and positive.
- Give and receive constructive and honest feedback.
- Respect confidences.

6.4.6 The role of the Supervisor

- Keep informed of the program, its objectives and progress.
- Suggest participation to potential mentors and mentorees.
- Provide the opportunity for appropriate candidates to participate.
- Support participants when the need to change mentoring partners arises from mismatching or changed circumstances.
- Encourage participants to feed outcomes from the mentoring relationship into their formal personal development plan and annual review.

³ as for note 2.

6.5 Other resources

6.5.1 References and reading

Implementation

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Evaluation

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- Gibb, S. (1999). *The usefulness of theory: A case study in evaluating formal mentoring schemes*. *Human Relations*, 52(8), 1055-1075.

Informal one-to-one model

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Peer mentoring

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Group mentoring

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- Kaye, B., & Jacobson, B. (1995). *Mentoring: a group guide*. *Training & Development*, 49(4), 22-28.

Team mentoring

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Kaye, B. (1999). *Reinventing the mentoring process*. Human Resource Planning, 22(1), 23-25.

Kaye, B., & Jacobson, B. (1996). *Reframing mentoring*. Training & Development, 50(8), 44-47.

Diversity

Kerka, S. (1998). *New perspectives on mentoring*. Eric Digest, 194(Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education).

Wanguri, D. M. (1996). *Diversity, perceptions of equity and communicative openness in the workplace*. The Journal of Business Communications, 33(4), 443-458.

6.5.2 Links

<http://www.andrewgibbons.co.uk>

<http://crlt.umich.edu>

<http://www.mentorsforum.co.uk>

<http://www.mentoring-australia.com/links.htm>

www.nottingham.ac.uk/tsd/mentor/index.php

http://www.rdg.ac.uk/Handbooks/Teaching_and_Learning/mentors.html

http://www.uwic.ac.uk/Strategy/policy_framework/Mentoring%20.doc

6.5.3 Contact(s) for support

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