



ACADEMIC MENTORING GUIDELINES

The academic mentor can expect to take on a number of roles within the relationship involving a range of skills and behaviours. Which role they adopt at any time will depend on the needs of the mentee and the situation. Typical roles a mentor will undertake include being a sounding board for the mentees various ideas or as a facilitator, advisor or coach. Alternatively, a particular mentor may be sought because they have some technical expertise or professional knowledge and they are a source of organisational knowledge. Mentors promote and encourage positive behaviours in others through being a role model and often prove to be an effective channel for providing feedback on both performance and development issues. In addition, mentors often find themselves in position to motivate the mentee to achieve their goals. Lastly, good mentors have the ability to challenge assumptions and encourage different ways of thinking.

Mentoring is usually undertaken by someone who has detailed knowledge of the mentee's field and is likely to be directive in terms of support and advice. Mentoring is also useful to develop individual confidence and capabilities to address current and longer term development needs. For this reason, mentoring is usually a longer term relationship than coaching and can last between six and eighteen months.

In terms of academic mentoring it is necessary to note that the mentoring can be formal and / or informal and the length of the mentoring relationship can vary considerably. It is recognised that some relationships will last a long time with for instance, PhD supervisors or post-doc advisors and staff with whom they have worked previously. These relationships may have begun as a formal mentoring relationship but may have continued informally. Also, some academics will identify a mentor to support them with a specific issue in which case the relationship will be relatively short.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Mentoring Policy.

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

The benefits of mentoring include:

- Providing a timely and structured learning and development intervention based on the specific needs of the member of staff and at their own pace.
- Providing the opportunity to reflect and plan career development.
- Being able to receive safe and supportive feedback as well as on opportunity for increased self-awareness.
- Providing links to be able to find sources of support that address the needs of staff effectively and quickly.
- The opportunity to learn from a role model who can help in setting realistic career and development goals.

Where the mentoring has been effective mentees note that they have:

- Identifying and developing their research/teaching objectives and plans.
- Advising staff regarding their publication strategy and identify good outlets for research outputs.
- Identify ideas that could attract research funding and advise on funding sources.
- Help staff deal with negative feedback and unsuccessful funding applications.
- Advise on teaching and assessment, pedagogical research and student engagement.

- Help staff to plan their long-term career and work towards promotion.
- Encouraging staff to network and collaborate with other academics.
- Ensuring that staff (particularly new staff) are aware of support available to them.

There are also considerable benefits for mentors:

- Many mentoring schemes report that mentors also develop confidence in their own abilities and learn from the mentoring process and it enables them to reflect and reinforce their own skills as academic leaders.
- Many mentors also note that mentoring also helps to build their own confidence through recognising the impact of their mentoring.
- A sense of personal satisfaction in helping to develop the potential of others
- Different perspective of the University's culture and landscape through listening to the views of academic staff and
- An opportunity to share experience and expertise.

The introduction of a formal mentoring scheme for staff will benefit the School/Department /University:

- By improving communication.
- Helping to motivate those involved.
- Potentially accelerate the learning of those involved in the scheme.

CHARACTERISTICS/ATTRIBUTES OF AN ACADEMIC MENTOR

An Academic Mentor will ideally be an experienced senior member of staff and he/she will have a network of contacts throughout schools, Colleges and the wider University and be able to influence the mentee in a positive way to achieve results.

The mentor will also:

- have chosen to act as a mentor and be committed to the process.
- Ideally, have attended mentoring skills training.
- be able to devote sufficient time to making the mentoring relationship successful.
- be prepared to share experience and pass on skills to others.
- have a genuine interest in developing potential for the future.
- have an enthusiastic and positive attitude towards their own work, other people and the University.

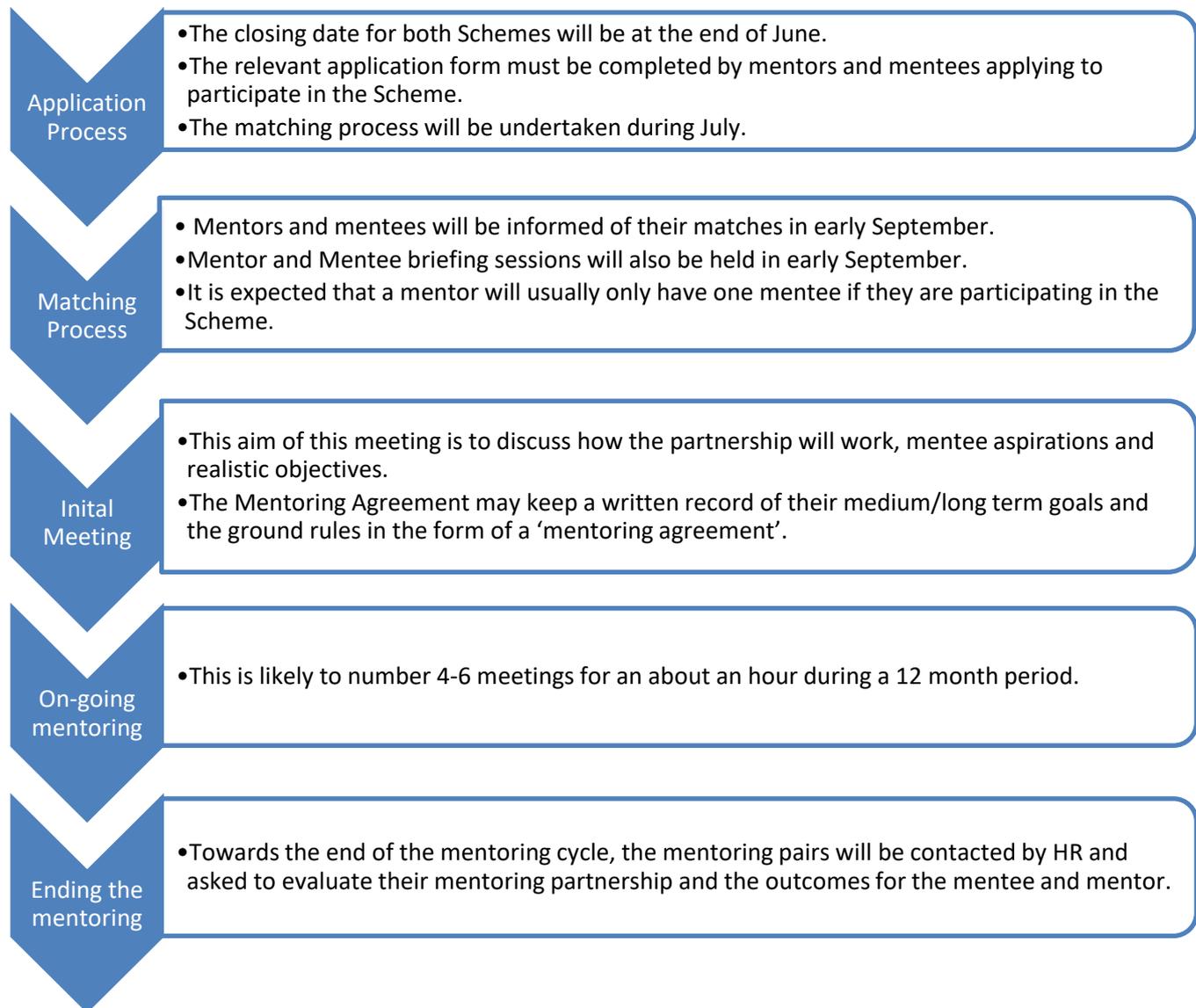
WHAT CAN A LINE MANAGER EXPECT?

The relationship with the mentee's line manager needs to be carefully managed. If it is not then the line-manager may feel alienated or believe their authority is being challenged.

As the mentoring relationship is confidential there should be no reporting back from mentor to line manager. In practice it is likely that mentor, mentee and line manager will establish a relationship but the channel for information between the three parties will be the mentee. The mentee should be encouraged to be open about the mentoring relationship but the decision about what information to share, if any, with the line manager, must lie with the mentee.

THE MENTORING PROCESS

The Academic Mentoring Scheme and Senior Academic Mentoring Scheme will run annually during the academic year. The mentoring process will involve:



In situations in which it is not possible to make a match the Scheme Co-ordinator will work with the Colleges to identify suitable mentors or look into the possibility of forming peer mentoring groups or another suitable development intervention.

Ending the Mentoring Relationship

For the Academic Mentoring Scheme and the Senior Academic Mentoring Scheme, if the mentoring relationship is not working for any reason staff can end the partnership without any negative ramifications. We encourage staff to discuss this with their mentoring partner before contacting the Scheme Co-ordinator to inform them that the relationship has ended. However, if staff feel this is not possible they may contact the Scheme Co-ordinator who will discuss the issues with member of staff and their mentor / mentee. If requested, the Scheme Co-ordinator will aim to provide the mentee with another mentor.

In terms of the Early Career Mentoring Scheme, if a mentee wishes to be mentored by another member of staff (to the one they have been assigned) it will be necessary to discuss this with their line-manager or the Head of School.

THE MENTORING AGREEMENT

It is strongly suggested that a Mentoring Agreement is discussed and agreed at the first meeting. In addition to the specific information required in the Agreement other topics to consider in this initial discussion are:

- What each person is prepared to talk about, e.g. work/personal issues.
- Confidentiality.
- Contact arrangements, e.g. where and when to get in touch, any 'no-contact' times
- Frequency, timing and location of each meeting.
- How the line manager will be involved and how the relationship with him/her will be managed
- When the formal mentoring relationship should end.

TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Following the matching process mentors and mentees will be provided with the opportunity to attend a briefing session that will ensure that they are clear about the expectations of the process and are given the opportunity to reflect upon the skills required of effective mentors.

Specifically the briefing session will aim to ensure that staff:

- Understand the expectations of mentors and mentees of the process.
- Explore and refine their overall mentoring objectives.

The Staff Development Team will provide support for mentors and mentees throughout the mentoring life cycle and should be contacted if mentors or mentees need further guidance.

TEN 'TIPS' FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

1. Staff should only take on the role of academic mentor only if you want to do it and believe in its value and are willing and able to commit sufficient time to it.
2. It is advised to use the mentoring agreement at the outset of the relationship to avoid potential misunderstanding later on.
3. Invest time early on in the relationship to establish rapport and get to know the mentee/mentor.
4. Mentors should recognise their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to the mentee's development needs and be prepared to guide them to other sources of help if appropriate. Mentors are not expected to be an expert on every subject.
5. Mentors should support the mentee in producing realistic development plans and goals. They should be honest and shouldn't support unrealistic expectations. If the mentee's plans and/or career aspirations are impractical or unreasonable then mentors should challenge them.
6. Mentors should keep the relationship with their mentee on a professional level. It is recommended that staff are aware of, and sensitive to, potential misinterpretation in language and behaviour particularly where there are differences in gender and/ or culture.
7. Wherever possible encourage the mentee should work out their own solutions to problems that they face.
8. Be aware that mentors are a role model. How the mentee perceives the way in which mentors manage themselves and others will impact on your relationship with them.
9. Mentors should build the confidence and commitment of the mentee and help them develop by providing honest feedback in a constructive and positive way.

10. When the time comes to end the formal mentoring relationship, mentors and mentees should aim to end on a positive and supportive note by reviewing and sharing the value and benefits that both gained from the experience.