Navigating a pathway to outcomes-focused thinking in engineering education

Enriching the academic culture through mentoring: A guide for Heads of School

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Acknowledgements

Support for the production of this publication has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

This guide is part of the deliverables of an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) National Teaching Fellowship awarded to Professor Wageeh Boles. The authors would like to thank the Project Officer Mrs Hilary Beck for utilising her excellent management and organisational skills to facilitate the successful implementation of the program.

Many thanks go to Dr Bhuva Lakshminarayanan for her valuable and important contributions during her work as Project Researcher. Thanks are also due to Dr Carol Quadrelli and Dr Martin Murray for their very valuable assistance and contributions to the program outcomes.

The significant advice, insights and support of the Program Reference Group and the Program Evaluators, Dr Deborah Southwell and Dr Elizabeth McDonald, are greatly appreciated.

Sincere thanks are due to the program collaborators in Australia and the USA, and the many colleagues at the five participating Australian universities for their great support and enthusiastic engagement with the program.

Published by the QUT Department of eLearning Services, March 2013
Introduction

This guide is one of the outcomes of the investigations and research conducted as part of an ALTC National Teaching Fellowship titled Navigating a pathway between the academic standards and a framework for authentic, collaborative, outcomes-focused thinking in engineering education, awarded to Professor Wageeh Boles. Further details on the Fellowship program and its outcomes can be found at: http://nationalteachingfellowshipboles.com

Overview

Designed for use by Heads of School as a concise, easy to read, evidence-based resource, this guide contains practical tips and guidance for the ongoing support and development of academic staff through mentoring. While it does not pretend to be a reference book, it is, however, based on an extensive review of the literature, with a specific focus on academic mentoring. It contains a list of references to enable readers to probe this topic further, if and when they wish.

Enriching the academic culture through mentoring: A guide for Heads of School contains a great deal of information and advice, so you might not wish to read it from beginning to end. You might choose to skim for a sense of what it contains and read those sections that require your immediate attention, turning to other sections as needed. If you have had extensive experience as a mentor or have previously established a mentoring program, you could use parts of the guide as a refresher and skip those sections that are familiar to you. A companion guide for mentors and mentees is also available.

Creating more rewarding careers: A mentoring guide for the professoriate

http://www.nationalteachingfellowshipboles.com/resources/guides.shtml
Terminology

In Australia, beyond a tutor or teaching assistant level, the academic levels start at a Lecturer, then Senior Lecturer, followed by Associate Professor, then full Professor. All are referred to as academic staff or academics. In most Australian universities, the word ‘faculty’ does not refer to teaching professors, but describes an organisational unit, consisting of a number of schools or departments. Further, Australian institutions differ in the way they describe units of study.

For the purpose of this guide, we will use the term course to describe what is generally a single, semester-long area of study (sometimes called subject or unit) and program to describe an overall degree (sometimes called course). We will also use the terms academics or academic staff to refer to all ranks of teaching professors. A Head of School will also refer to a Head of Department in this guide.
Preface

Congratulations on your appointment as Head of School. Whether you have been recently appointed or have been in the role for a number of years, your pathway to this position will have been unique to you. It is possible that the thought of being a Head of School did not even cross your mind until someone spotted your skills and abilities and you were invited to take up the position. You might have come to this with a successful career from the ranks of academia or industry and have recognised years of experience.

Perhaps you have been planning for this position for a long time. In which case, you will have studied the position description and the required knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, professional activities, and career achievements carefully. Ready to make a strong case for your appointment, you will have built a portfolio of evidence of your achievements and monitored the environment (and perhaps the job ads).

Maybe you arrived at this leadership role through a different scenario altogether? In any case, you are now in charge, and as you reflect on how you navigated your career path to this point you think:

- What were the critical factors that influenced my journey?
- Did I do all this on my own or did other people play a part?
- Who are those people, and what role did they play?
- How did we cross paths and at what stages?
- How did they positively impact my career and life?

As you read this booklet, you might wish to think about the people who have helped your career and how you have already helped others with theirs. You are eager to get to work and with a sense of urgency you aim for, and are determined to achieve success.
After participating in a university leadership orientation program, your supervisor organises a meeting with you. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss your plans to lead the school, this year and beyond. Waiting for your discussion is a set of objectives and goals and their associated key performance indicators.

This all sounds familiar; you have been through similar processes in the past, nothing unusual here. You leave the meeting excited about the things you will achieve. You look closely through the list and you think: ‘I can handle this, I can do that, I am very familiar with those aspects’ ... and so on.

It is all looking good until you read Objective 5: ‘Provide guidance and career development advice and support to the academics in the school’. Although you understand that this is an important part of your role, you begin to ask yourself: ‘How am I going to do this? How would I (and my supervisor) know that I have succeeded? What resources will be needed for me, and possibly for those I am entrusted to guide?’.

Deep in thought, you receive a visit from an experienced and trusted colleague Suzan. You share with her your enthusiasm for the school to achieve excellent outcomes. You also share your uncertainty around how to achieve Objective 5. Suzan then says she was doing a literature search for a journal paper recently and had come across a few good articles about mentoring.

‘Mentoring! I’ve had a little experience being mentored but that was a long time ago so I am a bit sketchy about it. Do you think this would help me to achieve Objective 5?’  ‘Yes’, Suzan replies, ‘I think it deserves some serious consideration.’
What is mentoring?

So let’s start by refreshing your memory about mentoring. There is no one definitive or widely accepted definition of mentoring in the literature. While descriptions vary with differing contexts, purposes and relationships, mentoring can be viewed across a continuum. At one end is the conceptualisation of mentoring as sponsorship, where traditionally a senior staff member mentors a more junior staff member to assist in his or her career. It is based on a relationship that is one way, with unequal power and no expectation that the mentor learns from the mentee.

At the other end of the continuum mentoring is seen as developmental, ‘has learning as its focus and is based on power sharing where both parties (i.e. mentors and mentees) are seen to benefit from the experience’ (Ehrich, 2008, p. 32).

Developmental mentoring is based on a relationship where the mentor serves as a guide rather than just providing answers. Even though the mentee’s needs define the mentoring relationship, mutual learning is an outcome of this type of mentoring. It is this broader developmental view of mentoring that this guide promotes:

Mentoring is a reciprocal and collaborative learning and development relationship between a more experienced academic mentor and a mentee or group who is less experienced. It creates a space for guidance, direction, feedback, dialogue, reflection, inquiry and action. The mentoring relationship supports mentees to plan and realise learning goals and enhance critically reflective academic practice.

Figure 1: The mentoring continuum
If you have had some experience with mentoring, you will realise that it has been used as an academic development strategy for a number of years to aid transition, career development and professional learning. Mentoring can be applied at different stages of a person’s career; for example, early career academics, staff undertaking new roles like program coordination, or to build capacity for senior academic leadership positions. Mentors can provide mentees with:

- friendship
- socialisation
- information
- role modelling
- advocacy
- encouragement
- career guidance
- opportunities to network with others outside of their usual circle
- advice on political realities and institutional culture and norms
- support on a specific aspect of a mentee’s focused development.

Mentoring provides multiple benefits across an organisation.
Benefits for mentees

The most widely cited positive benefits regarding enhanced opportunities for mentees include:

- psychosocial benefits (such as support, encouragement, self-confidence and role modelling)
- improved abilities with teaching strategies, resources, content and planning
- positive reinforcement from information and advice through discussion, sharing ideas, and feedback.

In addition, the literature on academic mentoring reports benefits for mentees as:

- mentee growth and career development (Buchanan, Gordon, & Schuck, 2008)
- enhanced job satisfaction and feelings of self-efficacy and confidence (Donnelly & McSweeney, 2011)
- increased research productivity (Bland, Taylor, Shollen, Weber-Martin, & Mulcahy, 2009)
- shared new understandings, awareness of expectations; goal setting, new perspectives and assistance with difficulties (Carnell, MacDonald, & Askew, 2006)
- improved socialisation and a greater connection to the university (Schrodt, Cawyer, & Sanders, 2003)
- increased professional opportunities and collegial networks (Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ, & Yip, 2008).
Benefits for mentors

**Table 1:** Widely cited positive benefits regarding enhanced opportunities for mentors

| **Personal and professional satisfaction through** | feelings of gratitude, giving back to the university community and contributing to the learning and development of new academic staff |
| **Personal growth and professional development through** | exposure to new ideas and different perspectives; and increased leadership, facilitation, communication, reflective and relationship skills |
| **Rewarding relationships and extended networks through** | collegiality, collaboration, sharing and professional interaction in scholarly research, projects and learning and teaching |
| **Reflection on practice through** | reappraisal of beliefs, values and practices and increased self-awareness |
| **Recognition by peers and the institution through** | increased reputation, profile and respect |

**Benefits for the school**

The most widely cited positive benefits for organisations include improved productivity, contributions, retention, loyalty, work relations, and communication (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004).

In addition, academic mentoring studies report enhanced:

- commitment
- leadership development
- cross-faculty collaboration
- collegiality and sharing of practice
- retention of corporate knowledge
- organisational culture
- staff feeling valued and recognised (Ewing et al., 2007).
A culture of care

As you can see mentoring provides benefits at a number of individual and organisational levels. As a Head of School, you have a fundamental role in shaping the school culture and in ‘creating a climate that is conducive to ongoing faculty learning and accomplishments’ (Lucas, 1994, p. 26). School cultures have a significant influence on staff and can potently signal the learning and practices that matter (Knight & Trowler, 1999). Knight and Trowler (1999) argue that ‘mentoring is a potentially powerful learning tool but its force is proportional to its compatibility with the culture within which the mentee operates’ (p. 33). The authors affirm the importance of mentoring, but caution that there can’t be mixed messages or mentoring will suffer.

A mentoring program communicates a strong message about a school culture and the commitment of its leaders to developing people (Slavenski, 2007). So while the purpose of the program and the resources you are able to devote to mentoring will influence your next step, the alignment of mentoring with your school culture and the extent of the message about care that you wish to convey regarding developing people is equally important.

A number of authors (see, for example, Johnson, 2007; Zachary, 2005) propose the development of a ‘mentoring culture’, which strengthens relationships, promotes growth and learning in individuals and organisations, and helps ensure the success and sustainability of mentoring programs. Johnson (2007) argues that ‘department leaders and deans must actively support mentoring efforts through words, allocation of resources and positive reinforcement’ (p. 223). He suggests that leaders assess needs, nurture buy-in, offer insights into what good mentors do, prepare the ground work, foreshadow questions and responses and prepare people for their roles. Recruiting, recognising and rewarding mentors and mentees who have the desirable qualities noted in this booklet reinforces the culture of care in your school, which ultimately benefits all staff. If you demonstrate you are serious about mentoring by putting these elements in place, academic staff become serious about mentoring.

Regardless of which of the following options you chose, the success of any initiative is dependent on the support and commitment you demonstrate. Figure 2 provides a flowchart for thinking about mentoring for your school.
Enriching the academic culture through mentoring | A culture of care

Figure 2: Considerations for mentoring (Adapted from Rolfe-Flett, 2002)
What are the mentoring options for my school?

Mentoring is a valuable strategy for guiding, supporting and developing staff in your school and achieving an objective to ‘provide guidance and career development advice and support to the academics in the school’. So what are your options to get things started? That largely depends on the purpose of the program and what you see mentors and mentees doing. Table 2 gives some examples.

Table 2: Mentoring options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For ...</th>
<th>Mentors might ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Share information on policies, procedures; provide advice on where to find things and who to go to for help; offer psychosocial support; socialise the mentee by introducing him or her to others, facilitating networking and integration into the school community; acculturate the new staff member to the tacit aspects of what is valued, expected and the norms of the school and the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Offer the mentee the opportunity to observe their own teaching, as well as offering to observe the mentee’s teaching or materials, or refer the mentee to an existing institutional peer review scheme. Mentors might also offer advice about curriculum design, teaching methods or assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Identify and discuss the research goals and plan; refer the mentee to capacity development programs; monitor achievement against research plan; review draft and unsuccessful proposals and articles; or review assessor comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A graduate certificate program</td>
<td>Support scholarly projects by assisting with designing research questions; goal setting; selection of literature, research methods and theoretical frameworks; data gathering and analysis; dissemination; provide peer review; monitor progress and help with ethics forms (Hubball, Clarke, &amp; Pole, 2010).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having thought about the mentoring focus, your options are to:

1. **Facilitate informal mentoring relationships** between mentees and potential mentors. If your purpose is to meet a specific need of one or two individuals, then an informal arrangement might be most beneficial and practical. Discuss your idea with the mentee or mentors and help them establish the mentoring focus and timeframe, and touch base with them from time to time.

2. **Refer staff to an existing university or faculty mentoring program.** If your purpose is to target specific groups (for example, induct early career academics into the school) there could already be an existing university mentoring program and therefore this established option might be very effective and efficient and require fewer resources.

3. **Consider starting a school program.** This option is beneficial if you are targeting specific groups or wishing to tailor a program to your school context. While all three options will contribute to fostering a culture of collegiality and care in your school, sponsoring a school-based program sends a clear message about your commitment to staff guidance and development. If you are considering this option, the next section will guide you through some helpful prompts. Human resource departments are also a good source of support, advice and resources.

4. **Consider a combination of the above,** which is beneficial if you have differing aims and target groups. For example, you might consider a formal mentoring program in conjunction with the promotion of informal arrangements between staff in your school.
How can I plan and implement a mentoring program in my school?

The thought of starting your own school-based mentoring program might seem daunting, but programs don’t have to be complex or very formal to be effective. You could start small and scale up the program as you collect evidence of its effectiveness. This evaluation can provide data that justifies an expansion of the program. Before you start, ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of the program?
- Who is the target group of potential mentees?
- What model of mentoring is needed?
- How formal should the program be?
- What process can I use to recruit and select mentors?
- Will I have a system for matching mentees and mentors?
- What do I need to know about mentoring relationships?
- What are everyone’s roles and responsibilities?
- What forms of institutional recognition and reward can I offer?
- What resources do I need to develop or coordinate to support the program?
- What training will be needed to prepare and develop participants?
- How will I evaluate the mentoring program? (Adapted from La Trobe University, 2012a)

The appendix has a checklist of these elements for you.

These questions reflect the strong consensus in the literature about the key elements of a successful academic mentoring program. Let’s unpack these questions a little further on the following pages.
1. What is the purpose of the program?

Is your purpose to induct staff to new roles; to help early career academics achieve success in a graduate certificate in tertiary teaching; or to build research capacity (for example)? Being clear about your purpose will influence how you establish the program and subsequently help you to promote it to others. Aligning the program to the university’s mission and goals will help you demonstrate how you are meeting your responsibilities as a Head of School. The more specific you are about the program purpose and objectives, the easier it will be to measure its success. Additionally, the program’s success would be more likely.

2. Who is the target group of potential mentees?

Your program purpose will influence your target group. For example, do you have a target group such as early career or mid-career academics or sessional staff, or is your target group staff who hold specific roles such as course or program coordinators?

What should I look for in an effective mentee?

Many of the qualities of an effective mentee mirror those of an effective mentor, particularly in a group mentoring arrangement, for example:

- enthusiastic, positive attitude, respectful, empathic, non-judgemental, sensitive to diversity, generous in sharing experiences and supportive of other mentees

In addition, effective mentees have:

- a strong desire to achieve goals, openness to different viewpoints, willingness to ask for help and receive feedback and show appreciation for their mentor’s time and contributions

However, potential mentees should not be excluded because they don’t possess some or all of these qualities. Everyone can benefit from mentoring.
As a development strategy, mentoring can help foster these qualities in individuals and more widely to others through a culture of care in your school.

While you can cite the benefits of mentoring and devote time to carefully and collaboratively matching mentors and mentees, or link mentoring outcomes to performance reviews, you might still find that some staff don’t wish to be mentored. If this is the case, suggest a trial mentoring period with a fault-free exit clause or assist the target mentee to select an alternate development strategy.

3. What model of mentoring is needed?

There are a number of different mentoring configurations, each with advantages and disadvantages. The main ones are:

- **Traditional dyads** provide individualised support but it can be difficult to find a sufficient number of mentors. This arrangement has been also criticised as perpetuating the status quo (Bland et al., 2009).

- **Peer mentoring** offers non-hierarchical mutual support and equality that is hard to achieve in dyadic relationships (Kram, 1985). It is more difficult to perpetuate the dominant view or hierarchy (Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002) and can be less threatening. However, it often lacks the benefits that come from working with a more senior mentor (Bland et al., 2009).

- **Group mentoring** is effective and economical in time, reducing redundancy and overlap, but can result in inequitable opportunities to interact.

There is also considerable variation on these three models. Furthermore, you can use **multiple mentors** and **multiple mentoring configurations**, for example, using dyads in combination with a peer mentoring group that has a specific focus.

4. How formal should the program be?

Most programs require some level of facilitation, such as assisting mentees to find mentors, nominating the duration of a relationship, or structuring training or activities. Providing too much structure can stifle relationships, but providing too little structure can result in relationships falling by the wayside.
5. What process can I use to recruit and select mentors?

You can identify and recruit mentors by:
- calling for applications from volunteers
- soliciting recommendations from other Heads of School and Deans
- approaching potential applicants directly
- combining any or all of the above.

Interested potential mentors could submit a biography/profile or curriculum vitae, or briefly respond to selection criteria to describe why they want to be a mentor and detail what they can bring to the position. Responses could be collected through an expression of interest template. Applications would be reviewed and mentors selected by you as Head of School, or by the staff member/s or school committee responsible for coordinating the program.

What should I look for in an effective mentor?

Descriptors of mentor qualities that are common in the higher education mentoring literature include:

- empathetic, enthusiastic, positive, approachable, trustworthy, respectful, non-judgemental, encouraging, generosity in sharing experiences, sensitivity to diversity, willingness to be involved in the mentoring program, coupled with a strong desire to help others achieve their potential

An analysis of 350 applications for Nature awards for mentors of young science researchers revealed that exemplary mentors were most often both good teachers and good researchers, and often had a wider impact on others who were not directly part of the mentoring relationship (Lee, Dennis, & Campbell, 2007).

Equally, common mentor skills include:

- active listening, giving constructive feedback, questioning, challenging, reflecting, group facilitation, building and brokering rapport and relationships, and joint goal setting and problem solving
Do I need mentor selection criteria?

In addition to possessing the qualities and skills recommended by the literature, a number of authors recommend using selection criteria. For example, Boyle and Boice (1998) suggest that exemplary mentors for novice teachers in universities should have 3–5 years experience; need to be good at scheduling, keeping to meetings and arranging additional opportunities to scheduled meetings; should not be negative or pessimistic about the organisation; should be amenable to follow up and generous in sharing experiences (pp. 176–177).

Furthermore, in the mentoring component of an early career leadership development project that was funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, the authors (Dolnicar, Vialle, & Castle, 2011) propose that mentors need the following demonstrated competencies: ‘a willingness and capacity to commit time to a mentoring partnership; recognised leadership capabilities and strength; a demonstrated interest in sharing knowledge and experience with colleagues; strong communication and interpersonal skills’ (p. 3).

6. Will I have a system for matching mentees and mentors?

The literature strongly supports mentor and mentee input into the matching process, particularly as involvement reflects the success of naturally occurring informal mentoring. However, choosing a mentor can be difficult for mentees who are new to the university and don’t know the mentors.

Matching strategies could include:

- creating and distributing a list of mentors with brief biographies, areas of expertise and contact details
- organising a lunch meeting to assist pairing
- making matching part of an induction process
- providing one-on-one support to match mentees who have not made a connection with a mentor or have had difficulty finding one.

While there are advantages and disadvantages to matching, the matching process is not as important as having people who have the necessary qualities and skills and a commitment to the success of the relationship (Rolfe-Flett, 2002).
7. What do I need to know about mentoring relationships?

Often referred to as a ‘learning partnership’ (Bearman, Blake-Beard, Hunt, & Crosby, 2007), good mentoring relationships are reciprocal, mutual and dynamic. The quality of mentoring relationships is a key factor in the success of a program, so it is helpful for you to understand a little more about this. If you are considering a mentoring program in your school it will also be very important to provide training and induction or guidelines for mentors and mentees that cover relationships.

The companion guide Creating more rewarding careers: A mentoring guide for the professoriate will offer a good starting point.

http://www.nationalteachingfellowshipboles.com/resources/guides.shtml

Mentoring relationship phases

Relationships are characterised by collegial interaction that develops over a period of time and goes through different phases. There is considerable overlap in the phases of a mentoring relationship as proposed in the literature but they are commonly expressed as:

- **Initiation**: Mentor and mentee matching and induction, setting goals, planning action and establishing ground rules.
- **Negotiation**: Negotiated and detailed planning which results in defined learning goals, objectives, success measures (milestones), action plans, activities, learning strategies and reflective processes, responsibilities, accountabilities.
- **Development and action**: Ongoing and completed actions and achievements, iterative review and development of new objectives and actions, ongoing evaluation of outcomes and relationship.
- **Closure**: Relationship concludes, celebration, summative evaluation.

**Figure 3**: Mentoring relationship phases

These four phases can also be followed by a further phase of redefinition (Kram, 1985), where the mentor and mentees might choose to continue the mentoring relationship, albeit in a redefined way.
Managing relationships

Contracting can be used for relationship management to document expectations, boundaries, practicalities, confidentiality, responsibilities, frequency and duration of meetings, and ground rules for behaviour and handling challenges. Decisions can be recorded in a mentoring agreement, which can then be revisited at agreed intervals to ensure expectations of the relationship are being met.

Confidentiality and ethical behaviour

All stages of a mentoring relationship are based on trust and respect, so encouraging mentors and mentees to establish ground rules that consider confidentiality and ethics is important. Group and individual discussions should be considered private. Other ethical issues to consider are:

- giving feedback
- conflict and tensions of values between mentoring practices and the university/school/faculty
- assumptions and defence of values
- taking responsibility for practice and learning (Carnell et al., 2006).

Relationship difficulties

From time to time difficulties will arise in mentoring relationships. The most commonly cited relationship problems are:

- lack of time
- mismatch of personality or expertise
- lack of training
- unclear understanding of program goals
- personal or behavioural difficulties
- failure to deliver agreed outcomes
- lack of proximity.

Encourage mentees and mentors to either speak honestly with each about any concerns or raise them with you or the program coordinator if you have one in the school. When problems cannot be resolved, a fault-free rematch should be organised.
Problems can also be the result of poor program planning and preparation, or lack of endorsement and resourcing. You can overcome the organisational factors that contribute to difficulties through:

- advocacy
- visible sponsorship
- support through the allocation of human and financial resources
- training
- recognising and rewarding participation and good practices.

Cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring relationships

In a university environment, mentoring arrangements will usually involve a mix of males and females, many of whom will be from different cultures. In areas such as engineering, you could have a shortage of senior female mentors. Chesler and Chesler (2002) argue that mentoring that is more inclusive, participatory and democratic works best with women in engineering, and advocates multiple mentors to meet diverse needs. However, the mentoring literature does not present a coherent or consensual view on the mentoring experience of men and women or participants from different races or cultures.
Bland et al. (2009) identify important factors for establishing quality cross-gender and cross-cultural academic mentoring relationships, including:

- establishing trust
- respecting each other's perspective and experiences
- engaging in open and frequent communication
- facilitating network building
- publicly supporting mentees
- seeing each other as individuals
- respecting boundaries
- recognising unintended bias (pp. 91–108).

The suggestions for approaching cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring benefit all mentees, with an emphasis on democratic participation and sensitivity to diverse needs.

**The duration of the mentoring relationship**

On average most mentoring relationships will span 12 months. However, the duration of the relationship depends on the purpose of the program and the learning goals of the mentee. In turn, the duration impacts on the relationship processes and outcomes, so be realistic about what can be achieved in the nominated time span. Most importantly, people need time to establish trust in a mentoring relationship.

**8. What are everyone’s roles and responsibilities?**

As one would expect in a reciprocal relationship, the responsibilities of a mentee largely mirror those of a mentor.

**Mentee role and responsibilities**

The academic mentoring literature commonly cites the mentee is responsible for:

- being reflective and possessing a desire to grow and learn
- taking responsibility for their own learning and development by clarifying their expectations, clearly identifying needs, establishing realistic learning goals, completing work plans, planning and implementing actions, submitting work for feedback, and regularly reviewing progress
- contributing to meeting agendas, being prepared for meetings and keeping records of discussions and actions
- engaging with others at meetings and activities
Enriching the academic culture through mentoring | Implement a mentoring program

- following up on meeting actions
- helping the mentor get to know you
- communicating proactively and seeking and providing feedback
- reflecting critically on experiences and feedback
- sharing experiences and expertise with the mentor.

Mentor role and responsibilities

The role of a mentor can be very broad and can include role model, adviser, critical friend, sponsor, advocate, expert, collaborator, coach, networker, challenger and problem solver. Lichtenberg (2011) offers the RESPECT model as a way to view the responsibilities of successful mentors of early career academics:

R: Role model (enthusiasm, enjoyment, curiosity, willing to invest in a personal relationship, share part of their own life and experiences and establish an intentional connection)

E: Empowerment and expertise (empower mentees to be in charge of their own development; expertise in own discipline as needed)

S: Support (enhance mentees’ sense of self-efficacy, encouragement, provide timely feedback, celebrate success, learn from disappointments, use constructive criticism, encourage balanced lives)

P: Protection and planning (help mentees develop their own plan of action, career development, program of research, etc.)

E: Emotional relationship (emotional investment and connection, help establish personal and professional goals)

C: Connections and conflict resolution (introduce to other colleagues, match maker)

T: Two-way relationship (all gain) (pp. 414–421).

In particular the mentor is responsible for:
- maintaining a focus on mentees’ learning goals
- making regular contact and setting meetings
- providing support and encouragement
- sharing their experience and wisdom
- modelling reflective academic practice
Enriching the academic culture through mentoring | Implement a mentoring program

- facilitating reflective dialogue through active listening, restating and summarising the mentee’s words, asking questions, challenging, providing empathy and constructive feedback
- facilitating problem-solving, decision-making and planning processes
- helping the mentee to link goals with actions
- encouraging experimentation and looking at ideas from a variety of perspectives
- connecting mentees with opportunities and networks
- acting as a co-learner and asking for feedback.

Head of School role and responsibilities

As a Head of School you play an important role in promoting quality mentoring relationships and a culture of mentoring and care in the school by sharing your vision, commitment and time. If you have a school-based mentoring program, your role is also to ensure there are sufficient resources to support the program. You can also promote mentoring as a valuable and valued aspect of academic staff learning and development by:

- discussing mentoring at staff meetings
- distributing mentoring information to staff
- referring staff to mentoring programs
- keeping informed about mentoring program objectives and outcomes
Enriching the academic culture through mentoring | Implement a mentoring program

- modelling good practice and sharing your own experiences in mentoring
- taking into account the workload implications of participation by mentors and mentees
- recognising mentor contributions in reward and recognition events and programs and in staff performance reviews
- supporting staff involvement in mentoring training and activities
- encouraging staff to contribute mentoring issues and outcomes to performance planning and review and development plans.

What are the differences between mentor and Head of School responsibilities?

Heads of School and mentors both have an important role in guiding and nurturing mentees. However, mentoring occurs outside of the performance management and direct reporting relationship between colleagues and their Head of School. Important distinctions between these two roles include:

- The mentor has no authority over the mentee and has no role in dealing with issues of under-performance or non-compliance.
- Mentoring relationships are confidential and mentoring arrangements are governed by the university's code of conduct, as well as privacy, equity and equal opportunity, cultural diversity and inclusion and other relevant policies.
- While both mentors and mentees benefit and learn from the relationship and share responsibility for its success, as a ‘developmental process’ (Bearman et al., 2007, p. 377) the mentee’s needs are predominant and shape interactions.

Read more ...


This booklet provides a comprehensive introduction to mentoring, including roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.
9. What forms of institutional recognition and reward can I offer?

‘Recognition or incentives turn mentoring into an important activity and a priority in the academic workplace’ (Donnelly & McSweeney, 2011, p. 271). Institutional recognition of the mentoring role is strongly advocated in the literature and takes many forms. You might consider a reward that fits the institutional culture, such as a certificate of book selection or payment of a small stipend. In this way, appreciation and recognition can be conferred at events and celebrations, especially at the conclusion of the mentoring relationship.

Workload allocation

All of these forms of recognition and reward are important, however the strongest messages that mentoring is supported and valued by the institution come when the mentor’s contribution is recognised through workload allocation and is integrated with performance review and promotion (Ewing et al., 2008).

10. What resources do I need to develop or coordinate to support the program?

As the program sponsor, you will probably work with your human resources department or other school colleagues to develop a program that meets your school’s needs. The amount of support your program needs will depend on how formal you intend your program to be and the extent of your resources. At the least, you will probably need some support to implement and coordinate the program. Many programs have an advisory committee, where membership can be rotated or you might use an existing committee to help oversee the program. Others have a program coordinator, where it is part of a person’s job to undertake this work.

The program coordinator’s role can include:

- maintaining communication with mentors and mentees
- monitoring and supporting relationships to stay on track
- troubleshooting difficulties and serving as a confidential contact point
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- coordinating:
  - mentor selection and recruitment
  - mentor and mentee matching
  - training
  - evaluation.

Involving others in the mentoring program will ensure greater ownership, wider dissemination and enhanced program sustainability. While most of your costs will be the human resources needed to cover the responsibilities listed above, don’t forget to think about the costs for publicity materials, training, evaluation, mentoring activities and catering, and rewarding or compensating mentors. Consider a formal launch to promote the program and increase its visibility.

11. What training will be needed to prepare and develop participants?

There is strong advocacy in the literature for training for both mentees and mentors to prepare them for their respective roles. Training validates the importance of the program and reflects the value institutions place on supporting staff development (Bearman et al., 2007). Training also clarifies expectations, as people often come to mentoring with varying assumptions, and difficulties can arise from mismatched expectations and needs.

However, training needs to be carefully managed to maximise benefits and ensure it is not too structured or time intensive. Understanding the different phases of a mentoring relationship has implications for training. For example, in the early phases, mentors and mentees will require more training. Consider involving an external facilitator or a staff member from your central human resources unit.

Sessions could range from one-hour information sessions or half- or full-day workshops. Refer to Table 3 for examples of training programs and what they might include (depending on the duration of the workshop sessions).
### Table 3: Example training sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory half-day workshop for mentors and mentees</strong>&lt;br&gt;This session provides an overview of mentoring and outlines the mentoring program. Mentors and their groups of mentees will have the opportunity to get to know each other and work through a mentoring agreement, including establishing mentoring relationship ground rules.</td>
<td>• Overview of the Mentoring Program (what is mentoring in your school context; program purpose and objectives; theoretical framework; organisational fit: sponsor, coordinator, relationship to line supervisor and performance review, program synergies with other development opportunities and related university policies and plans; mentoring model; mentoring benefits; mentor selection and mentee-mentor matching; relationship duration).&lt;br&gt;• Roles, responsibilities and expectations of mentors and mentees.&lt;br&gt;• The mentoring relationship (nature of the relationship, phases, cross-cultural and cross-gender, confidentiality, boundaries, dealing with difficulties).&lt;br&gt;• Suggested mentoring activities (meeting frequency, duration, format, focus, time commitment; reflective practice; goal setting and action planning).&lt;br&gt;• Contracting and mentoring agreements.&lt;br&gt;• Mentor and mentee skills (active listening, questioning, feedback, restatement, make links with next session and reflective dialogue).&lt;br&gt;• Goal setting and action planning.&lt;br&gt;• Monitoring and evaluating the relationship and outcomes.&lt;br&gt;• Support (program coordinator; resources).&lt;br&gt;• Where to from here? (Initiation stage—starting now, agreeing on logistics, establishing ground rules; Negotiation and planning stage—work plans, defining learning goals, objectives, success measures; Action stage—working together and monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes, ongoing cycle of action and review).</td>
<td>Mentor to break out with their mentee(s) to introduce themselves, establish ground rules, discuss roles and responsibilities, work through a mentoring agreement and plan next steps and first meeting agenda.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Workshop outcomes:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Mentoring relationship agreement.&lt;br&gt;• Plan for first meeting.</td>
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<p>| Reflective learning and dialogue half-day workshop | Depending on what is covered in any earlier sessions, this session could cover the following:&lt;br&gt;• What is critical reflection and how is it different to reflection?&lt;br&gt;• What is reflective learning and reflective practice?&lt;br&gt;• How does it relate to the theoretical framework that underpins the mentoring program?&lt;br&gt;• Reflective learning for improvement, for transformation, for learning about learning.&lt;br&gt;• Strategies to encourage reflective dialogue | Group and small group discussion of any of the topics.&lt;br&gt;Opportunity to practise reflective dialogue in small groups, rotate roles.&lt;br&gt;Example questions for reflective dialogue (Brockbank &amp; McGill, 2006, pp. 297–300). |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• develop and enhance facilitation skills</td>
<td>Group and small group discussion.</td>
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<td>(Brockbank &amp; McGill, 2007).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• learning/practice.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflective dialogue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-way through program</td>
<td>• Reflection on experiences to date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Specific skills development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of program</td>
<td>• Relationship closure.</td>
<td>Celebration and recognition event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summative evaluation.</td>
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</table>

**Read more ...**


This book provides a useful chapter on mentoring training and development ideas and resources such as sample ground rules and detailed session ideas and exercises. It has a particular emphasis on skills such as listening, restatement, empathy, challenging and reflective dialogue, in addition to diversity training.


This e-book provides a comprehensive chapter on training including training needs analysis and detailed suggestions for target audience, session topics and training methods.
12. How will I evaluate the mentoring program?

While evaluation is most commonly used for institutional purposes, such as quality assurance and continuous improvement of programs, ‘monitoring professional and personal growth and professional and personal learning within such relationships is a critical aspect of mentoring. It is this that frames mentoring as a positive professional learning activity’ (Corrigan, 2007, p. 102).

Why evaluate?

You should evaluate to:

- gather data that evidences how your school is contributing to the university’s goals and objectives
- demonstrate the value of initiatives and affirm the school’s investment in the program
- highlight individual and group achievements
- ensure the mentoring program remains on track and relevant to the university’s and school’s needs
- seek information to continuously improve the program
- troubleshoot mentoring relationship problems (Bland et al., 2009; Wallace & Gravells, 2010).

What to evaluate?

Evaluation of mentoring is usually applied at three levels (Wallace & Gravells, 2010, p. 93):

![Evaluation of mentoring](image)

**Figure 4:** Evaluation of mentoring
Evaluation of the mentoring relationship can focus on areas such as meeting frequency; discussion topics; activities; problems and their resolution; if the mentees needs are being or were met and if any assistance is required (Lumpkin, 2011). For example, through discussions and questionnaires, you can obtain the mentee’s views of:

- mentor functions and areas of assistance that are provided by the mentor, e.g. researching; getting published
- satisfaction with the quality of the relationship
- mentor skills and qualities
- ideas they have for helping their mentor improve in this role (Johnson, 2007).

Encourage mentors and mentees to regularly monitor the effectiveness of the relationship as well.

Evaluation of program processes provides evidence of effective or best practice. For example, through discussions, case studies, interviews and reports of mentoring activities you can collect stories of successful mentoring practices from mentees and mentors (Law, Ireland, & Hussain, 2007).

Evaluation of the impact of the program provides the opportunity to assess if the program is meeting, or has met, its objectives. Depending on how formal your program is, you can link performance indicators to each program objective and measure them to gauge impact (Law et al., 2007). This involves the collection of quantitative and qualitative data (for example, through activity reports and interviews). Discussions can also identify the aspects that contributed most to the mentee’s learning and development, as well as recommendations for improving the mentoring program approach. Capturing ways that the mentoring program adds value to your school or to the university will also be strategic for you with regards to retention of staff, increased research outputs, improved teaching evaluations, and enhanced collaboration and networking (Zachary, 2005).

Evaluation strategies can range from simple to more complex. Examples include:

- conversations over coffee
- informal observations
- discussions at performance reviews
- self-assessment by each mentee of his or her professional development, both before and after mentoring
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- questionnaire prior to the commencement of the program that can gauge mentors’ and mentees’ understanding of mentoring, prior experiences and expectations; then a post-completion questionnaire that can gauge if expectations were met, how the relationship was managed, topics of discussion and the ideal mentoring arrangement
- longitudinal tracking.

A number of different evaluation instruments that collect both qualitative and quantitative data can be used to solicit information. Those commonly reported in the higher education literature include questionnaires, interviews, reflective journals, focus groups, work plans-outcomes comparisons, and analysis of data such as program drop-out rates, successful relationships, promotions, complaints or the number of mentees returning in the future to become mentors (Donnelly & McSweeney, 2011; Mathias, 2005).

Cox (1997) also recommends the evaluation of each program-wide activity, in addition to finding ways to determine the ‘value-add qualities’ (p. 254) of the program. He offers the example of a comparison of a mentee’s early work and their work at the end of the program. Such comparisons of curriculum, publications and other initiatives would be possible through a portfolio of evidence.

When planning your evaluation strategy, ask yourself:

Figure 5: Evaluation strategy planning (Zachary, 2005, p. 125)

Don’t forget to close the loop on evaluation by reporting the outcomes of the mentoring to mentors, mentees and the school and relevant sections of the university community.
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Read more ... on evaluation

This e-book provides a chapter on evaluation, including the focus, levels and methods.

This e-book provides a chapter on evaluation, including process and impact evaluation.

This e-book provides a chapter that is a useful introduction to the systematic evaluation of mentoring.

Read more ... on designing and implementing a mentoring program

Academic mentoring web resources

This booklet provides a comprehensive introduction to mentoring and guide to designing an academic mentoring program.

This site provides a succinct guide to developing a mentoring program in your school, in addition to information for mentors and mentees.

Cont.

This resource provides advice for heads of schools on starting a mentoring program, in addition to resources for mentors and mentees.

**Academic mentoring books and articles**


This book provides a good introduction to academic mentoring. Pages 35–44 provide a useful synthesis of the features of an effective academic mentoring program, and pages 161–165 provide a checklist for developing, implementing and assessing mentoring programs.


This chapter by renowned American faculty learning communities scholar Milton Cox provides recommendations for establishing an academic mentoring program.


This article provides a succinct introduction to most of the key elements of mentoring programs.


This critical review of mentoring in business and the academe provides an overview of research on key aspects of mentoring.
Non-academic mentoring books


This e-book provides a comprehensive introduction to designing and implementing a mentoring program, including preparing an implementation proposal, strategies for common problems, training and evaluation.


This easy-to-read book provides a thorough synthesis of mentoring and program design and a number of useful sample resources, prompt questions and checklists.


This book situates the design and implementation of a mentoring program in the context of assessing and creating a mentoring culture in your organisation. It provides both an operational and strategic focus. It contains a number of resources, including mapping organisational readiness and culture templates, planning and accountability guidelines and checklists.
Concluding remarks

A few months have now passed since you had the memorable conversation with your colleague Suzan about Objective 5: ‘Provide guidance and career development advice and support to the academics in the school’.

You have just completed the annual performance review with school staff and have also participated in a series of meetings with the new cohort of early career staff in your school. You discussed with both groups their plans for advancing their careers and how their activities align with the school’s objectives. Your discussions made it clear that if they are to achieve their potential and maximise success, they needed support. You think to yourself; providing such support is at the heart of my role as Head of School. Indeed, this is what Objective 5 is all about.

This is your opportunity to actually put some of the ideas in this booklet into action. Please take some time out to reflect, explore your mentoring options, and start your first steps on the path to great success and satisfaction, for you and your colleagues.

Please keep this booklet handy to revisit some of its ideas from time to time.

Good luck.
References


Appendix

Mentoring program success checklist

The following elements represent the critical success factors of successful academic mentoring programs, so ask yourself:

Does my school mentoring program have clearly articulated and accessible information about:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program purpose and objectives</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational fit with relevant university plans and human resource practices such as performance review and planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visible sponsorship from you and other senior leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for mentors and mentees, including a nominated person to go to for more information or help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits to everyone from mentoring</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor and mentee roles and responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition and reward for contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment, selection and matching processes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of the mentoring relationship, activities and time commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to relevant human resources policies (e.g. equity) and procedures for handling difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor and mentee preparation, development and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program evaluation</td>
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</table>
In addition, in implementing the mentoring program, consider:

- Do you have a communication and marketing plan?
- Are information and resources available to all members of the university community?
- Do you have a roll out and implementation plan?
- Do you have a commitment for ongoing resourcing of the program?
- What program elements are in place at this time?
- What elements still need to be developed?
- Who will develop these elements? In what timeframe?