



Navigating a pathway to
outcomes-focused thinking
in engineering education

Creating more rewarding careers:

A mentoring guide for
the professoriate



Wageeh Boles
Rae-Anne Diehm

QUT

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**Creating more rewarding careers:
A mentoring guide for the professoriate**

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Contents

	page
Introduction	1
Overview	1
Terminology	2
Preface	3
What is mentoring?	7
Why mentoring?	9
Benefits for mentees	10
Benefits for mentors	11
Benefits for the school and the university	11
Characteristics of effective mentees and mentors	13
Desirable mentee and mentor qualities	13
Mentee and mentor selection and matching	14
Roles and responsibilities	15
Mentee role and responsibilities	15
Mentor role and responsibilities	15
Differences between Head of School and mentor role and responsibilities	17
The mentoring relationship	19
Mentoring relationship phases	19
Managing relationships	20
Confidentiality and ethical behaviour	20
Relationship difficulties	21
Cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring relationships	23
The duration of the mentoring relationship	24
Mentoring strategies and activities	27
Areas of academic focus	27
Reflective practice and action planning	28
Constructive questioning and feedback	29
Meetings	30
Initial meeting topics	31
Mentoring agreements and work plans	31
Mentor and mentee preparation and development	33
Evaluation of mentoring outcomes	35

Concluding remarks	37
References	39
Appendix	43
Example ground rules	43
Example mentoring meeting notes template	44
Example work plan	46
Mentoring readiness checklist	47

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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 the professoriate as a concise, easy to read, evidence-based introduction to mentoring, this guide contains practical tips and guidance for successful mentoring relationships. 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.

This guide 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, returning to other sections as needed. If you are an experienced mentor or have been mentored previously, you could use parts of the guide as a refresher and skip those sections that are familiar to you. A companion guide for Heads of School is also available.



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

<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

Another day at the office ...

Today, you start your day at the university by presenting a lecture to your postgraduate students. During the short break in the middle of the lecture, you go around the classroom chatting with your students, asking, 'How is the semester going for you?', 'How are you progressing in this subject?' and 'Are you enjoying this subject?' Over the years, you found these chats useful in learning more about your students, connecting with them, and responding to their needs. As you were about to go back to the front of the class, one of the students, Mina, says, 'Can I ask you a personal question?' You reply, 'Yes, but I cannot promise to answer it until I hear it', unsure of what kind of a question he has in mind. Mina continues, 'I was wondering—how did you get to be such an excellent professor?' You reply 'Thanks for the question and the compliment, but I can't answer this now as break is over and I need to get back to the lecture. How about I think about it and answer it after class next week?' He agrees.

You finish the lecture, attend a meeting, deliver an undergraduate lecture and manage to squeeze in some lunch on the run. Back at your office, you check your to-do list, respond to a couple of urgent emails, and prioritise what you need to work on next. Later on, you make some phone calls, attend to some student consultations, and reply to more emails. Before you know it, it is getting late, you feel exhausted and it's time to go home.

On your way home, you remember Mina's question and think, 'What did I get myself into? How am I going to answer his question without telling him the story of my life? Besides, why would this be of value to him?'

The next day you run into one of your colleagues, Mary. 'I haven't seen you for a while, although I wanted to come and congratulate you on the fantastic award you won last week, well deserved,' you say. She replies with a big smile and a voice full of humility; 'Thanks, I couldn't have done it without the support of many people, and I am very grateful for that.'



You think to yourself, Mary is one of those colleagues one could count on for genuine and sound advice so you ask: ‘Mary, do you have a few minutes for a chat?’ ‘Certainly, I was on my way to get a cup of coffee,’ she replies.

‘Yesterday, one of my students, Mina, asked me how I became a good professor, and I’m not sure what to tell him, without taking two hours. Mary seemed to suddenly engage in deep thought, and after a few moments she said, ‘I know Mina. He was in one of my classes last year. He is an excellent student, who has great potential if he is thinking about choosing a career as an academic. Maybe this is why he asked you that question!’ She continued, ‘I cannot tell you what your answer should be, but I will tell you, briefly, what my answer would be.’

Mary tells you that she enjoyed learning and that high achievement gave her a lot of satisfaction. This further fuelled her persistence and determination. However, she also acknowledges that from the time she was an early career academic, many experienced colleagues provided her with very valuable guidance, feedback and support. Many went out of their way to facilitate her progress and advance her career. Mary remembers, with great appreciation, a particular **mentoring** program she participated in. She recalls with admiration and gratitude, specific names of **mentors** who had a positive impact on the academic and personal aspects of her life.

You reflect on your own experiences and the people who had a major influence on your pathway as an academic. Formulating a response to Mina's question, you are looking forward to the tutorial class. More importantly, you begin to think: 'If I have been this fortunate, what am I doing for others? Can I give something back to aspiring students like Mina as well as to my colleagues? Can I mentor others? What would be my role? How might I go about it?'

If you are looking for some answers, you have come to the right place. This booklet is devoted to discussing and exploring these questions and more, so please read on.

What is mentoring?

So what is it? You are bound to have ideas that are based on your own experiences and knowledge. 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 mentee 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).

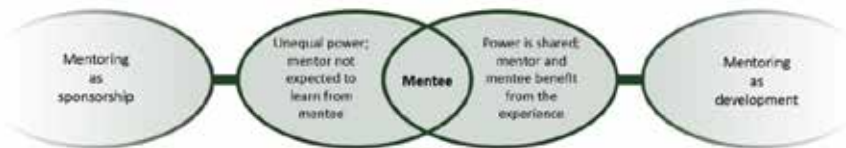


Figure 1: The mentoring continuum

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.

Why mentoring?



You may have been mentored in the past or been a mentor to another person, as mentoring has long been used as an academic development strategy 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. Mentoring can also be achieved through a variety of models, with the most common forms being traditional dyads, group mentoring and peer mentoring.

As a mentor, you could 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 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	enhanced reputation, profile and respect

Benefits for the school and the university

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).

Characteristics of effective mentees and mentors

Desirable mentee and mentor qualities

Many of the qualities of an effective mentee mirror those of an effective mentor.

Table 2: Descriptors of mentee and mentor qualities that are common in the higher education mentoring literature

Effective mentees	Effective mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enthusiastic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enthusiastic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive attitude
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathetic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-judgemental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-judgemental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitive to diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitive to diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness to different viewpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness to different viewpoints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generous in sharing experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generous in sharing experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong desire to achieve goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong desire to help others achieve their potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to ask for help and receive feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to commit time to the mentoring relationship and program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show appreciation for their mentor's time and contributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show encouragement, value the mentee's prior experiences and celebrate successes

Mentee and mentor selection and matching

As a mentee, you might have been selected on the basis of a need you or your supervisor has identified, or by invitation, or because you are a member of a particular cohort (for example, you may be an early career academic).

As a mentor, you might have been selected through volunteering, submitting an expression of interest, or by invitation. Most likely, you have been recruited because you possess the qualities noted in the previous table, plus a number of other characteristics. For example, you could have 'recognised leadership capabilities and strength; a demonstrated interest in sharing knowledge and experience with colleagues; strong communication and interpersonal skills' (Dolnicar, Vialle, & Castle, 2011, p. 3). 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). As a credible role model, you will have undoubtedly demonstrated improvements in teaching and/or research over time.

The literature strongly supports mentor and mentee input into the matching process; however, as involvement reflects the success of naturally occurring informal mentoring, choosing a mentor can be difficult for mentees who are new to the university and don't know the mentors. As such, you could find you have been matched through different strategies including:

- submitted expressions of interest
- asked to select from a list of mentors that provides brief biographies and areas of expertise
- assigned a mentor from your or another school or faculty.

Although having a mentor from outside of your school or faculty can lack proximity, relationships can be equally successful. While there are advantages and disadvantages to matching and same school/faculty mentors, the process is not as important as having people who have the necessary qualities and skills and the commitment to the success of the relationship (Rolfe-Flett, 2002).

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
- 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. 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

- 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.

In relation to early career faculty, Lichtenberg (2011) offers the *RESPECT* model as a way to view the responsibilities of successful mentors:

- 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).

Differences between Head of School and mentor role and responsibilities

A Head of School is primarily responsible for promoting mentoring as a valuable and valued aspect of academic staff learning and development. Heads of School and mentors both have important roles 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, Blake-Beard, Hunt, & Crosby, 2007, p. 377) the mentee's needs are predominant and shape interactions.

The mentoring relationship

The quality of mentoring relationships is a key factor in successful outcomes, so it is helpful for you to understand a little more about these relationships.

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:

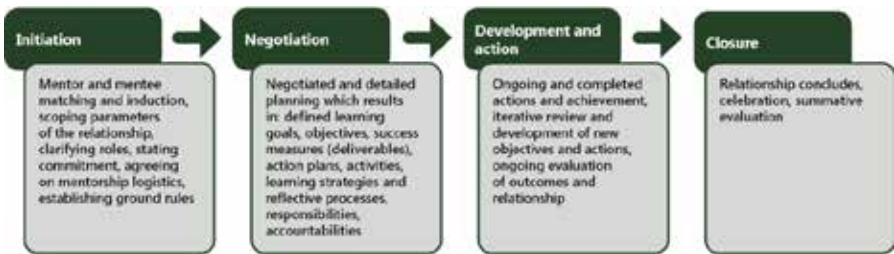


Figure 2: Mentoring relationship phases

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

Read more ...



Bland, C. J., Taylor, A. L., Shollen, S. L., Weber-Martin, A. M., & Mulcahy, P. A. (2009). *Faculty success through mentoring: A guide for mentors, mentees and leaders*. Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield Education in partnership with the American Council on Education.

This book has a chapter on phases with suggested practical activities.

Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

This older but foundational book provides a detailed description of mentoring relationship phases in addition to describing the distinctive focus of early, middle and late career mentees.

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 establishing ground rules that consider confidentiality and ethics is important. For example:

- Are all discussions considered to be private?
- What aspects of our conversations can be disclosed to others, such as my supervisor or the mentoring program coordinator?
- Can I disclose the positive aspects but not the negative ones?
- Do we need to give each other permission on a case-by-case basis?
- Do we keep confidentiality after the mentoring relationship has concluded? (Zachary, 2000, p. 105)

- 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; and taking responsibility for practice and learning (Carnell et al., 2006). Mentoring agreements can be used to ensure confidentiality.



The appendix contains example ground rules and an example mentoring agreement template for you.

Relationship difficulties

From time to time, difficulties do arise in mentoring relationships. You are encouraged to speak honestly with each about any concerns or raise them with the mentoring program coordinator if you have one, or with your Head of School.

Table 3: Commonly cited relationship problems and suggestions to overcome them

Lack of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware of the time commitment prior to entering into the relationship.• Set meetings well in advance. It can be helpful to schedule a series of three meetings to avoid a long delay if one meeting is cancelled. A mentoring agreement can also be used to record decisions on meeting schedules. Try to be flexible and renegotiate time commitments if difficulties arise.
Unrealistic expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set realistic expectations and ground rules for a relationship. Use your mentoring agreement to clarify and record expectations.• Realise that a mentor cannot be all things to the mentee.
Failure to deliver agreed outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish development goals and action plans early. You might like to use a work plan to record decisions and plans.• Agree on review milestones and evaluation measures. These can also go on your work plan.• Monitor and evaluate progress towards goals.
Lack of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend any training that is offered. If none is available, proactively seek advice from others.
Failure to establish rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish clear developmental goals that provide a shared point of focus and common purpose.• Value the different perspectives and experiences each person brings to the relationship.
Conflict in the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take some time out to reflect on the source of the conflict, your own contribution and what you would like to have happen.• Speak with your mentor/mentee honestly and without accusation or judgement. You might wish to speak with a trusted colleague beforehand.• Use a mediator if you do not feel confident about handling conflict.• Use good communication strategies such as active listening and paraphrasing, and be open to feedback.• Compromise as needed to resolve the conflict.• When problems cannot be resolved or approaches are incompatible, agree on a no-blame exit and request a fault-free rematch.

Read more ...



Johnson, W. B. (2007). *On being a mentor: A guide for higher education faculty*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This book provides a chapter on the common relationship problems and offers intervention strategies.

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.

The most important factors for establishing quality cross-gender and cross-cultural academic mentoring relationships include:

- 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 (Bland et al., 2009, 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.

Read more ...



Blake-Beard, S. D. (2001). Taking a hard look at formal mentoring programs: A consideration of potential challenges facing women. *Journal of Management Development*, 20(4), 331–345. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/1108/02621710110388983>

Bland, C. J., Taylor, A. L., Shollen, S. L., Weber-Martin, A. M., & Mulcahy, P. A. (2009). *Faculty success through mentoring: A guide for mentors, mentees and leaders*. Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield Education in partnership with the American Council on Education.

Johnson, W. B. (2007). *On being a mentor: A guide for higher education faculty*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Both books provide chapters on mentoring across gender and culture. Bland et al. also provide chapters on mentoring across generations, mentoring mid-career and senior academics, and mentoring staff considering academic leadership positions.

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.

Read more ... on mentoring relationships



La Trobe University. (2012). Mentoring for teaching. Retrieved from <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching/professional-dev/mentoring.html>

This site provides succinct information on roles, qualities of effective mentors and mentees, relationships and activities.

Macquarie University, Learning and Teaching Centre. (2010). *Spectrum approach to mentoring: A guide for mentors and mentees*. Retrieved from http://www.mq.edu.au/ltc/mentor/docs/spectrum_mentoring_guide.pdf

This resource was developed through a grant from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. It provides advice, checklists and templates for mentors and mentees, including a mentoring agreement.

University at Albany, State University of New York. (n.d.). *Mentoring best practices: A handbook*. Retrieved from <http://www.albany.edu/academics/mentoring.best.practices.chapter1.shtml>

This resource provides valuable advice for mentors and mentees on relationships and activities.

University of Newcastle. (2001). *Performance development framework: Mentoring*. Retrieved from <http://www.newcastle.edu.au//unit/human-resource-services/performance-development-framework/mentoring.html>

This website provides a comprehensive suite of resources for mentors and mentees covering roles, principles, relationship phases and mentoring agreements.

Zachary, L. J. (2000). *The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This easy-to-read book provides a comprehensive guide to mentoring and a number of useful resources, templates and checklists.

Mentoring strategies and activities

Mentors and mentees engage in a variety of activities. The information in this section is not a prescriptive list but does outline some commonly suggested activities.

Areas of academic focus

Mentee needs, experience and practice, and the purpose of the mentoring relationship will provide a focus for mentoring activities and topics for discussion. Table 4 gives some examples.

Table 4: Mentoring options

Effective mentees	Effective mentors
Induction	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.
Teaching	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.
Research	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.
A graduate certificate program	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, & Pole, 2010).

Reflective practice and action planning

Reflective practice is an activity that can be used by mentors and mentees. There are a number of models and strategies that can be used to encourage reflective practice, such as action research, critical incident, experiential learning, and recounting key events (Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005).

Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton (2004, p. 53) explain that reflective practice involves striving for continuous improvement, challenging oneself, looking for new ways to enable learning, and also thinking about and learning from one's own practice and that of others, which results in new insights. They recommend the following cycle of activities:

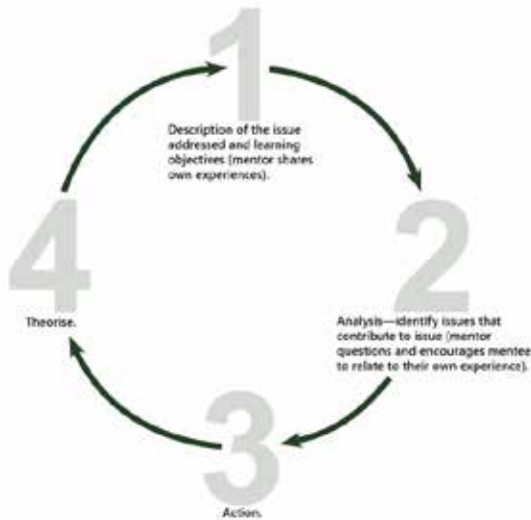


Figure 3: Reflective practice activities

As a mentoring activity, reflective practice involves mentees choosing an aspect of their practice, sharing their reflections with the mentor or group, and using this as a basis for discussion, feedback, brainstorming and planning future action. Sometimes mentees will record initial reflections in a journal or log, along with specific follow up actions and reflections.

However, without follow-up action mentoring won't result in new learning. Committing to action provides momentum, agreed plans and outcomes, and opportunities for further reflection and learning (Wallace & Gravells, 2010).

Read more ...



Brockbank, A., & McGill, I. (2006). *Facilitating reflective learning through mentoring and coaching*. London; Philadelphia: Kogan Page.

Brockbank, A., & McGill, I. (2007). *Facilitating reflective learning in higher education* (2nd ed.). Berkshire: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Both books provide chapters on reflective learning and dialogue and the facilitation skills that are needed as a mentor to help the mentee achieve reflective learning. The books also provide sample exercises for use by mentors and mentees and an appendix of questions for reflective dialogue.

Constructive questioning and feedback

Mentor skills pertaining to constructive questioning and feedback include:

- active listening
- giving constructive feedback
- questioning
- challenging
- reflecting
- group facilitation
- building and brokering rapport and relationships
- joint goal setting and problem solving (Marshall, Adams, & Cameron, 1998; Wallace & Gravells, 2010).

Read more ...



Brockbank, A., & McGill, I. (2006). *Facilitating reflective learning through mentoring and coaching*. London; Philadelphia: Kogan Page.

Brockbank, A., & McGill, I. (2007). *Facilitating reflective learning in higher education* (2nd ed.). Berkshire: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Both books provide a chapter on mentoring skills such as presence, active listening, restatement, questioning, summarising, challenging, providing feedback and managing emotions. The 2006 text has a chapter on training that provides sample exercises to practise these skills.

Meetings

Research reveals that quality regular interaction in pursuit of specific objectives is a feature of a successful mentoring relationship (Lucas & Murry Jnr, 2002). Importantly, interactions should be proactive and anticipate future professional needs rather than simply deal with problems (Foote & Solem, 2009). Meetings should result in follow-up actions and decisions are usually recorded. Progress can then be reviewed at the start of the following meeting.

Suggestions for effective interactions and meetings include:

- timetabling meetings well in advance
- being flexible
- keeping in frequent contact and keeping detailed meeting notes
- eCalendar reminders about what each person agrees to do
- reviewing actions and progress and reporting at the start of the next meeting
- using work plans to identify learning goals, objectives, learning tasks, potential resources and target dates
- scaffolding tasks into smaller, more achievable steps and targets
- devising protocols for dealing with stumbling blocks
- meeting over lunch or coffee
- inviting mentees to attend meetings or events with you as a networking or developmental activity
- touching base with mentees and mentors between meetings (email/telephone)
- leaving mentees alone sometimes to get on with it (Davey & Ham, 2010; Zachary, 2000).



See the appendix for a meeting notes template.

Initial meeting topics

In your initial meeting you might like to take the time to get to know each other and talk about your mentoring experiences. You could also discuss:

- the purpose of the mentoring
- the mentee's developmental goals
- relationship expectations and ground rules
- relationship duration
- meeting frequency and duration
- managing and giving feedback
- ground rules and confidentiality
- completing a mentoring agreement.

Mentoring agreements and work plans

Mentoring agreements can be used to manage and monitor a mentoring relationship and frequently include ground rules. Agreements provide a shared understanding and expectations of a relationship and help avoid scenarios like the following:

My mentor? I could never find her. And when I did manage to track her down it was always 'Sorry Mark. I haven't got time at the moment.' And so it always ended up with me trying to keep up with her while she was striding down the corridor, me trotting at her elbow trying to ask her pretty important stuff

(Wallace & Gravells, 2010, p. 27)

You can revisit a mentoring agreement regularly to monitor and evaluate how the relationship is going. Relationships with and without written mentoring agreements can be successful; however, mentors and mentees need to be very specific about roles, frequency and duration of meetings, and the type of meetings and activities.

Mentors and mentees can also use separate work plans to record and track learning goals and actions. Mentors need to ensure each mentee's work plan objectives are realistic. Relationship guidelines and your plan of action to achieve the goals and objectives also need to be agreed on at a meeting.



The appendix contains an example mentoring agreement and work plan templates. And together you might like to complete the mentoring readiness checklist.

Read more ...



La Trobe University. (2012). Mentoring for teaching. Retrieved from <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching/professional-dev/mentoring.html>

This site provides succinct information on roles, qualities of effective mentors and mentees, relationships and activities.

Macquarie University, Learning and Teaching Centre. (2010). *Spectrum approach to mentoring: A guide for mentors and mentees*. Retrieved from http://www.mq.edu.au/ltc/mentor/docs/spectrum_mentoring_guide.pdf

This resource was developed through a grant from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. It provides advice, checklists and templates for mentors and mentees, including a mentoring agreement and meeting minutes.

University at Albany, State University of New York. (n.d.). *Mentoring best practices: A handbook*. Retrieved from <http://www.albany.edu/academics/mentoring.best.practices.chapter1.shtml>

This resource provides valuable advice for mentors and mentees on relationships and activities.

University of Newcastle. (2001). *Performance development framework: Mentoring*. Retrieved from <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/unit/human-resource-services/performance-development-framework/mentoring.html>

This website provides a comprehensive suite of resources for mentors and mentees covering roles, principles, relationship phases and mentoring agreements.

Zachary, L. J. (2000). *The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This book provides a comprehensive coverage of focus and activities at each relationship phase, in addition to a number of useful sample resources.

Mentor and mentee preparation and development

As a mentor or mentee, you'll often be invited to participate in mentoring development sessions. There is strong advocacy in the literature for development for both mentees and mentors to prepare and support them for their respective roles.



Development and training validates the importance of the program and reflects the value institutions place on supporting staff development (Bearman et al., 2007). It also clarifies expectations, as people often come to mentoring with varying assumptions, and difficulties can arise from mismatched expectations and needs.

Training can:

- provide orientation to mentoring and to the program
- enhance skills
- introduce topics such as handling relationship problems.

Programs can range from one-hour information sessions to half- or full-day workshops and are usually at held at critical mentoring relationship phases.

Evaluation of mentoring outcomes

Formative and summative evaluation may be sought by the mentoring program coordinator or your Head of School. The focus of the evaluation can be on three levels:

1. Mentoring relationship
2. Mentoring and the program’s processes
3. Impact of the program and the relationship on the mentee, mentor and the school or university.

Together, you can monitor and evaluate these three levels because ‘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).

Here are some suggestions for simple questions to gauge these three levels (Zachary, 2000, p. 102).

Table 5: Evaluation of mentoring outcomes

Evaluation focus	Sample questions
Relationship	How are we doing? What is the quality of our interactions? In what ways could we strengthen our relationship?
Processes	Is the process we are using facilitating your learning? In what ways could we strengthen the process? What are you learning about yourself as a learner in this process?
Impact	What progress are you making towards your learning and development goals? What has been the greatest success? What has been the biggest frustration?

Evaluation of the mentoring relationship can focus on areas such as meeting frequency, discussion topics, activities, problems and their resolution, and if the mentee's needs are being or were met and if any assistance is required (Lumpkin, 2011). For example, through discussion, a mentor can obtain the mentee's views of: the areas of assistance that are provided by the mentor, such as researching, getting published, satisfaction with the quality of the relationship, mentor skills and qualities, and ideas they have for helping their mentor improve in this role (Johnson, 2007).

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

- conversations over coffee
- informal observations
- self-assessment by each mentee of his or her professional development, both before and after mentoring
- 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 that would subsequently serve other purposes (such as promotion applications).

Concluding remarks

It has been a long and very busy day at work. You leave your office thinking: 'I can't wait to get home and just have some rest.'

In the evening, as you reflect on the events of the day you remember your conversation with your award winning colleague, Mary. You also remember your student Mina's question: '... how did you get to be such an excellent professor'. It has been a while since you answered that question following Mary's remarks, and as a result you have been reading this booklet.

You certainly realise that your own success depended not only on your skills, abilities and hard work, but also on being propelled by the support of many people. Some were your teachers, others were your colleagues at work, and all were generous in sharing their time and experiences. They shared with you their wisdom, and provided guidance, and professional and moral support. You are now eager to do the same for others.

Welcome to the world of **mentoring** and to making very valuable and immensely rewarding contributions to your colleagues, academia and society.

Always remember—you can make a positive and lasting difference to people's lives. Now is a good time to start.

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Appendix

Example ground rules

Ground rules are the principles that help guide future behaviours and norms in your mentoring relationship. Ground rules aren't intended to restrict you. Rather, they help clarify and manage expectations and encourage accountability. Together, you should discuss and reach agreement on the ground rules that you will both abide by in the mentoring relationship and interactions. The ground rules can then be captured on your mentoring agreement.

We agree that:

- People enter a mentoring relationship because they are open to learning and growth.
- A person is a whole person, not just the part that is doing the job.
- Goodwill is how most people operate.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- Professional and ethical behaviours and standards are modelled.
- Scheduled time commitments are respected.
- Active and balanced participation by all parties is expected.
- Communication is open and honest and feedback is offered in a non-judgemental and constructive way.
- Differences are respected and provide an opportunity to learn from each other.
- Active listening, questioning, restatement and challenge are characteristics of reflective dialogue.
- Situations are viewed from more than one perspective.
- Actions to achieve goals are encouraged and supported.
- Decisions on mentoring strategies and activities will be negotiated.

Once you have agreed on a set of ground rules, discuss:

- what happens if and when these ground rules are not followed
- what checkpoints are needed to review the ground rules and to monitor if they are working effectively
- how you will go about making decisions when, for example, an agreement cannot be reached.

Example mentoring meeting notes template

Meeting date:

Discussion topics:

Reflections:

Actions:

Next meeting ideas:

Example mentoring agreement between [mentor name] and [mentee name]

We agree on the following:

Purpose of mentoring:

Duration of the mentoring relationship:

Method and frequency of contact:

Activities:

Mentor responsibilities:

Mentee responsibilities:

Review methods and milestones:

Ways of dealing with problems:

We agree to maintain confidentiality and to a no-fault conclusion of this relationship if necessary.

Mentee's signature _____ Date _____

Mentor's signature _____ Date _____

Example work plan

A work plan is an action plan to achieve your mentoring learning goals and objectives. It enables you to list what you would like to achieve, record how you plan to go about achieving your goals, identify what additional resources you might need and the target date, and keep track of your progress. It is helpful to share your work plan with your mentor.

Mentee name: _____ Date: _____

Goal	Objectives	Actions	Target date	Resources needed	Reflections and review date

Mentoring readiness checklist

-
- m Our respective roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and we are each accountable for these.
-
- m We have agreed on the relationship duration.
-
- m Our expectations of the relationship are clear and reasonable.
-
- m The mentee's development goals and objectives have been defined and are attainable.
-
- m We have a shared understanding of our ground rules, including respectful, ethical behaviour and confidentiality.
-
- m We have a process for solving problems.
-
- m We have established a meeting schedule and established who will make contact and when.
-
- m We have agreed to monitor and review the relationship at set milestones.
-
- m We have articulated criteria for success.
-

(Adapted from Zachary, 2000, p. 115)

