



Reference Guide

Mentoring supports professional development and career aspirations. It is a work-based relationship where a more experienced person (mentor) supports the professional development of a less experienced colleague (mentee). Mentoring can be used to provide depth to skill development, to support career mobility and to pass on organisational know-how.

How does mentoring work @ MQ?

Macquarie University supports a voluntary staff-initiated approach to mentoring. It is driven by the person wanting to be mentored (the mentee) who initiates the process, identifying and approaching their potential mentor.

What does a mentor do?

A mentor helps the mentee in his/her learning and growth, supporting him or her to make significant transitions in knowledge, thinking and/or practice.

Mentoring allows the mentee to discuss and explore issues, opportunities and challenges in a non-judgemental way. The mentor provides encouragement, acts as a sounding board, challenges, supports, and shares their own learning and experience.

Participating in mentoring is voluntary.

When is mentoring most beneficial?

Mentoring can be particularly useful for people who are:

- Starting in a new role
- Seeking promotion
- Applying for research funding
- Moving from a technical role to a supervisory role
- Developing connections with industry
- Returning from extended leave or a break from the workforce
- Clarifying research direction
- Promoted to a higher-level role
- Shifting between full and part time work such as preparing for part-time retirement
- Changing career path
- Seeking to develop leadership or professional skills.

How long does mentoring last?

There are no rules about how long a mentoring relationship lasts. Not all mentoring relationships are the same, so the time commitment varies. Depending on the goals the mentee sets, the mentoring relationship may last 4 or 5 meetings or it may last up to 12 months or longer.

Benefits of Mentoring

Past participants of mentoring programs have cited benefits including:

- Impartial discussion of ideas
- Sharing of knowledge and experiences
- Space for reflection
- Role modelling
- Increased confidence
- Valuable feedback and constructive criticism
- Support and encouragement

Benefits for the Mentee include:

- Developing new skills, knowledge and perspectives
- Preparing for a new role or promotion opportunity
- Gaining access to new professional networks and contacts
- Gaining greater insight into an organisation's operations and culture
- Finding new ways to solve problems
- Help with career planning – including preparation for promotion
- Increase in confidence and job satisfaction



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Benefits for the Mentor include:

- Contributing to our MQ community
- Developing skills in listening and coaching
- Enhanced self-esteem and confidence
- Developing leadership and interpersonal skills
- Gaining new insights into an organisation's operations and culture, as well as their own current practice
- A chance to actively assist the professional development of a colleague

Benefits for the Organisation/Faculty/Office include:

- Retention of talented staff
- Developing potential leaders internally
- Increased job satisfaction and productivity due to increased motivation
- Employee relationships and collaboration enhanced throughout both faculties
- Develops a greater sense of community

Key Roles and Responsibilities

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MENTEE

The role of the mentee is to learn with support from their mentor, accepting feedback and challenges from them and engaging in self-reflection in order to grow and develop within their career and job role.

In doing this, a mentee's responsibilities include to:

- Identify their mentoring goals and what support they are seeking from a mentor
- Find and approach a possible mentor
- Proactively engage in and take ownership of the mentoring process
- Be punctual and prepared for each meeting including setting an agenda for each meeting
- Engage in enquiry-based learning

A mentee also needs to:

- commit to the ground rules set out in the mentoring agreement (whether documented or not), including the confidentiality and no-fault conclusion in the event of the mentoring ending earlier than anticipated
- seek feedback and take it on board respectfully

- be willing to be challenged, to look at issues from a different perspective and listen actively
- respond to questions and challenges thoughtfully
- understand the mentor's role and boundaries

It is important to note that a mentor is not someone who could – or should – resolve issues for their mentee. Mentors can be a sounding board, provide advice and access to networks as appropriate, but it is not their role to resolve issues or problems on behalf of their mentee

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MENTOR

The role of the mentor is to guide, support and act as a role model for their mentee in helping them achieve their professional development goals. The mentor needs to be comfortable and confident to facilitate and encourage enquiry-based learning as well as to challenge and offer constructive feedback.

The responsibilities of mentors are to:

- assist the mentor in clarifying his/her goals and motivations for mentoring
- periodically help the mentee review progress towards his/her goals
- set the learning climate and encourage risk-taking because making mistakes is part of learning
- listen actively and ask coaching questions, thereby helping the mentee look at ideas from a variety of perspectives
- give constructive, specific feedback, and suggest areas for improvement
- act as co-learners and ask for feedback
- offer a 'safe' space, agreeing to maintain confidentiality, so that information shared remains between the two parties
- facilitate a no-fault conclusion to the mentoring relationship with no negative consequences.



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Three keys to successful mentoring

CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE MENTOR/MENTEE

It is important to be clear what each person expects of the mentoring relationship, for the mentee to be clear on his/her goals for mentoring and for the mentor to be clear about their role and boundaries. A successful mentoring relationship depends on mutual commitment, openness, trust and reliability.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Prior to committing to a mentoring relationship, have frank and open discussions in the setting-up phase about goals and expectations

Mentees, in particular, may have idealized and unrealistic expectations about what will happen as a result of the mentoring program. It is important to discuss and agree expectations early.

TIME

Lack of time is one of the most common reasons given for a mentoring relationship breakdown. If time commitment becomes an issue, acknowledge it early, revise expectations and renegotiate commitment.

Ending the mentoring relationship

Reasons for ending the mentoring relationship could include:

- the mentee has achieved his/her goal(s)
- the agreed timeframe has lapsed
- you can no longer commit to the mentoring
- the mentoring relationship isn't working

At the start of the mentoring it's important to agree the anticipated length of the mentoring relationship and how to adopt a no-blame approach to ending the mentoring.

Ending a mentoring arrangement prematurely can be uncomfortable, so it is important to adopt a no-blame approach.

If this situation arises, as a mentee, you could say something similar to:

"I'm finding that our styles are so different that I am having difficulty following through on your suggestions. I think that it may work better for me to find a mentor with a style more like my

own."

As a mentor you could say "I'm finding that I can't support you in the way I think you need and it may be better for you to find somebody who has a similar style and approach to your own."

For further information

The following documents provide more specific information on the mentoring relationship:

- MQ Tipsheet for mentors
- MQ Tipsheet for mentees
- MQ Mentoring process

References

Clutterbuck, D. (2014). *Everyone Needs A Mentor*. 5th Edition. United Kingdom: Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development

McCarthy, W. (2008). *One 2 One The Guide for Mentees: How to Be a Valuable Mentee*. Woolloomooloo: Focus Publishing Interactive.

McCarthy, W. (2008). *One 2 One The Guide for Mentors: How to Be a Valuable Mentor*. Woolloomooloo: Focus Publishing Interactive.

[UK national standards for mentoring and coaching](#)