

Guidelines for Mentors

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is the process by which an employee is paired with a more experienced member of staff who acts as a guide helping the other to learn and enhance their professional role. Mentoring provides a source of support and information during the induction period for new members of staff.

It is likely to be especially beneficial for members of under represented groups in the University who may face particular issues during their employment.

The following guidelines apply equally to the arrangements for the mentoring of new staff as well as those between more established members of staff.

Skills and Qualities

All mentors will be provided with appropriate training which will build upon the skills and qualities that are seen as relevant to being a good mentor to prepare them for their role. A successful mentor should be:

- * interested in being a mentor
- * a person with stimulating ideas
- * able to discuss others' ideas
- * someone with skills to exchange
- * supportive of change at the personal, institutional and educational levels
- * able to adapt to change in time to influence and control future developments.
- * willing and able to give time to the relationship to allow it to develop
- * ready to share concerns with other mentors
- * a coach rather than a counsellor
- * open, inspiring trust and confidentiality
- * encouraging – helping mentees to value their work and development
- * focused in their approach
- * able to inspire confidence
- * capable of engendering mutual respect in the mentoring relationship
- * able to understand the perspective of and demonstrate empathy with those they are mentoring

Working as a Mentor

A key aspect of the role of a mentor is confidentiality which should be maintained at all times. The person you are mentoring (the 'mentee') will look to you as a source of information and guidance to help them settle in to the University, understand their role within it and overcome obstacles or problems. You will not be expected to know all of the answers but to act as a point of reference and a facilitator for the mentee to obtain information.

In the first instance it will be your responsibility as a mentor to make the first contact with the mentee and establish with them, from the start, the basis of the mentoring relationship. This should include frequency and duration of meetings. Although this

will vary depending on particular circumstances, as a guide you should aim to meet about once a month for up to an hour.

As a mentor you will be doing a selection of the things listed below (though don't imagine that you will be expected to do all of these at the same time!)

- * simply being available for a chat – either face to face, on the phone or may be by email
- * setting time aside to listen, support , encourage
- * helping the mentee keep track of their work
- * knowing 'someone who can' when you personally cannot help
- * asking simply how is it going?
- * helping the mentee to see 'a way through'
- * giving informal feedback on what mentees have already done
- * being positive about achievements
- * providing an opportunity for learning based on the mentee's own experience
- * sharing knowledge and experience
- * helping the mentee to make the most of feedback from others
- * reviewing/evaluating the mentoring relationship from time to time to refocus

Review/evaluating the Mentoring Relationship

As with any form of development you will need to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship with your mentee from time to time. This is an opportunity to assess the benefits, to both of you, of the relationship. You may find the following helpful in conducting this review:

- * what am I gaining from the relationship?
- * is my time in mentoring well spent?
- * is the focus of discussions appropriate?
- * what should the focus and emphasis be?
- * how has the relationship changed?
- * is the relationship still beneficial to both parties? In what ways?
- * how do I want the relationship to develop?
- * has the relationship reached a natural conclusion?

Such a review will remain confidential to the mentor and mentee. Decisions on whether and how to continue the relationship or, if appropriate, to end it should be made jointly after full and open discussion.