



HSRAANZ Mentoring Program

A Guide to Mentoring

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What if the Relationship Doesn't Work?

1. What is mentoring?

'It is a relationship, not just a procedure or activity, where one person professionally assists the career development of another, outside the normal manager/subordinate relationship.'

¹ Mind (1993) as quoted in Employment Equity and Diversity, Public Employment Office, NSW Premier's Office (2004) Mentoring made easy: a practical guide, p5 ² Adapted from Grossman, M (2007) *So you want to find a research mentor...* VUECR Seminar, 24 April 2007

Mentoring is a relationship that provides an opportunity to reflect on practice, share professional and personal skills and experiences, and grow professional and personal capabilities. It is an exchange of views and ideas that are based upon encouragement, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

Mentoring can be achieved using a variety of methods such as face-to-face meetings, email or telephone conversations. It may involve shadowing, coaching, role-playing or practicing, giving constructive feedback, guiding and advising. The mentor may be a motivator, a sounding board, a coach, guide or teacher. The key feature of mentoring is that it is driven by the needs of the mentee.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring is a two-way relationship that is supportive, constructive and focussed on the development needs of the mentee. It is based on mutual respect, shared values and benefits both parties through the act of sharing.

For Mentees

Mentees are the drivers of the mentoring relationship. Benefits can include:

- improved confidence and morale
- insights and expertise from an experienced colleague
- a supportive sounding board for ideas, problems and goals
- new strategies and ways of thinking about, approaching and managing work related activities
- career direction
- enhanced listening skills
- improved understanding of the sector, its structures and culture
- defining and achieving realistic professional goals
- advice, coaching and feedback on performance and career development
- the possibility of new and/or extended professional networks and opportunities

For Mentors

While mentoring is focussed on the professional needs of the mentee it can also provide significant benefits to mentors including:

- an opportunity to practice personal skills and share valuable tacit knowledge
- satisfaction in seeing the mentee develop, reflect on and clarify roles
- insight into areas outside the mentor's discipline or specific expertise
- a chance to stimulate and support the development of less experienced colleagues

- cross-intellectual exchange and debate
- enriched collegial relationships
- contribution to the direction of the next generation of researchers in a discipline or field of study

For the Field of Study/Discipline

Mentoring can assist in the development of better informed researchers who have the confidence and knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the field. Those participating in mentoring can share the knowledge and resources gained from a mentor with other colleagues in the field and in the institution. Mentoring can also facilitate collaboration within and across disciplines and can inform teaching and practice through learning and exchange.

For the HSRAANZ

Enhanced dialogue and cooperative relationships, the establishment of support mechanisms to assist research performance and productivity and meeting the Association's commitment to training and development needs of early career researchers are all benefits the Association can gain from mentoring. Mentoring will also facilitate more confident and competitively well-equipped researchers who are better able to meet the challenges of a rapidly shifting research climate in a volatile higher education sector.

2. How Does Mentoring Work?

Mentoring Types

Mentoring can be formal or informal and may take a variety of forms. While most mentoring occurs as a one-on-one and face-to-face relationship, some other types of mentoring include:

Mentoring More than One Mentee

A mentor has more than one mentee and meets with them separately or, where appropriate, as a group. This type of mentoring can allow mentees to benefit from one another's experience and opinions, as well as from those of the mentor.

Group Mentoring

Group mentoring involves a small group of mentees (usually between four and six) working with an experienced mentor. The group identify issues and receive guidance and feedback from the mentor as a group. Group mentoring can foster joint learning across the whole organisation and provides the opportunity to network and learn from other colleagues

The mentor acts as the facilitator, guide and catalyst for sharing personal experiences and insights and to create a forum for discussion and learning.

Peer Mentoring

Colleagues mentoring one another is referred to as Peer Mentoring. This may be appropriate in small and isolated work locations where available mentors are scarce. The emphasis of peer mentoring is on mutual support and cooperation.

On-line Mentoring

On-line mentoring uses technology such as email, on-line discussion groups and phone conversations as the method for conversation and discussion. On-line mentoring usually works best where the mentee and mentor know each other or have had at least one intensive face-to-face meeting. It is generally agreed that this method of mentoring should be supplemented by face-to-face contact wherever possible to facilitate motivation and clear communication.

Shadowing

Shadowing provides an opportunity for the mentee to challenge and extend their understanding in a 'real-time' setting. Shadowing may involve the mentee attending meetings with their mentor or being with them during their typical work day. Observation and interaction 'at close range' is a means of experiential learning that enables mentees to assimilate and understand the organisational culture, increase their understanding of the differences and similarities in people's practices and styles, and challenge their own assumptions.

Conditions of a Successful Mentoring Relationship

For a mentoring relationship to work successfully both mentee and mentor require good communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills and must be committed and motivated to make the most of the mentoring experience.

In addition mentors need:

- a sound knowledge base;
- competence in their field;
- an established network; and
- a willingness to share information, skills and wisdom

Mentees need:

- initiative and drive to set the direction of the relationship and implement actions; and
- the capacity for self-direction

Roles and Responsibilities

There are six key areas in which both mentees and mentors have a role and responsibilities:

1. Listening actively
2. Build trust
3. Determine goals
4. Encourage
5. Learn quickly
6. Manage the relationship

The table below provides some examples of how these roles can be fulfilled. In some cases the responsibility is the same for both mentee and mentor. In others each party will fulfil the role in a different way.

ROLE		RESPONSIBILITY	
		Mentee	Mentor
1.	Listen Actively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show interest in what your mentee/mentor is saying and reflect back important aspects to show you have understood • Use body language that shows you are paying attention • If you are talking by phone, reduce background noise, and limit interruptions 	
2.	Build Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to alternative ideas • Follow through with commitments and suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safe environment for disclosure • Be a role model

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate a genuine commitment to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available, visible and non-threatening • Listen and take your mentee's experience seriously
3.	Determine Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what your goals and priorities are • Reflect on your career, personal vision, and goals and share these with your mentor • Understand your strengths, weaknesses, success and challenges • Help your mentor understand your responsibilities and the context in which you work • Discuss actions that you've taken in your career, explaining your rationale, and inviting feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the mentee to set clear, realistic and measurable goals • Seek clarity • Use your own experience to provide feedback
4.	Encourage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express appreciation • Let your mentor know how you've benefited from the mentoring relationship • Point out concrete examples of how you've used his/her guidance and input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest and constructive • Be positive and supportive • Build self-confidence • Be empathetic and patient • Provide useful feedback and advice • Maintain a focus on the mentee's goals • Help the mentee arrive at their own conclusion or decision • Inspire creativity and independence

5.	Learn Quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time preparing for meetings • Ask appropriate questions to clarify what your mentor is teaching or suggesting • Consider all of the advice and suggestions you receive • Ask for comments and feedback • Apply the information and strategies and report back • Pursue useful learning opportunities and resources on your own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask appropriate questions to clarify what your mentee is saying • Challenge and provide constructive feedback • Facilitate self knowledge and learning for the mentee • Illuminate the big picture and broader context • Show what is possible and how it might be done • Help mentees understand their environment and culture • Ask probing, open-ended and 'what if' questions • Provide useful learning opportunities and resources
6.	Manage the Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the lead • Schedule meetings well in advance and propose an agenda before each one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your mentee to take the lead • Follow through on commitments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on satisfaction with the pacing, focus and content of your relationship as well as any relationship issues you should address 	

Effective and Ineffective Mentor Behaviours

Effective Behaviours	Ineffective Behaviours
Act as a sounding board and facilitator Maintains privacy / confidentiality	Fixes problems for mentee Assumes responsibility for academic
Supports, is a safety net Ensures a safe environment to take risks	Fights mentee's battles Overprotects
Gives structure and direction Provides guidance based on observations during interactions with mentee Empowers mentee to handle his/her problems independently	Dictates, controls learning Looks for quick fixes Provides unconstructive criticism or judgment Tells mentee what to do
Identifies skill or competency gaps through a 'third party' lens Identifies and facilitates development opportunities	Allows for personal biases Abdicates, does not follow up
Positively provokes, pushes toward highest standards Helps mentee explore potential career opportunities	Pushes too far too soon Discounts mentee's thoughts and opinions
Clarifies organisational values and politics	Removes obstacles so mentee doesn't have to deal with organisational politics
Gives needed support, enhances self-esteem Exhibits empathy and understanding	Gives too much feedback Discounts mentee's feelings or concerns

Expectations for Mentees

Core Performance Expectations	Time Commitment Obligations	Mentoring Citizenship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify professional development goals, priorities and career interests • Demonstrate a genuine interest in being helped by mentor • Demonstrate application of learning obtained through the relationship • Exhibit a desire to improve in a certain area or learn a new skill, gain new learning and change attitudes. • Be willing to discuss failures and successes • Listen actively • Provide honest feedback to the mentor • Seek ways to achieve objectives and contribute ideas for solving particular problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be accountable for scheduling meetings with mentor • Be respectful of mentor's time and schedule • Commit the requisite time and energy • Do the necessary pre-work for mentoring conversations • Follow up on action items identified during development conversations • Informally communicate on a regular basis with mentor as agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend mentoring related meetings and events • Maintain privacy/ confidentiality of development conversations • Provide input to assess and improve the mentoring program • Take advantage of organisational resources • Track development and career progress

Time Management

Creating time is the number one challenge in mentoring. A realistic approach, with an agreement to re-evaluate the amount of time after a trial period, is recommended. After an initial face-to-face meeting (if possible), over-the-phone or web contact may be a viable alternative to meetings.

Most mentoring partners aim to talk at least monthly with greater frequency based on need and work issues. As well as the time for interaction with the mentor, the mentee should schedule some time to work alone on tasks connected to the goals of the partnership.

3. The Mentoring Experience

Stage 1. Initiation, Exploration and Goal Setting

The first stage of mentoring begins at the point at which a mentee decides to seek out a mentor. At this time they have identified a need for mentoring and may have established some specific goals they would like to achieve.

Once a match is agreed, and prior to the first meeting it may be helpful for the mentee to complete a Development Plan, and provide it, with their CV, to their Mentor for review.

A Draft Development Plan is attached at Annex 1

The First Meeting

Mentors and mentees will need to get to know each other and begin to establish trust (see the section on roles and responsibilities for ideas on how to establish trust).

During the first meeting you will:

Discuss your background, experiences and interests

Be open and honest and provide information that is relevant to your research career and mentoring goals.

Outline your expectations of mentoring and of your mentor

Be clear about what you hope to achieve and what you hope your mentor will provide, both in terms of advice and assistance, and in terms of the way they approach the mentoring relationship (eg. mode of communication). Make sure you know what the expectations of your mentor are also. What do they expect of you and of the experience?

Being clear at this stage will make it more likely that you will meet your expectations and minimise conflict due to different or unrealistic expectations.

Explore and define your goals and objectives

It is essential that you set clear, realistic, measurable and achievable goals for the mentoring relationship. Seek your mentors' assistance in defining these goals and explore how you may go about achieving them.

Your goals and objectives should be the focus of your mentoring experience. Continually reflect on your goals and, if necessary, adjust or amend them to ensure they continue to be relevant.

Establish boundaries and strategies for trouble shooting

Boundaries are essentially borders for the relationship. They will help to define the scope of the relationship and areas that are not included. Questions to help define boundaries may include:

- When and how do you agree to communicate with one another?
- What are the topics that are relevant?
- What is off-limits, in terms of your mentoring relationship?

Most relationships run into stumbling blocks at some stage. By being very clear about your expectations and ensuring an open and honest relationship you can help to minimise difficulties. However, it is useful to discuss how problems can be addressed if they should arise.

Set out the ground rules

Ground rules are the rules, responsibilities and protocols for the relationship. Issues to be discussed and clarified might include:

- What do each of you agree to do?
- How will you work together to hold each other accountable for making time to do what you plan?
- How will you communicate between meetings, if at all?
- What do you agree to in terms of protecting confidential information?

A frank discussion at the outset can prevent pitfalls later. A simple Do's and Don'ts list can clarify the parameters of a partnership.

Agree a meeting schedule and methods (ie. face-to-face, phone, email)

It is important to set down at this stage a schedule for how often you will meet, making clear and taking into consideration any period in which you or your mentor will be unavailable. Dates, times and places should be set down. This is true even if meetings will be held by phone or via email.

One suggestion is the "10/20/60 rule" that will help you establish a solid partnership and address mentoring goal and everyday issues. For example for a meeting of about 1-1 1/2 hours split the time roughly as follows:

First 10 minutes – Engage in personal/professional – "check-in"

Next 30 Minutes – Focus on "front burner issues" (upcoming presentation, manuscript revision, etc)

Last 30 Minutes – Discuss current and long term goals and priorities.

Make a Mentoring Partnership Agreement

Once you have explored and established the areas above you may like to set them out in a written agreement to ensure that they are documented for future reference and absolute clarity. The agreement could include:

- Goals, strategies and measures
- Proposed meeting schedule
- Commitment to confidentiality

It is recommended that you lodge the Partnership Agreement with the Program Director.

A draft agreement is attached as Annexe 2

A first meeting Checklist is provided at Annex 3.

Stage 2. Establish the Relationship, Develop the Plan, Build Trust

Following the first meeting the focus should be on establishing the mentoring relationship and setting down a more detailed plan about how the goals will be achieved. Explore questions such as:

- How will the achievement of your goals benefit you/your organisation/the community?
- What are the potential barriers to success?
- What resources/supports are needed to achieve the goal?
- How will progress be measured?

The goals may be broken down into more detailed objectives and strategies into specific tasks. Set out the tasks to be achieved by the next meeting and confirm the meeting date.

Stage 3. Action and Review

Action

From here on the focus is on implementing the actions required to achieve the goals. Work towards the achievement of your goals may include conversations, written materials provided by your mentor, trying various learning and development activities, and perhaps connecting with other resources or people your mentor introduces you to.

Stage 3 should be marked by openness and trust, meaningful discussion, application of new insights and approaches, and ongoing support. At each meeting present the results of the agreed actions and discuss progress, outcomes and obstacles met. Seek feedback, advice and guidance for future actions. During each meeting review your goals, the set tasks and what is to be achieved by the next meeting.

Review

At some point during the relationship it is important to reflect on how it is going for both you and for your mentor. It may be useful to explore questions such as:

- What are the benefits of the relationship up to this point?
- How is your mentor helping you achieve your goals?
- What changes do you see in yourself and the way you approach your work as a result of the mentoring relationship?

- What kinds of adjustments or changes, if any, are needed in your goals or in the relationship?

Stage 4. Winding Down and Celebrating Success

At the conclusion of the formal mentoring program, or at the point at which you have agreed to end the relationship it is important to reflect on the experience including accomplishments, challenges and progress towards your goals.

Explore what kinds of support you may need after the conclusion of the relationship including people, resources and information.

It may be appropriate to discuss if the relationship will continue informally and the ground rules you will abide by to make it work.

Ensure that you schedule a final meeting which celebrates your mutual achievements and expresses your appreciation and thanks. Together reflect on questions such as:

- Were goals initially stated achieved?
- Were goals redefined and were they then met?
- What other outcomes were achieved?
- What professional gains were made?
- What personal gains were made?
- What aspects did you find challenging?

Provide feedback to the program coordinator about your achievements, challenges and about what aspects of your relationship and/or the program worked well or you would change.

Section C. Stumbling Blocks and Trouble-shooting

Tips for Avoiding Stumbling Blocks and Conflict

- Keep your mentee/mentor informed of any planned periods of absence, so that this can be considered in planning tasks and meetings.
- Respect confidentiality and understand that your mentee/mentor may not be able to disclose certain details.
- Seek permission/support from your supervisor to attend any mentoring-related activities during normal working hours.
- Establish a clear action plan in which goals are broken down into objectives and strategies into tasks.
- Be realistic and honest about your availability.
- View your mentor as a 'learning facilitator' rather than an expert on all things.
- Identify, explore and learn from your differences as well as your commonalities.

Dealing with Problems or Conflict

The following process can be used to help identify and address issues in the mentoring relationship:

- a) Clarify in your own mind what the issue seems to be from your point of view.
- b) See if you can think about the issue from the other point of view.
- c) Taking both perspectives into account, think of possible solutions or alternative ways you might move the situation forward.
- d) Introduce the topic of concern in your next meeting, or if appropriate before your next meeting. Outline your concerns and ask how they perceive the issue. Use the information from both points of view to find a way of working through the issue to an appropriate solution.

Where an issue cannot be resolved, or where you feel it would be inappropriate to raise the issue with your mentee/mentor, for those involved in a formal mentoring program advice and assistance will be available from the program director. In some cases it may be appropriate for another mentor to be sought for the mentee.

What If It Doesn't Work?

Although the majority of mentoring partners obtain satisfactory outcomes, there are no guarantees that mentoring will produce the desired results. Some people find that they are not compatible. Sometimes, either or both are not getting their needs met.

It is helpful to agree at the beginning that if either partner, for any reason, wants to end the mentoring relationship, they are free to do so without fault-finding or blaming. It is often possible to sort problems out without dissolving the mentoring partnership. Usually, the sooner a problem is recognised and discussed the less likely it is to cause irrevocable damage.

A good practice to implement at the beginning is to schedule a specific review meeting to take place after you have had 2-3 meetings, where the first or main agenda item is simply to reflect on the relationship.

Discuss what is working well and what you would like to change. Commit to continuing or decide to opt out.

Annex 1

Individual Development Plan HSRAANZ Mentoring Program

Instructions to Mentees:

Please complete this form and give a copy to your mentor before your first mentoring session. Attach an updated CV.

Instructions to Mentors:

Please review the mentee's CV and this form prior to your first meeting your mentee.

Date:

Mentee Name:

Mentor Name:

Current Role

Current Professional Responsibilities

List your major professional responsibilities and if you anticipate significant changes in the coming year:

Future Professional Goals

Short Term Goals

List your professional goals for the coming year. Be as specific as possible, and indicate how you will assess if the goal was accomplished (expected outcome).

1 Goal:

Expected outcome:

2 Goal:

Expected outcome:

3 Goal:

Expected outcome:

Long Term Goals

List your professional goals for the next 3-5 years. Again, be specific, and indicate how you will assess if the goal was accomplished.

1 Goal:

Expected outcome:

2 Goal:

Expected outcome:

3 Goal:

Expected outcome:

Annexe 2 - Mentoring Partnership Agreement

Mentoring Agreement	
Date	
Name of Mentor	
Name of Mentee	
Goals and objectives of the mentoring relationship: 1. 2. 3.	
Activities to be conducted:	
Expectations	
As a mentor I undertake to:	
As a mentee I undertake to:	

Communication methods and frequency:

I agree to enter this mentoring relationship as defined above and will maintain confidentiality.

Mentee:

Mentor:

Date:

Date:

Attachment 3

First Meeting Checklist

Get to Know Each Other

- Share information about your professional and personal life
- Learn something new about your academic/mentor

Establish Guidelines

- When and where will we meet?
- How will we schedule meetings?
- How will we communicate between meetings?
- What agenda format will we use?
- Will there be any fixed agenda items to be discussed at every meeting?
- How will we exchange feedback? How will we measure success?

Partnership Agreement

- Review partnership agreement, modify if desired, sign and exchange
- Review goals for the mentoring relationship

Confirm Next Steps

- Schedule date, time and place of future meetings