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## MENTORING SCHEME

College of Business, Government and Law

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### Good Practice Guide



# Welcome & Introduction

## WELCOME TO THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT AND LAW MENTORING SCHEME

CBGL aims to foster the development of its staff through its mentoring program. This voluntary program is designed to facilitate the transfer of the personal and professional knowledge of an experienced person (mentor) to a less experienced staff member or student (mentee) to assist in the development of the mentee. Participation from all career stages (from the most junior to senior levels), from rural and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people of any gender is encouraged.

The mentoring relationships developed through this program are designed to be separate from those of the mentee with their Performance Reviewer or Supervisor. The nature of these mentoring relationships can be varied depending on the parties involved, and the aims, desired outcomes and type of mentoring required. A typical mentor-mentee relationship, however, is likely to involve:

- the mentor and mentee meeting up to four times a year
- the transfer of advice relating to career guidance, such as setting career goals, assistance with CV building, and providing a fresh perspective
- a vehicle for the mentees to gain other useful contacts

The mentoring relationship is designed to be of general career related advice and assistance. This document is intended to provide a set of useful guidelines as a framework for the mentoring relationship. We encourage mentors and mentees to become familiar with this document, which also outlines the benefits of this relationship, and your roles and responsibilities.

Mentoring helps individuals achieve their personal aspirations and goals in the workplace. A mentor is defined as:

- a wise and trusted counsellor or adviser
- an experienced sponsor or supporter

The mentor / mentee relationship involves trust, support and empathy. Such elements are essential for a rewarding and beneficial relationship.

This guide outlines how mentoring can be arranged for mutual benefit of the participants and the CBGL. It provides a framework and suggests ways in which the benefits and impact of your mentoring arrangement can be maximised.

Having decided to join the scheme, please think carefully about the outcomes you would like to achieve. It is important to set some objectives. These may be to:

- explore professional and personal development options
- gain advice on dealing with work related issues
- gain career advancement (e.g. a continuing post or promotion)
- decide on career priorities or
- help you make critical decisions

Frequently, we are faced with competing options. Mentors can be useful in helping to define the options and to delineate pathways to a personal objective. They can also open doors by setting up contacts internally and externally and introducing the mentee to activities that provide exposure to new environments.

Not only are there benefits to the mentee but there are many valuable personal rewards for mentors too, particularly from the sharing of new perspectives and the sense of fulfilment that you will gain.

Further information and assistance can be obtained from:

### The CBGL Mentoring Panel

Prof. Roberta Crouch	roberta.crouch@flinders.edu.au
Prof. Margaret Davies	margaret.davies@flinders.edu.au
Prof. Andrew Goldsmith	andrew.goldsmith@flinders.edu.au
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# What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a voluntary relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth. The mentor assists growth by sharing resources and networks. Mentors may choose one-on-one mentoring or group mentoring. The latter is useful when helping to develop skills, such as research skills.

The process is based on encouragement, constructive comment, openness, mutual trust, respect, and a willingness to learn and share. It is a relationship where both people in the relationship gain benefit.

Mentoring relationships differ according to the way they are formed, their aims, the context and the degree of difference in the experience of both parties. Ideally an individual will be mentored throughout life, most likely by several mentors as the mentee's needs/goals change and mature.

## THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

As mentioned earlier, mentoring helps individuals achieve their personal aspirations and goals in the workplace and aid in attaining a state of well-being.

### Benefits for the Mentee

- The opportunity to learn from someone more experienced
- Gain new competencies, skills and knowledge
- Increase self-awareness
- Gain fresh insights and perspectives
- Get assistance with career promotion and mobility (inside and outside Flinders)
- Possibly gain increased visibility or exposure
- Gain greater organisational knowledge and understanding
- A better understanding of roles
- Increased networks
- Development of a sense of professional identity
- Gain support through difficult times
- Help with decision making

### Benefits for the Mentor

- Personal satisfaction through contributing to others' development
- The ability to share knowledge, talents and experience
- Fresh perspectives, ideas and knowledge
- Reflection on own practice, style and experience
- Professional recognition and reputation
- Skills in developing others
- Increased networks within the organisation

## Benefits for CBGL

- Professional and leadership development of key staff
- On the job learning
- Sharing of organisational and role knowledge
- More communication channels across the organisation
- Support networks for employees
- Increased staff attraction and retention
- Improved workforce effectiveness

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE MENTORING PROCESS

### Role of the Mentee

The role of the mentee is to:

- Shape the overall agenda and goals for the relationship
- Identify priority issues for action or support
- Be willing to look at issues from a different perspective
- Listen actively
- Be willing to learn and develop and try out new ideas
- Seek feedback and take it on board
- Respond to questions and challenges thoughtfully
- Communicate openly
- Be respectful of the mentor's time and commitment
- Come prepared to each meeting
- Reflect and act between meetings
- Maximise the benefits of the relationship
- Agree on and commit to the ground rules set out in the mentoring agreement

### Role of the Mentor

The role of the mentor is to:

- Help the mentee establish realistic and attainable expectations
- Assist in solving problems and setting goals
- Give personal and emotional support
- Listen actively
- Motivate by encouraging, supporting and challenging
- Provide guidance based on previous experience
- Share stories, including mistakes
- Act as a sounding board for ideas
- Encourage looking at issues from a variety of perspectives
- Give constructive, specific feedback, and suggest areas for improvement
- Introduce the mentee to others who may provide additional support or advice
- Prepare for, and reflect between, meetings
- Act as co-learners and ask for feedback on their contribution to the relationship
- Agree on and commit to the ground rules set out in the mentoring agreement

# About the CBGL Mentoring Scheme

## THE SCHEME

### Becoming a Mentor and/or Mentee

The first step to entering the CBGL Mentoring Scheme is to submit an expression of interest to be a mentor and/or mentee. Just email any member of the CBGL Mentoring Panel.

The CBGL Mentoring Panel will meet regularly to consider expressions of interest and to assist in the matching of mentees with potential mentors. Qualities that will be considered in the Panel's mentor selection include:

- Experience at a higher level than the mentee
- Experience across a variety of roles
- An understanding of the organisational structure and operations
- Political savvy and an understanding of the organisational culture
- Relevant networks

### The mentor should:

- Be a high performer and competent
- Be regarded highly for professionalism, ethics and integrity
- Have good relationships with key people inside and outside CBGL and Flinders University
- Make time for mentoring and keep commitments
- Be a good listener and communicator
- Be good at motivating and supporting others
- Take satisfaction from the achievement of others and promote their achievements

Mentor and Mentee training (one-hour sessions) will be provided by People and Culture at regular intervals to allow new parties to enter the scheme.

Once a mentor has been identified, the Panel will communicate this to the mentee. The mentee then needs to contact the mentor, introduce themselves and arrange a time to meet. Initially a formal mentoring agreement needs to be established (**see Appendix A**).

## Developing a Mentoring Agreement

Whether it is one-on-one or group mentoring, it is worth trying to complete a formal agreement at the first meeting. This establishes the boundaries to be discussed and the goals of the mentee. It is best to discuss this early so that the parameters are well understood by each party.

A mentoring agreement template is attached in **Appendix A**.

Parameters to discuss include:

- **Expectations:** The mentee needs to clearly state what they would like to get out of the relationship. The mentor needs to communicate which attributes they will bring. This allows common ground to be established.
- **Meeting framework:** An agreement should be reached about the type, duration, location and frequency of meetings. Boundaries around availability and accessibility are a factor in mentors agreeing to offer their time to mentor.
- **Goal time frames:** Set realistic time frames for the goals, starting with goals to be achieved in 6-12 months. See next section for suggested discussion points.
- **Confidentiality:** Discuss between the parties those areas that are deemed confidential to one or other. In situations where both parties work in the same organisation it can be easy to unintentionally break confidences.
- **Phone and email contact between sessions:** The mentee should check whether the mentor is happy to have phone or email contact between sessions. Most are, but this can't be assumed. Email contact is a good way to update each other on goals and progress.
- **No fault exit clause:** The capacity to end the relationship, without blame, when it does not work for either party is extremely helpful. It allows sensitive issues such as a clash of values, mentor inexperience and mentee non-commitment to be addressed positively and without in-depth explanation. Examples of pitfalls that may arise where the exit clause is important are outlined later in the guide.

Working together through the questions posed in the Mentoring Agreement in **Appendix A** will enable the parties to create a shared understanding of how the relationship will work. Realistic shared expectations set the scene for a successful partnership.

# How Mentoring Works

## YOUR FIRST MEETING

This is generally an informal meeting to help you both decide on whether the match is the right one – an opportunity to meet each other and get a feel for how you might work together. If you want to proceed, you will complete the mentoring agreement at the first meeting.

Mentees should prepare for the first meeting by considering the points to be filled out in the agreement. Importantly, a set of potential goals should be formulated and taken to the first meeting.

Mentors should consider the following points prior to the meeting and consider using some of these as a basis for the conversation:

- What do you want to achieve from this meeting?
- What are you trying to achieve with your goals?
- How will you know when you achieve your goals?
- Have you identified all opportunities?
- Which course of action do you favour?
- What obstacles do you think you'll encounter on the way?
- What support do you want from me and/or others in your plan?
- How useful has this meeting been for you?
- Where do we go from here?

## OUTLINE FOR SUBSEQUENT MENTORING SESSIONS

1. Find a mutually acceptable meeting place.
2. Schedule a beginning and end time and try to stick to it.
3. Whatever the current meeting is about, it is important to review how things went since the last meeting. This is the 'observation' part of the action learning cycle. Having someone to assist you in making sense of how your efforts are going is extremely useful.
4. Before you launch into your topic for the current meeting it is a good idea to outline what you want to talk about and what you hope to achieve by the end of the meeting (e.g. a decision on whether to write a journal article and forego an invited book chapter). In fact, we recommend that before your meeting you email your mentor to let them know what you want to talk about (just a couple of lines is fine). This increases the productivity of your meetings.
5. Mentees should feel able to ask for advice and ideas from their mentors. However, it is probably not a good idea for mentors to offer strong opinions on what they think a mentee should do, unless this is asked for or the mentor is a recognised expert in the field. Even then it is the mentee's decision on whether to take the advice. The mentee is the driving force in the mentoring partnership.
6. At the end of the session, it is a good idea to summarise what you are going to do next. It is ideal to record this and send your mentor an email summary.
7. Always arrange your next meeting at the end of your current meeting. Even if you must change it later, it is better to have one scheduled; that way it is far more likely to happen.

Some tips for consideration by the mentor are:

- Ask the mentee what they would like to focus on at the beginning of the session
- Follow-up and review actions from previous sessions
- Challenge in a constructive way
- Hold the mentee accountable for what they agreed to do
- Explore blockages when there has been no progress
- Question and listen more than speaking - unless sharing experiences or offering specific advice
- Recognise and build on successes
- Keep critique positive. Build the person's confidence and self-belief
- Reflect back what the mentee has said from time to time to reinforce points
- Agree on next steps or actions at the end of each session

A set of ideas for discussion at the meetings is provided in **Appendix B**.



## Setting Mentee Goals

Mentees should develop a set of goals to be clarified at the beginning of the relationship. It is important to realise that these goals are likely to change and be refined over time as experience and understanding is gained. Flexibility is needed, particularly when changes occur in the workplace. There may be a need to respond to these changes by altering goals.





# If Things Are Not Working Out

## REVIEWING THE MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

It is useful to have a discussion occasionally to ensure that the mentoring partnership is still meeting the needs of both the mentor and the mentee. If either of you are unsure about something, it is a good idea to contact any member of the BGL mentoring Panel.

## WHEN THINGS ARE NOT WORKING OUT

Mentoring is a voluntary process and should be an enjoyable and rewarding (although at times, quite challenging!) experience.

Giving and receiving feedback can be sensitive and, without a level of rapport, a mentee may feel inhibited in what they can say. A critical or excessively directive mentor, or a mentee who is not open to feedback and reflection, can be problematic - as can a sense of power imbalance or feeling intimidated. In short-term relationships where skill-building is the goal, the level of rapport will not be as important an issue. However, where the mentee requires a sounding board for personal issues, the capacity for intimacy is important.

In such cases, parties should trust their intuitive judgment and acknowledge any mismatch as soon as possible. The earlier it is addressed the easier it will be to manage. The 'no blame exit clause' allows this to be accepted without full explanation. For example, if you find that a mentor is too critical and directive and that this will be a major inhibitor in your learning it is sufficient to say '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 to be supported and it may be better for you to find somebody better able to assist you'.

If there is a clash of values this is best dealt with by invoking the no blame exit clause. An example of a value clash may be when a mentor advises of a course of action that is unethical or lacks integrity, or conversely a mentor may find the mentee's values are questionable.

If the experience is not what you had hoped or is not working out and talking to the other party hasn't solved the problem, then contact any member of the CBGL Mentoring Panel.

As mentor and mentee we both understand how honest, respectful and genuine communication can enhance this mentoring relationship and we agree to work with personal and professional integrity at all times. *We agree that all discussion and communication between us remains confidential and that no information will be shared without mutual consent.*

Signed:

Date

[illegible]



# Suggested Questions for Mentors

How are you feeling about yourself – good and bad?  
How are you travelling with your job now?

What has happened since the last session?

What have you done that you said you'd do?

What breakthroughs or insights have you experienced?  
What new choices or decisions have you made?

What are you working on?

What progress have you made in your goals and activities?  
What has got in the way of progressing any actions set?  
What have you done that you are proud of?

What successes/wins have you had?

How can your mentor assist?

Where are you stuck?

What support do you need?

What are you wondering about?

What advice do you need?

What do you need to plan for/deal with?

What is next?

What is the next action or goal to take on?

Where do you want to focus?

What do you want next for yourself?

