

# MENTORING GUIDELINES

## Mentoring Scheme for Academic Staff – Lecturers

This mentoring programme is part of the variety of learning and development opportunities offered by the University. Mentoring is a process where one person offers help, challenge, advice and support to facilitate the learning and development of another, especially when they are new to the University. It supports the new member of staff to become effective as swiftly as possible by helping them increase familiarity with the University as a whole and their role within it.

This document provides 'minimum' guidelines for Schools. Where Schools have their own arrangements in place for mentoring academic and research staff, Schools should ensure that their practices meet or exceed these minimum guidelines.

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## SCOPE

This mentoring scheme is available to new members of academic staff appointed to Lecturer positions and applies during their probationary period. Their line manager or nominated person from within the School will assign a mentor for them on appointment.

The mentoring relationship is expected to last for the duration of the probationary period (3 years), although it may continue informally after that time. The mentor has a central role to play in supporting the new Lecturer through successfully developing as a teacher, achieving Fellow membership of the HEA (Higher Education Academy) and in developing a research profile (for those staff employed in academic roles which are Teaching & Research or Research Intensive).

### **Aims of mentoring new Lecturers:**

- To provide an experienced member of staff to advise, encourage and provide support to new Lecturers to enable them to meet the probationary requirements, develop their ability to think for themselves and take responsibility for their own professional development.
- To provide general induction support, sharing knowledge about how the University operates, acting as a point of referral signposting new Lecturers to colleagues in the School or elsewhere they may wish to approach for specialist information.
- To provide a source of help and advice on all aspects of the professional role including teaching, research and administration.
- To support the translation of skills, theories and ideas from the Academic Practice Programme (APP) - where a new Lecturer is undertaking this qualification - into subject-based application.
- To provide constructive feedback on teaching and research activities.
- To support School based work on subject related teaching and learning issues as a part of the APP programme.
- To help the new Lecturer to develop their own personal development plan
- To provide a 'critical friend' outside the management framework.

This scheme does not replace the [New Staff Induction](#) session, which should be attended by all new staff and is booked via Employee Self Service, or the local induction to the School carried out by the line manager. It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that the new member of staff receives a comprehensive induction to the University and their School.

## MENTOR ALLOCATION

A mentor should not be a Head of School. It is a good idea for the mentor to be outside the direct line management of the new Lecturer and should be someone who has passed their probationary period. The line manager will gain the agreement of the person to take on a mentoring role. It is recommended that the mentor attends the '[Successful Mentoring](#)' training course provided by People Development.

In selecting a mentor, the line manager should consider:

- do they have the capacity in their existing workload to provide support to the new member of staff when needed?
- do they want to take on the role?
- do they listen well and ask open questions?
- can they give honest and direct feedback in a constructive way?
- can they create a safe but challenging learning environment that suits the needs of different types of people?
- do they take a proactive approach to their own development to appreciate the importance of development for the new member of staff?
- are they likely to have empathy with the problems faced by new members of staff?
- do they have a balanced view of the importance of each facet of the university?
- do they demonstrate the University's Values and Behaviours?
- are there any cultural or gender issues that should be taken into account?

It is important that School workload models make allowance for the time new staff need to establish their research careers and undertake the APP. In addition, models should also make allowance for the time taken to provide effective research and teaching mentoring.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTEE AND MENTOR**

Both parties have a responsibility to ensure that the mentoring relationship is of mutual benefit and it is based on trust, confidentiality and equality. By participating in the scheme, both parties agree to abide by the Ethical Code of Practice for Mentoring, as shown in Appendix A.

Mentees should:

- be open and honest with their mentor
- respect any trust that they show, for example sharing personal and confidential information
- arrange each meeting, set the agenda and make the time for it. Each meeting typically lasts for one hour, although this can vary with agreement from both parties
- keep their mentor informed of progress and any problems at each meeting
- ask for help or advice, using email to help to provide a practical mechanism for queries or ideas that arise in-between meetings
- prepare for and participate in meetings
- achieve actions and / or targets within deadlines as agreed with the mentor
- agree the frequency and location of the meetings with their mentor.

Mentors should:

- provide guidance based on their past experience in a sensitive and straightforward way that deals with the participants concerns
- create a positive relationship based on open communication
- commit to arranged meetings
- empower the participant to solve problems rather than give solutions
- any criticism should be given constructively
- being a mentor should develop your own skill base, get feedback from the participant and consider your own development as well as theirs
- be interested in the participant and their objectives
- keep an eye out for anything that would be of interest to or support the participant
- respect the confidentiality of the conversations with your mentee, subject to the exceptions described in the next section.

Many aspects of mentoring will depend on the particular School and the area of research of the new staff member.

## Teaching

The majority of new Lecturers will attend the Academic Practice Programme (APP). Mentors play a vital role in helping new staff to get started on their teaching activities and to reflect on their teaching practice in order to continually develop and improve. New Lecturers will need to discuss topics such as teaching methods, course design, teaching materials, assessment, student support and the compiling of a teaching portfolio which is a component of the APP programme. New Lecturers may need to experiment with ideas discovered during the APP sessions within the specific subject area and adapt them accordingly. Mentors can usefully act as a sounding-board, provide ideas on alternative sources of subject-specific information or suggest other colleagues who may already have experience in the area concerned.

Mentors may also contribute to the structured observation of a variety of teaching activities by the new Lecturer. For the APP, six observed sessions are required over a two year period. Some of these may be conducted as a part of any School peer observation scheme. Normally the mentor will conduct at least three of the six observation sessions. New Lecturers often find the chance to observe their mentor's teaching activities valuable and wherever possible this should be included in development plans.

New Lecturers may find managing their time and various commitments problematic. Mentors have a role to play in asking about any problems and referring them to the People Development webpage to see what skills development support is available, for example developing stronger organisational skills and encouraging the Lecturer to raise any concerns with their line manager/Head of School.

## Research

The Mentor has a role to play in either providing appropriate research mentoring or working with the Lecturer and the Head of School to identify someone from the School (or another part of the University) who would be an appropriate person to mentor in this area. Research mentors need to be experienced active researchers – it is not necessary for them to carry out research in the same

specific field as the new Lecturer, although it is helpful if their own research is in the same general area so that they are aware of the national and international context and structures (for example, in relation to potential grant income sources).

The research mentoring should be provided throughout the Lecturer's probationary period to support the new member of staff demonstrating that they are capable of acting as an independent researcher.

The person providing research mentoring support should:

- meet with the new Lecturer on a regular basis (as a minimum 4 times per year in the first year and twice yearly thereafter).
- helping them to focus on a manageable research agenda
- advising on their publication strategy and suitable outlets for research outputs
- helping to transform research ideas into projects that could attract external research funding, and advising on funding sources
- helping them to plan a longer term research career (i.e. thinking beyond their first grant)
- ensuring new staff members are aware of internal support (both within the School and the wider University) for making grant applications, for example Research and Enterprise Services (RES)
- suggesting other appropriate internal and external contacts/potential collaborators
- encouragement to attend key conferences etc in order to gain new research ideas and make new contacts
- supporting the new Lecturer by reading draft written work or grant proposals, as appropriate, and assist in providing introductions to other colleagues who may be helpful in working with/guiding the new Lecturer in the development of their research.
- Provide encouragement for, and show an interest in, their mentee's research plans and activities. Equally to support new Lecturers with appropriate time planning and management. All new staff engaged with research should have been set explicit research targets that should be achieved within their probation period. In many instances, the research mentor can help the Lecturer to break down these higher level targets into a number of sub-targets, with deadlines.

## **BENEFITS OF MENTORING**

Mentoring is a fantastic opportunity to settle into a new role quickly and explore personal motivation, skills and thought processes with an independent colleague. The relationship can bring benefits to both the mentor and the mentee.

### **Benefits to the Mentee**

Benefits will vary for individuals but it is likely that mentoring will help to achieve at least some of these points:

- settling in and developing networks more quickly
- understanding the culture, professional behaviours and values of the university

- overcoming feelings of isolation
- receiving advice and encouragement
- having access to an informed second opinion
- help with problem solving
- gaining insight into own performance through a 'critical friend'
- identifying development needs and opportunities
- drawing on another person's perspective
- reflection on our behaviours and approach, increasing personal awareness
- developing knowledge or skills
- building confidence
- dealing with change
- responding to a challenge
- balancing work with personal life
- guidance on career development.

## Benefits to the Mentor

Mentoring can be extremely rewarding for the mentor in the following ways:

- developing their own skills and expanding their experience
- learning about other areas of the university
- finding personal satisfaction from seeing a colleague develop and flourish
- acting as a catalyst for own personal development and change
- having access to different ideas and perspectives
- having the opportunity to discuss professional issues that there would not normally be the time chance to do
- gaining insights into their own practices, approaches, thinking and behaviours
- enhanced organisational reputation.

## MAINTAINING GOOD PRACTICE

The role of a mentor is not the same as a line manager and if the mentee is struggling in their role then the mentor should not try to manage them. Instead, the mentor should follow the responsibilities highlighted above, encouraging the mentee to develop their own strategies for resolving the situation. If appropriate, the mentor may recommend that the mentee seeks assistance from other University support services such as [Human Resources](#), [Occupational Health](#), [People Development](#), [Harassment Advisors](#) and the [Employee Assistance Programme](#), provided by Confidential Care or to external sources of support such as their GP.

The mentor has a commitment to the mentee to maintain confidentiality both during and after the mentoring relationship. However, there may be some circumstances in which the mentor might need to seek assistance and disclose the reasons for this. Examples may include if the mentee is behaving in a way that is of considerable concern, appears to be going against University policy, acting illegally

or raises concerns for the mentee's or other's safety. The mentor should discuss concerns with the University support services or external authorities. If possible and appropriate, this should be done with the mentee's consent and permission. The mentor should not contact the mentee's line manager, unless this has been discussed and agreed with the mentee.

## **ENDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP**

Mentoring relationships are expected to last for the duration of the probationary period. However, either party can end the mentoring relationship at any time with no blame attached, for example if the mentoring relationship is not working or there is a personality clash. Mentors and mentees must notify the Head of School of any changes to relationships.

# APPENDIX A

## Ethical Code of Practice for Mentoring

- The mentor's role is to respond to the mentee's developmental needs and agenda; it is not to impose his or her own agenda
- Mentors must work within the current agreement with the mentee about confidentiality that is appropriate within the context
- The mentor will not intrude into areas the mentee wishes to keep private unless invited to do so. However, he or she should help the mentee recognise how other issues may relate to those areas
- The mentor will be sensitive to issues of culture, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, race, age and all other aspects of diversity
- Mentor and mentee should aim to be open and truthful with each other and themselves about the relationship itself
- The mentoring relationship must not be exploitative in any way, nor can it be open to misinterpretation
- Mentors need to be aware of the limits of their own competence and operate within these limits
- Mentors have a responsibility to develop their own competence in the practice of mentoring
- The mentee must accept increasing responsibility for managing the relationship; the mentor should empower them to do so and must generally promote the mentee's autonomy
- Mentor and mentee should respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is reasonable
- Mentor and mentee share responsibility for the smooth winding down of the relationship when it has achieved its purpose – they must both avoid creating dependency
- Either party may dissolve the relationship. However, both mentor and mentee have a responsibility for discussing the matter together as part of mutual learning
- The mentee should be aware of his or her rights and any complaints procedures
- Mentors must be aware of any current law and work within the law
- Mentor and mentee must be aware that all records are subject to statutory regulations under the Data Protection Act 1998.



# APPENDIX B

## Record of discussion with mentor

This record should be completed by the Lecturer after a significant discussion with the mentor. Ideally the mentor should comment and sign it. This record may be referred to as evidence in the portfolio.

1. Background / what triggered the discussion?

2. Key Points of the discussion:

3. Action plan as a result of discussion:

4. Your Reflections

5. Comments from mentor

Lecturer signature \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor signature \_\_\_\_\_