

Mentoring Policy

Introduction

Mentoring is an important activity designed to support all staff members at all stages of their careers. A staff member's mentor should be outside of their line management structure and preferably somebody not involved in their day-to-day work. Conversations with a mentor should be confidential.

The School provides mentors to all new members of staff and to staff applying for promotion. Staff members should also be offered mentors where appropriate when changing roles (e.g. career transition points) or when engaged in training. The mentor relationship should help the member of staff familiarise themselves with new processes and structures, with the aim to support and enable their professional development. The School also provides an Academic Support Network that is administered through the School Well-Being, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (WIDE). Please contact scfpculturechampion@reading.ac.uk for more details.

Aims

This policy aims to set out School procedures to help promote successful formal mentoring relationships that provide appropriate support for the mentee.

This should complement and not replace existing mentoring guidance provided by the University.

Additional advice on mentoring can be found here:

[Coaching and Mentoring](#)

The mentoring process should be a positive and useful support for a mentee, and it will often have advantages for the mentor as well. The following guidelines aim to equip both parties with the information necessary for them to conduct a positive mentoring relationship. Responsibility for making the mentoring process work is with both the mentor and the mentee.

The aims of the process are:

- to provide advice and encouragement on all aspects of a professional role
- to help in identifying and planning personal development
- to provide a 'sounding board' for the discussion of:
 - the organisational culture and values of the University
 - personal performance issues
 - to provide constructive feedback in planning of personal research, teaching and learning and other roles
 - to provide access to networks or contacts.

Responsibility for mentoring process and allocation of mentors

Responsibility for the mentoring process lies with the Head of School, with support from the School Manager. The HoS will appoint mentors in consultation with line managers. The School Manager will ensure that mentors have completed appropriate training. The School will maintain a central document listing mentor/mentee pairing and the start/finish dates anticipated for each, together with a list of staff that are trained and able to provide mentoring. If you would like to become a mentor, please contact the HoS or School Manager.

Mentors are assigned for several reasons, and evaluation is carried out two months into a mentoring relationship to ensure that the support provided to the mentee is appropriate and helpful.

A mentor is offered to staff in the following circumstances:

1. For all new staff members at all grades and contact types, both probationary and non-probationary. For probationary staff, the relationship will formally be in place until probation and will then be reviewed. For non-probationary staff, a mentor will normally be assigned for one year in the first instance.
2. For all staff moving on to a new and significant administrative or leadership role. A mentor will be assigned during this period for a minimum of six months but can continue beyond that period where there is benefit.
3. For all academic staff leading up to submitting a case for promotion in line with university guidance as part of the academic promotions' procedures.
4. For all staff who request mentor support as part of their PDR. A mentor will be assigned for one year in the first instance, or as appropriate for the individual circumstances.
5. To support staff enrolled on significant training programmes, e.g. EDMAP, FLAIR, Ed.D. In these cases, the duration of the formal relationship will link to the duration of training.

Core expectations for the mentoring relationship

Apart from enabling the process to achieve the aims set out above, the general role of the mentor is to help the mentee come to their own conclusions about issues that they are facing. This will involve some discussion of the mentor's own observations and experiences.

The role of a mentor is not the same as a line manager, and if the mentee is struggling in their role the mentor should not try to "manage" them. Instead, the mentor should continue to follow the approach described above, enabling the mentee to develop their own strategies to deal with their situation. In such a situation the mentor may wish to direct the mentee towards other University support services such as the Human Resources Employee Assistance Programme or Health and Wellbeing. Details of these and other services can be found on the [Human Resources](#) website.

The mentor has no role in reporting to the manager of the mentee unless it has been specifically discussed and agreed by the mentor and mentee. It is important that the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship is maintained. In situations where either the mentor or mentee is unhappy with the mentoring relationship and it is not working, they should contact the HoS who will consider reallocating the mentee to a new mentor.

Core expectations of mentors

The following points suggest the way in which the mentor should conduct discussions with the mentee:

- Have time to offer to a mentee.
- Listen actively to the mentee's views.
- Ask open questions.
- Reflect back feelings.
- Make suggestions but avoid being prescriptive.
- Within a meeting, summarise its main themes.
- Give constructive, positive and precise feedback.
- There is no need to keep a written record, but a confidential aide-memoire can be kept if it is agreed by both parties.

- The role of the mentor is to help the mentee come to their own conclusions in how to overcome obstacles and how to take the next steps in their career development.
- All mentors should have received formal mentoring training and have identified themselves as available to support staff in a formal mentoring relationship. See information below on training available at the University.
- A mentor is expected to be non-judgemental in their support, and to be accessible. The mentee should be able to feel comfortable about asking for meetings and seeking advice.
- The mentor is expected to arrange initial meetings with the mentee and then to agree the level of formality and frequency of meetings thereafter. At the early meetings the two should agree about how the relationship will proceed to ensure that basic expectations on both sides match.
- Meetings should be confidential.
- The mentor should not take on a managing role when supporting a mentee who is struggling with particular aspects of their role. Where possible the mentor can direct the mentee to other university support within HR or CQSD.

Core expectations of mentees

- Responsibility for making a mentoring relationship work lies with both the mentor and mentee. If the mentee is open with the mentor, for example, the mentoring process will be more beneficial.
- The mentee should be prepared for meetings and keep to agreements of regularity and formality of meetings.
- The mentee should be willing to ask for advice and to ensure the mentor is kept informed of successes and problems.

Evaluation

Following the mentoring process, both parties will be asked to evaluate its effectiveness and to provide feedback on how the scheme may be improved. All feedback will be anonymous. Mentoring relationships can extend beyond normal timescales where requested and both parties agree. Both mentor and mentee will be asked to comment on the effectiveness of the process after approximately two months, to make sure that the match between mentee and mentor is working. Where a problem is highlighted the opportunity to change mentor will be provided.

Mentor Training

The University offers various online training courses for staff who are a mentor. These can be found from the on UoR Learn

https://uorlearn.sabacloud.com/Saba/Web_spf/EU2PRD0149/app/dashboard

Mandatory training:

Successful Mentoring Workshops (90 mins) are offered monthly.

NB - Please send proof of training to the School Manager.

Additional training available:

Personal Titles Mentor Training – *ad hoc* or on request

The University also provides access to [LinkedIn Learning](#) courses – simply go to the site and enter your University email address and password. Search for Mentoring / Coaching.