Guidance for mentoring scheme coordinators

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What is mentoring?

Mentoring is the process by which one person (the mentor) supports another individual (the mentee) to manage their own development so that the mentee becomes self-reliant in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and abilities, and develops a continuous motivation to do so.

Mentoring relationships are most commonly between a more experienced person (mentor) and a less experienced person (mentee), although mentoring can also be a developmental relationship between peers.

Introducing a mentoring scheme

There are many benefits of mentoring for mentors, mentees and the wider organisation. When designing and implementing a mentoring scheme a variety of practical factors need to be considered.

This guide provides information for anyone involved in coordinating mentoring schemes for their teams or department.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Before embarking on the development of a scheme it is vital to secure wider institutional support. This is essential and will influence the success of a mentoring scheme.

Get commitment from senior leaders / stakeholders

A mentoring scheme is more likely to be successful if it has the visible support of senior leaders. With senior commitment, confidence will spill down to mentors and mentees, who will be more likely to give their time, commitment and energy to the scheme.

Find a champion

Appoint a mentoring champion who is a senior member of the School/Department. Ensure that they are seen to be actively supportive on a day-to-day basis. This will be demonstrated through their help in developing the scheme, willingness to contribute to it themselves by mentoring others, involvement with others participating in the scheme.

Identify what resources and time will be allocated to the programme

Based on the decisions relating to the scope of the scheme it is vital that adequate resources and time are allocated to ensure the success of the scheme (see panel right).

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You will need to consider the time and resources required for:

- Scheme management and administration
- Scheme promotion
- Recognition of mentoring responsibilities within workload models
- The resource needed for training and development for participants
- Conducting and disseminating an evaluation report

Designing a scheme

Key considerations

DEFINE THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

Consider the purpose of the scheme and why you are proposing to establish a mentoring scheme. It could be to:

· Support induction and transition into new roles
· Foster institutional collaboration and knowledge sharing
· Develop skills
· Enable staff to realise career development plans

By establishing the purpose of the scheme and identifying the outcomes you can begin to scope the scheme.

DECIDE THE TYPE OF MENTORING SCHEME YOU WILL USE

You should give consideration to the type of mentoring scheme that will suit your objectives and target group. There are a variety of structures and formats of mentoring to choose from with different benefits. The most common type of mentoring arrangement is one-to-one mentoring between a more experienced member of staff (mentor) with a less experienced staff member (mentee). However, there are also benefits to group mentoring, peer mentoring and mentoring outside of usual work disciplines/groups.

> Before implementing your scheme it can be worth exploring ideas with your target group(s), ask them what type of mentoring they might benefit from, who would their ideal mentors be and how would they like to experience mentoring?

DEFINE YOUR TARGET GROUPS

You will need to decide your target group(s) for mentees, and this should be closely linked with the scheme purpose. Are there particular groups within your department that might benefit from working with a mentor? Alternatively, would you prefer to leave the scheme open to all to self-nominate?

You will also need to determine your target mentor group. When defining your mentor group consider the relationship between mentors and mentees. Although it is often beneficial to have mentors that are more experienced than the mentee – evidence shows that if the gap in experience level is too great, it can make the mentor un-relatable or even intimidating for the mentee and impact the effectiveness of the mentoring arrangement.

A key ingredient for successful mentoring is to ensure that both your mentee and mentor groups are fully engaged in the mentoring programme. This will require careful communication of the scheme and also relates to visible institutional support from senior management and mentoring champions.

FIND OUT MORE

**www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/
mentoring/guidance-for-coordinators**

SCHEME LOGISTICS

It is important that mentors and mentees know what they are 'signing up for' when they join a mentoring programme. Therefore it is helpful to provide a framework for the mentoring arrangements. Considerations should include:

Meeting frequency

A useful guide for meeting frequency is for mentoring discussions to take place every 4 to 6 weeks. This ensures regular contact and follow up, but also allows adequate time for the mentee to act upon issues discussed in the mentoring session.

Meeting locations

You might like to provide guidance about where mentoring meetings should take place; for example, for productive mentoring discussions it is usually best for the meeting to take place in a private neutral place away from the usual distractions of work.

Depending on your target groups, some mentors/mentees might not be based in the same location; therefore consider providing guidance about online/telephone mentoring meetings.

Mentoring duration

Duration is more difficult to specify as successful mentoring arrangements may continue for many months or even years. However, when establishing a mentoring scheme it is useful to provide some guidance. You could specify a minimum number of meetings (four would generally be the minimum for a productive outcome) or a minimum duration (e.g. 6–12 months).

You should also consider whether you want mentors/ mentees to be able to join the scheme on a rolling basis or whether you will recruit new mentors/mentees on a cohort basis (e.g. once a year). If you have a small pool of mentors you might need to be more firm with bringing mentoring arrangements to a close within a set time-frame in order to release mentors to take on new mentees.

Number of Mentors and Mentees

The number of mentees your scheme can support and the number of mentors you will need will be determined by the type of mentoring scheme you implement. It will also relate to the amount of time allocated for mentoring within workload models.

Consider using a pilot scheme

If you are implementing mentoring for the first time, you could consider piloting your scheme with a small number of mentors/mentees initially. This will allow you to try out the scheme on a smaller scale and identify any potential issues or challenges before rolling out to a wider audience.

When designing the scope of the scheme, pay careful consideration to the workload and recognition of the mentors. Maintaining a productive mentoring arrangement can require a significant investment of time and energy for both parties.

If mentors are overloaded with too many mentees, are not afforded adequate time, and/or are not appropriately recognised for their mentoring responsibilities, it might result in the breakdown of mentoring arrangements and disenfranchisement with the mentoring scheme.

Recruiting, and matching mentors and mentees

Scheme promotion

When promoting your scheme to potential mentors and mentees you will need to provide an outline of the scheme benefits, requirements and expectations via email, promotional materials, online etc.

There are many options for generating interest in your mentoring scheme for example you could:

· Use your mentoring champion(s) to encourage colleagues to participate as mentors/mentees

· Draw on quotes or testimonials from previous mentors/ mentees to demonstrate the benefits of participation

· Organise a launch event to provide information and an opportunity for potential mentors and mentees to meet

· Highlight the mentoring scheme at meetings, events or inductions

Registration/selection forms

To enable the selection and subsequent matching process it is useful to ask potential mentees/mentors to provide some information about their expectations, requirements and skills when they register their interest in the scheme. Some templates are provided in the resources section of the website (see below) or you can design your own.

FIND OUT MORE

Registration and selection forms
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/ mentoring/guidance-for-coordinators

Mentee/Mentor matching

In most organised mentoring schemes there will be an element of matching of mentees and mentors. There are different options for this detailed below:

· **Mentee self-matching**. The mentees are provided with details about the mentors on the scheme and select the mentor(s) that they believe suit their requirements.

· **Coordinator matching**. The scheme coordinator(s) match mentees with mentors (or a selection of potential mentors that the mentee can choose from) based on the information provided in the registration forms.

· **Automated matching**. There are now a number of software programmes and apps that carry out the matching process for mentoring schemes. Mentee and mentor information and preferences are uploaded and used to generate possible matches with a 'compatability score'.

· **Random matching**. Mentees are randomly assigned a mentor from the mentor pool.

For a discussion of the pros and cons of these matching options see the link below.

FIND OUT MORE

Mentee/Mentor matching options
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/ mentoring/guidance-for-coordinators/mentors-and- mentees

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As well as deciding on the matching mechanism, other considerations when matching mentees and mentors might include:

· **Management chains**. For productive mentoring arrangements it is often best to avoid matching mentees with their immediate line manager or close colleague (see the link below for more information on the distinction between mentoring and supervision).

· **Experience gap**. Often mentors tend to be more experienced in their career than mentees. However if the experience gap is too large, it may mean the mentor seems un-relatable or intimidating for the mentee.

· **Discipline or profession**. Whether or not it is advantageous for mentors and mentees to be matched according to their discipline or profession will depend on the objectives of your scheme. If the mentoring scheme focuses on the requirements of a particular role or disciplinary outcome, it might be beneficial to have a mentor within a similar role/discipline. However if the mentoring arrangement is to support career/professional development more generally, it can be useful for mentees to have mentors that are from a different discipline/profession as this can bring about new ideas and perspectives (see: 'Structure/format of mentoring' link below).

FIND OUT MORE

Management chains: the distinction between mentoring and supervision
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/mentoring/what-is-mentoring/mentoring-andmanagement

Structure/format of mentoring
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/mentoring/what-is-mentoring/structure-and-format

Training for mentors and mentees

For any mentoring scheme it is advisable to provide an element of training for both mentors and mentees. A basic overview of key mentoring concepts is provided on the Mentoring at Sussex website (see link below) and in complementary mentee and mentor guidance booklets (see resources link below). Ideally this should be supplemented with some more in-depth training which will give participants the opportunity to try out their skills before using them in mentoring scenarios.

TRAINING FOR MENTORS

Training will introduce the key skills and attributes required of effective mentors and will discuss key considerations in working with and supporting mentees. Mentor training will also ensure mentors are aware of the ethical considerations of mentoring and introduce mentors to strategies for handling difficult situations in mentoring scenarios.

TRAINING FOR MENTEES

Training will help mentees to consider how to make the most of their mentoring sessions. It will also clarify what mentees can reasonably expect from their mentors and highlight tools to ensure that they are able to make progress both within and beyond their mentoring discussions.

Within the University mentoring related skills training can be accessed via Organisational Development and (for researchers and academics) the Research Staff Office regular training programmes.

The University also holds a list of external providers of mentoring training if you wish to arrange bespoke training sessions for your mentoring scheme (contact **od@sussex.ac.uk** for more information).

External mentoring skills courses are available through providers such as ILM, Chartered Management Institute (CMI), Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and The OCM. There is more information and links to resources in the 'Further information' section on page 18 of this brochure.

FIND OUT MORE

Guidance for mentors
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/ mentoring/guidance-for-mentors

Guidance for mentees
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/ mentoring/guidance-for-mentees

Online resources
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/ mentoring/resources

Further information and links to external training providers can be found on page 18 of this brochure.

Scheme evaluation

To ensure the continued success of your mentoring scheme it is important to review the outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme; with consideration of:

- Effectiveness of scheme for delivering stated objectives
- Benefits for mentors, mentees, department and wider organisation
- Effectiveness of scheme coordination and management

WHY EVALUATE?

Careful evaluation will enable refinement and improvements to the scheme for the benefit of future mentees and mentors. Assuming the evaluation is positive, it will also provide important evidence and testimonials with which to recruit future mentors and mentees and to secure ongoing institutional support for the scheme. During the evaluation it is important to ensure that outcomes can be reviewed without breaching confidentiality.

Before you implement your mentoring scheme, you should consider how to conduct the scheme evaluation; specifically you should consider

- what you need to evaluate
- what type of information you need and how you will collect it
- what points in time you will evaluate

What to evaluate

The questions you will explore in your evaluation should relate directly back to your original objectives for the scheme. The Kirkpatrick model of evaluation can be a helpful tool in planning mentoring evaluations. It explains four levels of evaluation for learning and development interventions such as mentoring:

Level 1: Reaction
The degree to which participants find the intervention (i.e. mentoring) favourable, engaging and relevant to their jobs

Level 2: Learning
The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment based on their participation in mentoring

Level 3: Behaviour
The degree to which participants apply what they learned during mentoring when they are back in their jobs

Level 4: Results
The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the mentoring intervention.

You should to aim to gather information across all four levels outlined above. This may require longer term data collection and follow up.

FIND OUT MORE

The Kirkpatrick model of evaluation
**www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/Our-Philosophy/
The-Kirkpatrick-Model**

Information collection

You may wish to collect quantitative information about the mentoring arrangements for example:

· Number of mentors/mentees recruited
· Number of matches
· Number of mentoring meetings held
· Duration of mentoring relationships

You may also wish to collect qualitative information for example:

· Feedback from mentees and mentors
· Feedback from scheme champion/sponsor e.g. head of team or department
· Feedback from managers/colleagues of those involved in mentoring

Mechanisms for qualitative information collection could include: surveys, structured interviews, focus groups.

Depending on the scheme objectives there may be other data you will need to collect. For example, if it is a career development mentoring scheme you might wish to collect information about:

· How many mentees are promoted
· Whether mentees move on to new roles within the University or elsewhere
· How many mentees go on to be mentors
· Other career related outputs – e.g. awards, publications, public recognition etc

When to evaluate

There is no specific 'right' moment to evaluate. However, if it is a new scheme it is advisable to evaluate a mentoring scheme at a number of points to ensure any issues can be addressed quickly. A good guide for the first year of a scheme is:

· An initial 'light touch' evaluation after the first mentoring meetings – to gather initial reactions from mentors/mentees and to address any early challenges.

· A mid-point review – to see how mentoring arrangements are progressing, to assess any initial learning and changes in behaviour in the participants.

· An 'end-point' review – when the majority of mentoring arrangements have concluded and mentors, mentees and departments are able to reflect on the learning, behaviour change and outputs that have resulted from the mentoring.

· An 'n-months on' review – the outputs of mentoring are not always immediately apparent. Therefore it can be helpful to catch up with all participants a few months on to capture any longer term outputs. You may wish to capture quantitative data over an extended time-period (e.g. promotions secured, outputs/publications from mentees).

After the scheme is well established, it might be appropriate to decrease the number of evaluation points; however it is good practice to do an evaluation exercise at least annually to ensure the scheme continues to meet the needs of mentees, mentors and the wider-institution.

Further information

Find out more about mentoring at Sussex

Our mentoring web pages provide practical information and resources for anyone engaged in mentoring activities, whether you are (or would like to be) a mentee or mentor; or if you are involved in developing a mentoring scheme for your department or area of work.
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/ mentoring

For mentoring related training and development within the University, visit:
www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development

For mentoring information and support for researchers visit:
www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/rs

External mentoring skills courses are available through providers such as:

ILM
https://www.i-l-m.com

Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
www.managers.org.uk

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
https://www.cipd.co.uk

The OCM
www.theocm.co.uk/products-and-services/courses

More information is also available via mentoring professional bodies such as the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)
https://emccuk.org

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