

# UOR MENTORING GUIDELINES

## Mentoring Scheme for Professional and Managerial Staff

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 or promoted into a role from within the University. It supports the 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.

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# SCOPE

The mentoring scheme is available to all staff and is particularly beneficial in the following circumstances:

- New members of staff appointed to Professional and Managerial Grade 7 roles and those of Grade 6 roles with a cross-University remit and existing staff promoted into these roles.
- New managers at all levels, whether appointed from within the University or externally.
- All existing staff looking for guidance and development, for example with career development or the enhancement of skills.

For new starters, their line manager or nominated person from within the school or function will assign a mentor for them on appointment. Please contact People Development ([peopledevelopment@reading.ac.uk](mailto:peopledevelopment@reading.ac.uk)) for all other requests. The mentoring relationship is expected to last for six months, although it may continue informally after that time. There is an equivalent scheme for all new lecturers and research staff (see the Guidelines for the Mentoring of New Academic and Research Staff).

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 or function carried out by the line manager as it is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that the new starter receives a comprehensive induction to the University and their team. It also does not replace the range of courses available to support managers.

The aims of the mentoring scheme are to provide:

- Advice and encouragement in their role
- A sounding board for the discussion of:
  - o The organisational culture, values and behaviours of the University
  - o Ideas on good practice in the context of the University
- Personal performance issues
- Help in problem solving
- Help in identifying development needs and opportunities
- Access to networks or contacts
- A critical friend
- Skills development
- Career development

# MENTOR ALLOCATION

A mentor should always be someone from a different school or function who has passed their probationary period and worked at the University for at least 9 months (3 years for an academic). This time should be sufficient to gain an understanding of the University, whilst remembering what it's like to be new.

For a newly appointed or promoted manager, the mentor should have been a manager themselves for at least 18 – 24 months; to have been through the PDR process at least once and dealt with a range of management issues.

For a new starter (either new to the University or in a new role), a mentor will be allocated for their suitability for providing advice and guidance according to the context of the new starter's role. The line manager will gain the agreement of the person to take on a mentoring role. It is recommended that the mentor should have already attended the 'Successful Mentoring' training provided by People Development or book themselves onto the next convenient date.

In selecting a mentor, the line manager should consider:

- do they have the capacity in their workload to support to the new staff member?
- 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 have 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 role model the University's Values and Behaviours?
- are there any cultural or gender issues that should be taken into account?

The new starter should make contact with their mentor within their first two weeks to arrange the first meeting.

## **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.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

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
- 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.

# 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 EmployeeCare or to external sources of support such as their GP.

Both the mentor and mentee have a commitment to each other 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 approximately six months, although they can last longer by mutual agreement. They usually come to a natural end as agreed between the two parties. 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 programme coordinator, Geraldine Bourgeon in People Development, of any changes to relationships.

# SCHOOL / FUNCTION / SERVICES MENTORING SCHEMES

Some schools and functions have a local mentoring scheme for newly appointed staff. Please check with your Head of School or Director of Function for details. Other Heads of School or Directors of Functions / Services may wish to introduce a mentoring programme for categories of staff not covered by this scheme. The mentoring scheme co-ordinator (Geraldine Bourgeon in People Development) can provide general support for the introduction of such a scheme.

# LGBT+ SCHEME

The LGBT+ scheme provides the same benefits as the mentoring scheme however, it also provides support regarding LGBT+ considerations. All staff who identify as LGBT+ are eligible to access the scheme. The scheme aims to provide a safe space to confidentially share issues of personal concern regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. Please contact the Co-Chairs of the LGBT+ Staff Network (<https://www.reading.ac.uk/diversity/diversity-networks.aspx>) if you would like a mentor or to volunteer as a mentor to others.

# BECOMING A MENTOR

If you would like to become a mentor, please gain agreement from your line manager in the first instance. You can then book onto the Successful Mentoring Workshop, which is run at regular intervals and covers the key aspects of this scheme and skills required.

# REVIEW OF SCHEME

It is important to know whether the mentoring scheme is working efficiently and successfully. The main reasons for reviewing the programme are to:

- ensure individual relationships are working
- assess whether any improvements need to be made to the management and / or processes of the scheme
- demonstrate that the time investment in mentoring is worthwhile.

The programme will be reviewed by asking the following types of questions:

- Is there a clear sense of direction in the relationship?
- Is there sufficient trust between the mentor and mentee?
- Have the goals set been met?
- How long did the relationship last?
- What benefits have been gained from both the mentor and mentee?
- Does the mentee feel equipped to fulfil their role?

The results will be used to assess the benefits and value of the scheme to the University and whether any changes should be implemented. The confidentiality of individual conversations will be preserved.

# 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.