



University of
South Australia

Mentoring @ UniSA

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE



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Introduction

Mentoring is one of the most effective methods for helping individuals achieve their personal aspirations and goals in the work place. This guide explores how mentoring can be arranged for mutual benefit of the participant and the organisation. It suggests different principles, frameworks and outlines a range of factors that can maximise the benefits and impact of your particular and unique mentoring arrangement.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a voluntary two-way relationship that involves deliberate pairing of a skilled or experienced person with one who is less experienced. Mentors share their professional and personal skills and experience to assist their mentees to develop. The process is based upon encouragement, constructive comment, openness, mutual trust, respect, and a willingness to learn and share. It is considered a power-free relationship where both people in the relationship gain benefit and where the mentor acts as a role model. 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. One of the main differences is whether it is a formal program where people are matched according to knowledge, experience and personal goals or whether it is informal, with parties self-selecting each other and initiating the process.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring offers direct and indirect benefits to both parties, as well as the organisation.

Benefits for the mentee

Benefits for the mentee include:

- The opportunity to 'walk with' a person who has been there before
- New competencies, skills and knowledge
- Increased self-awareness
- Fresh insights and perspectives
- Assistance with career promotion and mobility
- Potential for increased visibility and sponsorship
- Greater organisational knowledge and understanding
- Improved understanding of roles
- Increased networks
- Development of a sense of professional identity.

Benefits for the mentor

Benefits for the mentor include:

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

Benefits for UniSA

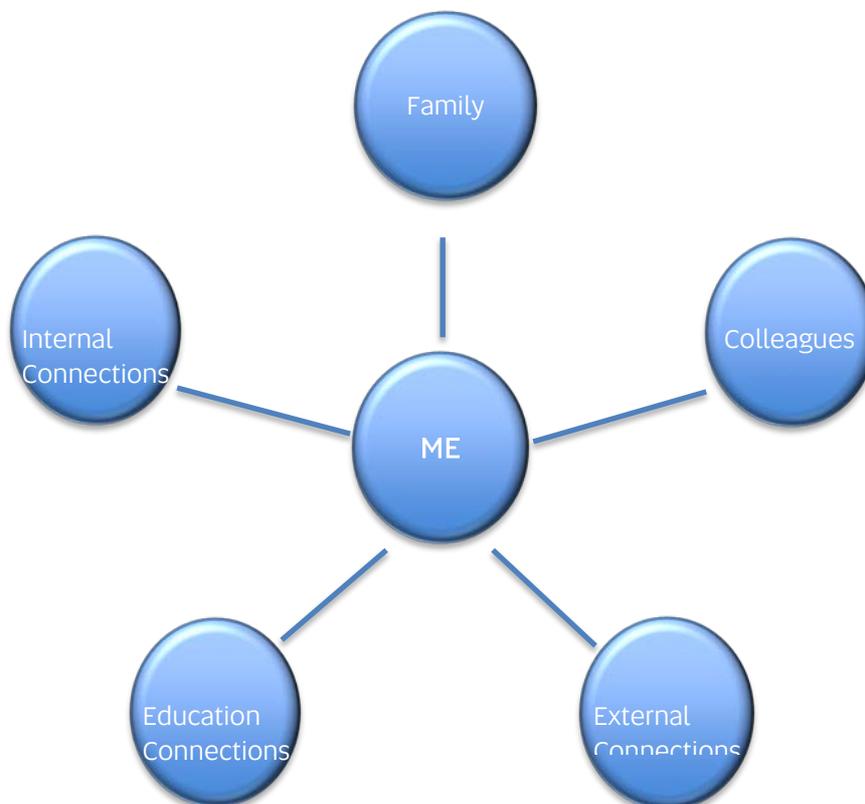
Benefits for UniSA include:

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

Multiple mentors: Developmental Networks

While much of the literature on mentoring focuses on a 1:1 relationship between a mentor and mentee, recent attention has focused on the creation of a network of mentors, as one person may not be sufficient to provide all the information and guidance a mentee needs.

A developmental network might comprise a relatively small set of relationships that helps guide a mentee through their work, career, and can provide both personal and professional support. The network might include relationships with colleagues (supervisors, subordinates and/or peers), family members, members of local communities, professional associations or other relevant entities. An example of a development network model is set out in the graphic below; [click here](#) for more detail.



Benefits of developmental network mentoring

- It recognises the value of multiple sources of expertise and guidance
- It is flexible and open to change as a mentee's needs change
- It helps build and deepen relationships over time.

A more detail discussion of mentoring and the use of developmental networks can be found in the following work by Kathy Kram; [Building Effective Mentoring Relationships and Developmental Networks](#).

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
- 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

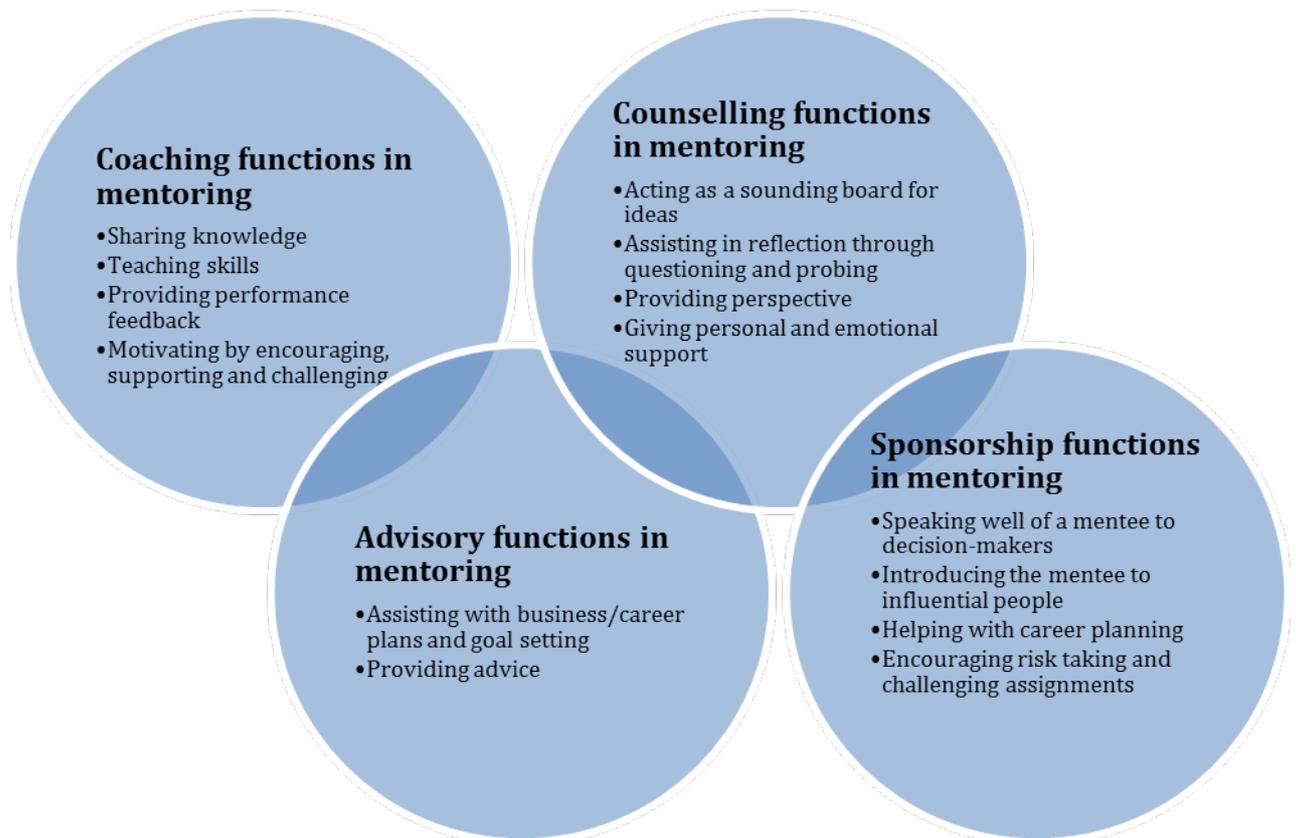
The role of the mentor is to:

- Establish realistic and attainable expectations
- Set the learning climate and encourage risk-taking
- Listen actively
- Provide guidance based on past experience
- Share stories, including mistakes
- Assist in solving problems and setting goals
- Encourage the viewing of issues from a variety of perspectives
- Give constructive, specific feedback, and suggest areas for improvement
- Act as co-learners and ask for feedback on their contribution to the relationship
- Prepare for, and reflect between, meetings
- Link the mentee to others who may provide additional support or advice
- Agree on and commit to the ground rules set out in the mentoring agreement.

How Does Mentoring Differ From Other Development Functions?

There is overlap between mentoring and other personal development activities such as coaching, training and counseling. The main differentiator with these activities however

is that a mentor is generally a person who has had direct experience in the areas they are mentoring in. They should also be outside of the reporting chain. In this way they are able to share organisational or professional knowledge, act as role models and act as a sponsor for the their mentee. Coaches, counselors and trainers often do not have this direct experience and can sometimes be line managers. In addition, mentors are also mostly more senior. Coaching is a solution-focused, results oriented process that usually involves self-directed learning. Counselling focuses on personal and other issues that may be inhibiting performance. In reality however mentoring is likely to involve a blend of functions – including coaching, advisory, counseling and sponsorship functions as outlined below.



The functions required will vary according to mentee needs and are therefore an important factor in selecting a suitable mentor.

Key Qualities of Effective Mentors and Mentees

The quality of a mentoring relationship is not solely dependent on the skills and knowledge of the mentor and how well these are matched with the development needs of the mentee. A variety of other qualities, as listed below, are also desirable.

Mentor qualities:

Desirable mentor qualities include:

- Interpersonal skills with the capacity to challenge, support and empower others
- ‘Expert’ knowledge – knowledge of the organisation, field or profession
- Commitment to the mentor role
- Teaching skills
- Management skills and perspective
- Standing and credibility within the organisation, field or profession.

Mentee qualities:

Desirable mentee qualities include:

- A willingness to learn and develop
- Openness to feedback and advice
- Motivation to try out new ideas or strategies
- Respect for the time and commitment shown by the mentor
- Capacity to reflect and build self-awareness.

Choosing a Mentor

In selecting a person to approach it is important for the mentee to first clarify the purpose behind seeking mentoring. If the focus is on self or career development, interpersonal skills and the capacity to challenge coach and provide wise counsel is important. If the requirement is more related to skills transfer then the conversations can be more directive and interpersonal skills are less important than the mentor's capacity to teach and share skill and knowledge. When sponsorship is of more importance then organisational status, reputation and networks is a pre-requisite.

Mentor Selection: Potential Mentor Qualities

The following is a check-list of potential mentor qualities. Which of these are most important will be determined by a mentee's purpose in seeking mentoring. This is a long list and expecting one person to fulfill all of these is unrealistic. In such circumstances mentors may link the mentee into other supports, or more than one mentor may be useful.

Management perspective

- Management experience at a higher level than the mentee
- Experience across a variety of organisations or roles.

Organisational know-how

- An understanding of the organisational structure, its policies and procedures, and how it operates
- Political savvy and understanding of organisational culture
- Solid organisational networks and relationships
- Experience in handling cross-departmental tasks, projects and relationships.

Credibility

- Viewed as competent and a high performer
- A reputation in the organisation for professionalism – in image and behavior
- Ethical and seen to have high integrity
- Good relationships with key people within the organisation and external stakeholders.

Accessibility

- Makes time for the relationship and keeps commitments.

Communication

- Expresses views and thoughts articulately

- Adapts communication to suit the audience
- Asks insightful questions
- Checks frequently for understanding
- Promotes two-way communication
- Listens attentively and visibly.

Empowering orientation

- Creates energy and excitement
- Allows people opportunity and latitude
- Motivates and supports others to be the best they can be
- Publicises and takes satisfaction from the achievements of others.

Developmental orientation

- Provides opportunities for people to perform above their current levels and expectations
- Delegates responsibilities that are progressively more challenging and job enriching
- Invests personal time in developing others
- Gives constructive feedback.

Inventiveness

- A creative problem solver when faced with obstacles
- Thinks laterally and generates a broad range of options and alternatives
- Active supporter of good ideas.

How to Ask a Person to Mentor

People often hesitate to ask high performers to be mentors as they think they may be too busy or that they have nothing to offer in return. As indicated above, mentoring offers substantial benefits to mentors so by not asking you are not giving somebody the opportunity to make their own decision. Also, if they do decline they may still have suggestions for other mentors.

You may have more success if you articulate boundaries around your request. This means being as specific as you can about what you need and, if possible, the anticipated time commitment.

For example:

'I've identified that work-life balance and time management are areas of improvement for me. I've noticed that you seem to be very good at this. Would you be willing to give me some advice in that area over a couple of coffee meetings?'

'I'm new to the university and need to get a better understanding of the culture. Would you be willing to help me over the next few weeks?'

'I am employed in a XYZ role and am looking for some mentoring on future career direction. You are someone I look up to in terms of what you have achieved. Would you be willing to mentor me in exploring options for the next stage of my career?'

Developing a Mentoring Agreement

In formal mentoring relationships a written mentoring agreement is often beneficial. This can be completed together at the first meeting. It allows for boundaries to be discussed and goals to be set and recorded. While not aiming to stifle the possible flexibility or informality of the arrangement, it is important that both parties understand the parameters of the relationship.

A template of a mentoring agreement is attached at [Appendix A](#). Areas to cover include:

Realistic expectations: It is important that both people understand the purpose of the relationship. That is, the mentee clearly states their clarified purpose for wanting a mentor and the kinds of functions they would like; and the mentor clearly states the strengths they could bring to the table. In this way both can check in that there is a match between needs and strengths and that the pairing is appropriate.

Accessibility: 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.

Time frame: What is the time frame of the agreement. Is this set? If not, over what timeframe do the parties expect to achieve their goals – 6 months, 12 months?

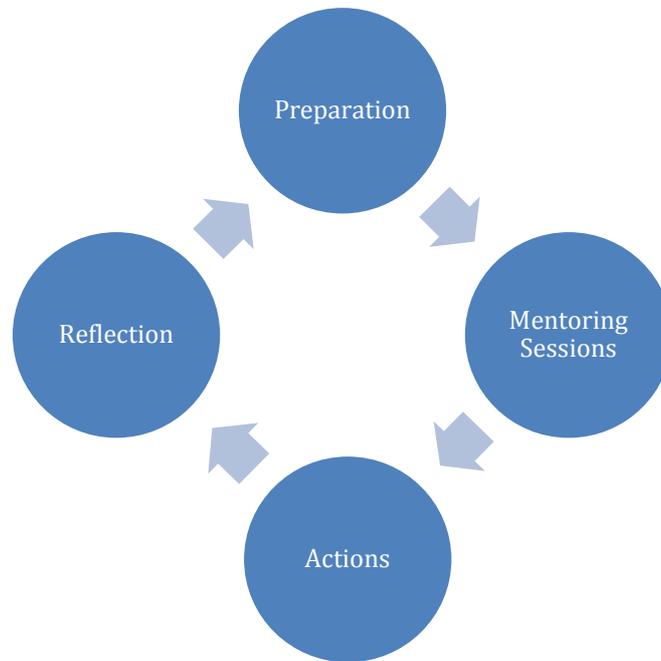
Confidentiality: This is a critical clause that requires discussion to ensure both parties understand what confidentiality means within the context of the relationship. In situations where both parties work in the same organisation it can be easy to unintentionally break confidences.

No blame 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 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 template 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.

Mentoring Process

Once a mentor is established the preparation and actual sessions can go ahead. Considering the right space and time is a critical element.



Preparing for the First Meeting

Mentee preparation

Prior to the initial session the mentee should consider, but not complete, elements of the mentoring agreement in [Appendix A](#). This should be completed together with the mentor.

Self-reflection is a critical part of any personal and professional development exercise. A useful activity in this regard is completion of a SWOT analysis as outlined in [Appendix B](#).

Mentor preparation

Mentors should consider, but not complete, elements of the mentoring agreement in [Appendix A](#). As outlined above, this should be completed together with the mentee. Another useful preparation resource is the Mentor Meeting Preparation Sheet: First Meeting in [Appendix C](#).

Conducting the First Session

The first session is an opportunity to discuss and be clear on the goals of the mentoring relationship, as well as the expectations of each party. Ideally it comprises:

- An opportunity for parties to establish rapport and learn about each other's roles and background
- Discussion regarding the purpose and goals of the mentoring
- Completion of the mentoring agreement as outlined above
- Agreement on next steps.

Setting Mentee Goals

While it is essential to clarify goals at the beginning of the relationship, it is also important to be flexible as sometimes they may change over time. For example, as a mentee reflects on an area for development their needs may shift in accordance with improved self-understanding. A general goal of improving influence may, for example, develop into a focus on negotiating or speaking out at meetings. What a mentee

initially thought was a need to write better business cases may actually be reflective of a deeper lack of political savvy. It is common for goals to shift and become refined as self-awareness increases.

The fast pace of change within universities indicates that the issues faced by a mentee may shift over the life of a mentoring relationship. In consequence, it is useful to be flexible in approach to goal setting and to debrief and discuss strategy on emerging challenges as part of the mentoring process.

A well-established coaching model built around goal setting is the GROW model. Established by Sir John Whitmore, this approach is commonly used by managers when coaching staff. An outline of the process and questions that support this process is provided in [Appendix D](#).

Tips for Mentors on Structuring Meetings

There is no set pro-forma for a session and too much pre-determined structure by the mentor may detract from what the mentee's needs are at that time.

Some tips for consideration are:

- Ask the mentee what they would like to focus on at the beginning of the session
- Follow-up and review and 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.

Reflection between sessions

Reflection by both parties after each session, and before the subsequent one, assists in adding structure and focus to sessions.

Mentee reflection and preparation

At the end of each session with their mentor a mentee should reflect on the actions arising from the session and find time to follow through with these. Keeping a reflection diary as outlined in [Appendix E](#) may prove useful.

Prior to each subsequent session it is useful to prepare by considering the questions below:

- What have I accomplished since the last session?
What did I not do that I intended to do and why?
- What current challenges or issues can I take to the session?
- What opportunities are available to me right now that my mentor can assist with?
- What is the best use of the upcoming meeting with my mentor?

Each mentoring relationship is unique and will evolve differently. As it is the mentee's role to lead the sessions as much as possible it is useful to know what to talk about. Here are some ideas.

How are you?

How are you feeling about yourself – good and bad?
How are you travelling with your job at the moment?
How do you feel about those you work with?

What has happened since the last session?

What have you done that you said you'd do?
What break-throughs 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 not progressing on 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?

Mentor reflection and preparation

As mentoring is a learning process for the mentor as well as the mentee, some reflection on the process and outcomes of each session are useful. A checklist of aspects of mentoring to reflect upon is listed below under mentor self-assessment. It is useful to ask the mentee directly for feedback on how useful each session was and how best to continue to add value. Specific questions are better than general ones. For example a question such as *"Did the focus on steps in XYZ today work well for you?"* will more likely provide an honest response than a general comment such as *"Did the session add value today?"*

When preparing for the next session, a review of the mentee's agreed actions is important.

Mentor Self-assessment: Commonly Asked Questions

How do I show I am interested?

Showing interest provides a platform for developing a productive relationship.

- Listen more than you talk
- Ask open questions
- Watch for body language and cues - acknowledge and respond
- Talk about the mentee not yourself – focus on their interests and problems
- Pace the conversation – don't rush it
- Be flexible – let the mentee lead the conversation.

How do I determine the mentee needs?

A mentee should assess and come to the session with their development goals reasonably well defined. As part of the mentoring process these may be clarified and redefined. If a mentee is unprepared discussions on the following topics may assist. What are their future career aspirations and what do they need to do to achieve these? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Conducting a personal SWOT analysis (see [Appendix B](#)) may be useful. What are specific challenges or issues they are facing at the moment that they need advice/support on?

How do I check that I am doing all right?

How can you ensure things are going well?

- Ask them!
- Observe if they are engaged, responsive and spontaneous
- Use your intuition – watch for signs of discomfort or hesitation
- Use goals and signposts, or other objective measures of progress
- Define stages of achievement so that you both know you are making progress.

How do I give good feedback?

Feedback is a vital part of the learning process.

- Focus on the behavior not the person
- Focus on observation rather than inference, intuition or guesses
- Focus on description rather than judgment
- Be specific rather than general
- Balance the negative with the positive.

How do I motivate?

A mentee's motivation will vary over the period of the relationship. When this is low a mentor can:

- Provide perspective and a 'reality check'
- Identify strengths to build on
- Determine the blockages and problem-solve around these
- Maintain optimism and confidence in their capacity
- Look for, acknowledge and leverage from progress.

How do I deal with a failing or unproductive relationship?

Mentoring relationships do not always turn out as planned and it is important not to just press on regardless.

- Reflect and diagnosis before making a decision. Discuss the issues openly with the mentee
- Check out what the mentee thinks is happening and how they feel
- Reflect on your own misgivings
- Try to identify and describe issues in a detailed rather than a generalised way
- Make a plan for improvement or recovery and then monitor it
- Use the 'no blame exit' clause of the agreement if the relationship needs to end.

How do I ensure I am an effective quality mentor?

- Assess what your mentee means by high quality mentor
- Prepare for sessions and set goals and objectives
- Work by consensus and agreement
- Keep up to date and get development for yourself where necessary
- Monitor progress – both your own and that of your mentee.
- Recognise achievements and celebrate success
- Take stock every once in a while.

Linking Into Other Support

One crucial role a mentor often plays is linking a mentee into other support and advice that may be of value in achieving their goals. Sometimes specific needs arise during discussion that are outside of either the skill of the mentor or the boundaries of the relationship.

Typical examples of arranging additional support include linking the mentee with:

- **Employee Assistance Scheme** – For personal issues that fall outside of the mentoring relationship or for specific assistance in managing interpersonal issues at work
- **Other managers/colleagues** – For additional advice and guidance that complements that given by the mentor
- A professional coach
- **Networks such as professional associations** - For building relationships with key personnel
- **Reading material, training programs or other resources** – For more in-depth knowledge or skill relating to specific topics.

Ending the Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring relationships should have a finite life. As part of your initial agreement you may have agreed on time commitments. Despite this agreement the duration will still need to be managed and monitored as to its appropriateness as the timeframe negotiated may need to change.

Timeframes may need review if:

- External factors such as mentor availability or role change mean it is no longer logistically viable
- The specific achievements or outcomes are reached earlier than expected
- The mentoring relationship does not work out (see common pitfalls below).

For this reason it is important to:

- Monitor progress and the lifecycle of the relationship
- Define signposts or outcomes that will signify end points
- Identify when there is a need to re-define the relationship– for instance continuing to see each other as friends, or on some other basis
- Determine when a different type of support may be needed outside of mentoring.

Conducting the Final Session

As part of the final session it is appropriate to review progress and recognise and celebrate the learning that has occurred. Sometimes parties agree to continue the relationship, but usually in a different form. As learning is a life-long process it is also useful to discuss the next steps and processes in the mentee's development. Many mentees go on to act as mentors themselves.

Potential Pitfalls – Commonly Asked Questions

As indicated above, mentoring relationships do not always work out as planned. Common pitfalls are explored here.

What if my mentor has a very different style or personality from me?

In pairing mentors and mentees different leadership styles or personality are common. Unless the style or personality is inhibiting learning, for example too critical or directive,

personal differences can be a useful learning process. Across the career life span a mentee will need to work with a variety of people. Having insight into different thinking processes and perspectives is valuable. Mentoring from a similar person may not stretch or challenge a person in the same way.

What if there is an inability to establish rapport?

For a mentoring relationship to work there needs to be an atmosphere of trust and respect. 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 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.

Clearly there is no necessity to specify the personal aspects of the mentor or mentee that you find difficult. 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 and it may be better for you to find somebody better able to assist you."* Addressing the issue is difficult but not addressing it may be more difficult as expectations of, and commitment to, the mentoring relationship advances.

The 'no blame exit' clause is designed for situations like this.

What if there are differing expectations?

Mentees may have idealised and unrealistic expectations of what their mentor can assist with, or the mentor may be expecting too much of a mentee who may also be managing a very demanding role. This situation can be largely resolved by frank and open discussions upfront around goals and expectations. Regular progress reviews against goals is also helpful. Achieving this demands honest, yet constructive, feedback from both parties.

What if time pressures get in the way?

Lack of time, especially in busy work environments, is a common reason for a break down in the mentoring process. It may be that either the mentor or mentee, or both, do not invest the time and effort required. Completing the mentoring agreement at the beginning is important in establishing expectations but it helps to be realistic about time commitments. It is not uncommon for people to over-commit at the beginning without realising that it may be difficult to keep to the agreement. Both parties should acknowledge the possibility of re-negotiation around availability.

What if my mentor does not have the skill to mentor?

Many mentors within UniSA undergo a training workshop on the pre-requisite skills and approach for good mentoring. This will not guarantee proficiency however. Some mentors may be overly controlling or negative, or may be rescuers. They may have

used these styles during their career and not be aware of them. An inflexible mentoring style may be a problem. For example, a mentor who prefers a directive style of communication may result in the mentee becoming frustrated with, or dependent on, the mentor. On the other hand, a mentor who prefers to be non-directive may not challenge the mentee, resulting in limited development. Some mentees manage this situation as they may have had prior experience working with similar people. Others may struggle.

A balance is needed between mentees being prepared to adapt their learning styles and step out of their comfort zone and ensuring an effective mentoring relationship is established.

Open communication and seeking feedback is important for both parties in this situation. Ultimately, the mentoring relationship should be one in which both parties learn and grow.

What if there is a clash of values?

This area is best dealt with by invoking the no blame exit clause as personal values are extremely personal and challenging them is fraught. An example of a value clash may be when a mentor advises of a course of action that is unethical or lacks integrity. Similarly, a mentor may find their mentee's values are questionable and in contrast to their own. Sometimes the mentor may be able to address this by challenging the behavior – for example talking about transparent communication, as opposed to addressing the action as dishonest. Mostly in situations such as this the mentoring relationship becomes untenable, as respect is very difficult to restore.

APPENDIX A

Sample Mentoring Agreement

Purpose of the mentoring:

Duration of mentoring relationship:

Frequency and length of meetings:

Type of contact between scheduled meetings (e.g. email, phone):

Confidentiality agreement:

We agree that all discussion and communication between us remains confidential and that no information will be shared without mutual consent.

Are there any off-limit topics in this relationship?

No-fault conclusion to the relationship:

We agree to a no-fault conclusion of this relationship if, for any reason, it seems appropriate.

Mentor's name: -----

Mentor's signature: -----

Date: -----

Mentee's name: -----

Mentee's signature: -----

Date: -----

APPENDIX B

Mentee SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a tool commonly used in business planning. It is also useful to apply to individuals and teams and can be used as a preparatory activity for mentees before commencing mentoring. The process involves identifying your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. For the purpose of this exercise it may be best to consider these within a timeframe of the next 12 months.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Your Strengths</i> What strengths do you have that can help you?</p> | <p><i>Your Weaknesses</i> What areas do you need to develop in?</p> |
| <p><i>Opportunities</i> What opportunities will you have in the next 12 months?</p> | <p><i>Threats</i> What could threaten achieving your goals?</p> |

How can you leverage from your identified strengths?

What can you do to address your identified weaknesses and how can your mentor assist in this?

How can you capitalise on opportunities in the next 12 months?

How can you address the threats you have identified?

APPENDIX C

Mentor Preparation Sheet: First Meeting

Clarifying purpose of meeting

- How much time do we have?
- What do you want to achieve from this meeting?
- What do you want from me during the meeting?

Clarifying purposes of mentee's learning development plan

- How did you feel about your development plan?
- Where is your energy for change coming from?
- What are you trying to achieve?
- If all goes well, what will you be doing differently from what you do now?
- How much confidence do you have in your ability to achieve your plans?
- What will you feel like when you achieve your goals?
- How will you know when you achieve your goals?
- Have you identified all opportunities?
- Is there anything else that you can do?
- Which course of action do you favour?
- What obstacles do you think you'll encounter on the way?

Support required by mentor

- What support do you want from me in this plan?
- What support do you want from others in order to make this plan work?
- Who else should be involved?

Review

- How useful has this meeting been for you?
- Where do we go from here?

APPENDIX D

The GROW Coaching Model

The **GROW model** is a popular model as it is simple-to-use and oriented around goals. It was first popularised by Sir John Whitmore in his 1992 text "*Coaching for Performance*".

This model uses a sequencing of questioning as follows:

Goal setting - Precisely what do you want? Developing long-term broad goals that can be translated into short-term performance goals.

Reality checking - Exactly what is happening now? Exploring the current situation.

Options generation - What more could you do? Identifying all the alternative strategies and courses of action.

What next? Specifically what will you do? Planning what is to be done - the when, by whom, and the will to do it.

How to use the GROW Model

In each area it is good to start with a broad question and then focus in on the detail.

Step 1: The Goal

- Positively introduce the performance areas to be discussed
- Use open-ended questions to clarify situation – that is 'what', 'when', 'where', 'how come'. Minimise the use of 'why' and 'how' as this demands analysis and opinion and can result in defensiveness
- Agree on a broad goal. Even though it seems odd to develop a goal before exploring the reality, doing this first will open the possibilities and not limit a response to past performance and negative perceptions. This can be fine-tuned in the Reality Stage. Make sure the goal is stated positively e.g. 'I will become more organised versus I will stop procrastinating'.
- Establish a desire for a solution.

Step 2: The Reality

- Agree what the current situation is
- Use the questions below to involve the mentee and gain commitment to change.
- Note that often in this stage a thorough examination of the reality throws up an answer before you enter Stages 3 and 4.

Step 3: The Options

- Involve the mentee in generating ideas – avoid making suggestions where possible. Go for quantity not quality to open up possibilities and encourage creative options not previously considered
- Explore all of the options presented
- Agree on the best option forward

Step 4: What Next?

- Prepare a clear written record of the agreed action steps outlining the who, what, where, when and how
- Set a specific date to review progress
- Confirm how you will give your support
- Reinforce the importance of the action and your confidence in the mentor achieving it.

GROW Questions

The GROW sequence of questions assumes that it is desirable to visit all stages which is usually the case when tackling an issue for the first time. When coaching is ongoing and involves review of progress the session may begin and end with any stage.

Goal

- What would you like to work on?
- In the long term what is your goal in relation to this issue? What is the time frame?
- What intermediate steps can you identify, with their time frames?
- Which would give the best result?
- Which of these solutions appeals to you most & feels best to you?
- Which would give you the most satisfaction?
- Which option or options do you choose?
- To what extent does this meet all your objectives?
- What are your criteria and measurements success?
- When precisely, are you going to start and finish each action step?
- What could arise to hinder you in taking these steps or meeting your goal?
- What personal resistance do you have, if any, taking these steps?
- What will you do to eliminate these external and internal factors?
- Who needs to know what your plans are?
- What support do you need and from whom?
- What will you do to obtain that support and when?
- What could I do to support you?
- What commitment on a one-to-ten scale do you have to taking these agreed actions?
- What prevents this from being a ten?
- What could you do or alter to raise your commitment closer to ten?
- Is there anything else you want to talk about now or are we finished?

Reality

- What is the present situation in more detail?
- What and how great is your concern about it?
- Who is affected by this issue other than you?
- How much control do you personally have over the outcome?
- Who else has some control over it and how much?
- What action steps have you taken on it so far?
- What stopped you from doing more?
- What obstacles will need to be overcome on the way?
- What, if any, internal obstacles or personal resistances do you have to taking action?
- What resources do you already have? (Skill, time, enthusiasm, money, support, etc?)
- What other resources will you need? Where will you get them from?
- What is really the issue here, the nub of the issue, or the bottom line?

Options

- What are all the different ways in which you could approach this issue?
- Make a list of all the alternatives, large or small, complete and partial solutions.
- What else could you do?
- What would you do if you had more time, a larger budget or if you were the boss?
- What would you do if you could start again with a clean sheet, with a new team?
- Would you like to add a suggestion from me?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options? Go through them in turn.

Source: Coaching For Performance by Sir John Whitmore

APPENDIX E

Mentee Reflection Diary

Date of Meeting:

Session overview: What did we discuss?

Post session reflections: What came out of the session for me?

Agreed next steps: What do I need to do or think more about?

Next meeting: When is this and what will we cover?

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This guide was developed by
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