

Guidance on setting up a mentoring scheme

Introduction

This guidance has been developed to support anyone in the University who is considering introducing mentoring as a means of supporting peoples' careers and personal development. Our aim is to introduce the decisions that you will need to make and to provide options and examples to help you make them. The step-by-step guidance here is not prescriptive: you will not be told to 'do it this way'. Where we make recommendations, they are based on experience at Oxford and elsewhere and are included only for consideration.

We have included a section on each of these topics:

- Considering whether you need a mentoring scheme or something else instead
- Establishing the aims for your scheme
- Deciding who will be eligible to participate as mentees and mentors
- Considering what type of mentoring is appropriate
- Thinking about resources
- Matching mentors with mentees
- Dealing with the practicalities of a scheme
- Monitoring and evaluating a mentoring scheme

At the end of the guide you will find a number of detailed annexes providing more information on some of these topics:

- Alternatives to mentoring
- Examples of mentoring scheme aims
- Types of mentoring – case studies
- Example of a short handout for mentors
- Mentoring techniques
- Mentoring in practice (for mentors and mentees)

We want to keep the guidance under review and up to date. Please give me feedback and especially examples of what has worked well in mentoring for you.

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1. Is what we need a mentoring scheme or something else?

This section will help you to clarify whether or not what you need is mentoring as a means of supporting peoples' careers and personal development and, therefore, covered by this guide. You will find descriptions of mentoring and related ideas, followed by a brief summary of the respective roles of mentors and mentees within a developmental scheme.

Defining mentoring

There is substantial literature on mentoring and many definitions. Because this guide focuses on mentoring as a means of supporting peoples' development (meaning professional, career and personal development), the definition we will work with is: 'a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the mentee's career and personal growth'. This can include peer mentoring, where participants are at the same level of seniority but have differing experience.

If what you have in mind fits this definition, then the guidance that follows on setting up mentoring is likely to be helpful. If you are not sure or want to know more then take a look at the alternatives we've described in [Annexe 1](#).

The mentor's role

'A mentoring session is a safe and privileged time in which my mentee has permission to concentrate on and talk about herself.'

Dr Frances Lannon, Principal, Lady Margaret Hall and Oxford Ad Feminam mentor

This list summarises what can normally be expected of a mentor whose role is to support a mentee's personal and career development:

- Listening actively with interest, holding the focus on the mentee's agenda
- Managing the framework of the mentoring sessions, while encouraging the mentee to take responsibility for the content
- Taking appropriate approaches such as robustly challenging a mentee who is not sufficiently focussed or sympathising in the event of bad experiences while encouraging the mentee to take ownership and respond appropriately
- Helping the mentee to see the bigger and longer term picture if he or she is concerned only about the present and the short term future
- Helping a mentee to reframe how he or she views something, or to consider a different perspective, for example a tutor who may need to consider a student's perspective; an author of a paper who may need help with understanding an editor's viewpoint
- Taking an interest in the mentee's progress.

The mentee's role

Within a developmental mentoring relationship, a mentee is expected to be:

- In control of the agenda, taking responsibility for his or her development, rather than expecting 'quick fixes' from a mentor

- Committed, for example to attending planned sessions, taking the actions planned with the mentor,
- Prepared to be challenged when the mentor feels that this, rather than perhaps sympathy, will be of benefit,
- Professional in the relationship with the mentor, for example being punctual, respecting agreed ground rules, and talking openly and honestly with the mentor.

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2. What are we aiming to achieve?

A mentoring scheme with a clearly stated purpose is more likely to attract participants than a scheme which is perceived as too general or vague. In the longer term you will need clear, specific aims to find out through monitoring and evaluation if your scheme is achieving what you set out to do. This section provides some key questions to ask yourself, followed by examples of mentoring scheme aims to help you to formulate your own.

‘The Ad Feminam scheme offers Oxford women the opportunity to explore with a senior member of the university what they would like to do next in their academic or professional lives and how to set about that.’

Dr Sally Mapstone, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Ad Feminam sponsor.

Key questions

- Why are we considering mentoring – what do we hope to achieve? For example, if your scheme is for researchers, what outcomes are expected beyond a general aim of career support?
- Who will the mentees be and how will they benefit – is the focus, for example, their current role, career development or a future goal – will the focus be entirely on professional life or on the relationship between professional and personal life, for example balancing the differing demands of work and family or, in the case of academics, the demands of teaching, research and administrative roles?
- What is the demand for mentoring likely to be – will the scheme need to be marketed to potential mentees – if so what will attract them to it?
- What can mentors and mentees expect of the scheme and of each other?
- How will the organisation (department, division etc.) benefit?
- How will mentoring fit with existing objectives?

Answering some or all these questions will help you to formulate your aims and objectives and to design a scheme that will meet your aims. It may help to look at the examples of mentoring scheme aims that we’ve included as [Annexe 2](#).

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3. Who will we invite to mentor and who will be eligible for mentoring?

This section prompts you to consider who will be eligible for mentoring and who your mentors will be. First we suggest some principles for mentoring that may influence your choices.

Principles for mentoring

Mentoring experience at Oxford and elsewhere suggests that the following principles are worth considering:

- A developmental mentor should not normally work closely with or supervise his or her mentee, or have other vested interests in the mentee's development. This is because a mentee needs to feel free to discuss problems with a mentor without feeling that there may be an adverse impact if he or she reveals vulnerabilities
- Where a scheme is targeted for positive action reasons, it's worth knowing that cross-group mentoring is thought to be as effective as within-group mentoring. For example, men mentoring women and vice-versa; white staff mentoring BME staff. In some cases it may be possible to give mentees options, in others this will be a matter of practicality, for example if there are not enough senior women for all women who might want one to have a female mentor
- Mentors and mentees should be encouraged to take their approach beyond normal, polite conversation, for example accepting that tough forthrightness can sometimes be more helpful than tea and sympathy.

Mentee eligibility

Drawing up some criteria for recruiting mentees in line with your aims can help you to focus your scheme:

- Are you focussing on certain staff grades or staff groups, such as support staff, academics, researchers?
- Are you targeting particular groups, for example women or men or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff? (UK law allows this kind of 'positive action' when a group is under-represented, for example BME people in senior staff positions.)
- If your scheme is for researchers, will you include graduate students?
- Do mentees need to have a minimum amount of experience, for example academics who have completed their first five years in post, graduate students in the second or third year of a DPhil.

Mentor eligibility

Criteria for appointing mentors will enable you to attract potential mentees as well as mentors by giving them a good idea of who will be mentoring them (not at this stage a named mentor but the sort of mentor they will have):

- Will your mentors be internal to your department or division or recruited from other departments or divisions?
- Could you use mentors external to the University? The University's 'Link Up!' career mentoring scheme, for example, invites alumni to mentor current students interested in the mentor's field of work.
- Do you need a cohort of mentors senior in grade to your potential mentees, or is greater experience, perhaps at the same level, just as useful?

- Is common ground important? For example, researcher mentees are likely to need a mentor with research experience; on the other hand academic discipline has not proved to be important in mentoring academic staff for leadership.

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4. What type of mentoring do we want?

Most developmental mentoring is based on one senior or experienced mentor working with a single less senior or less experienced mentee. This section lists some other types of mentoring that you may want to think about alongside or in place of this model and gives some examples:

Types of mentoring

- **Peer mentoring**, where participants are at the same level of seniority but have differing experience.
- **Co-mentoring**, where two participants take it in turns to mentor each other.
- **Mentoring circles**, where a small group of mentees at a similar career level or with a shared objective meet together with a more senior mentee.
- **E-mentoring/telephone mentoring**, in e-mentoring mentors and mentees work by email or via a web-based forum. E-mentoring loses some advantages of a face-to-face meeting, such as being able to 'read' body language and hear tone of voice; the main advantage is that it can be done anywhere at any time so that a mentor and mentee do not need to be geographically close, or working at the same time. This may enable more reflective responses. Telephone mentoring loses the advantage of mentor and mentee being able to engage at different times but retains tone of voice and useful behavioural hints such as periods of silence or oral 'tics'. Video telephoning may also be useful. Both e-mentoring and telephone mentoring can be used in place of or in conjunction with less frequent face to face meetings.
- **Activity mentoring**, for example mentoring alongside a shared interest such as running or art.
- **Panels of mentors** who could be approached for consultation on individual issues rather than via a longer-term relationship.
- **Bifocal mentoring**, where the scheme aims to impact on organisational culture as well as supporting the mentee's development: the mentor and mentee work together to identify and promote cultural change needed for the mentee to achieve his or her goals.
- **Alumni mentoring**, where the University's alumni mentor current students. For information on the Careers Service 'Link Up!' initiative, contact tracey.wells@careers.ox.ac.uk

[Annexe 3](#) provides some case studies using different types of mentoring.

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5. What resources will we need?

Once you have made these initial decisions. You will have some idea of the resources that you need and about how you might need to adjust your plans to fit the available resources. Having considered the following questions, you will be better placed to develop the details of the scheme covered in subsequent stages.

Key questions

- Have you got a sponsor for your scheme? Mentoring schemes are likely to have greater success where a senior figure actively sponsors and promotes the scheme.
- Who else will you need on board to successfully recruit mentors and mentees? A 'tap on the shoulder' can be an effective back-up to more formal approaches to potential mentees and mentors. Your shoulder-tappers may need careful briefing, in particular about avoiding bias in who they approach and about explaining to those they contact that they are not being approached because of any perceived remedial needs.
- Who will co-ordinate the scheme? The extent to which this has to be fitted alongside other duties and the priority that can be given to the role will have a significant impact on what you can offer.
- Do you have or need a budget? Much within a mentoring scheme can be delivered without significant cost: mentors give their time freely and mentors and mentees find their own meeting spaces. The Oxford Learning institute may be able to help with mentor training and in other ways. Time pressures on mentors and mentees can mean that it is useful, for example, to be able to provide briefings and training over lunch, involving some cost.
- Will you hold a launch event or produce publicity materials? This may depend on the level of knowledge about development amongst your target mentees and how receptive they are to mentoring as an asset in their development.

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6. How will we match mentees with mentors?

One of the most important practical matters to be decided is how mentees will be matched with mentors. An outline of some options for matching is followed by some suggestions for possible pitfalls to avoid.

Options for matching

When considering these options, think about:

- Whether you want mentors and mentees to be able to join the scheme on a rolling basis, or whether you will close access to one cohort, only recruiting more participants when that defined period of mentoring ends.
- Whether or not it is advantageous within the aims of your scheme for mentors and mentees to work in the same discipline or profession. For example, if fostering first-class research output is your aim, you may want mentors and mentees to have much in common; if your aims are to foster leadership development, this will be less important and differences in background may be productive.

Some options for matching mentors with mentees are:

Mentees find a mentor via a website or other published source

Mentors provide brief biographical details, together with an outline of the areas in which they would like to mentor e.g. research scientists, women combining family and career; mentees ready to take a next career step. Mentors could also be asked to include information about their approach to mentoring and any preferences they have for meeting arrangements.

This self-help approach can be useful when resources are limited or mentors and mentees are geographically distant. For example, the Institute of Physics has an online mentor matching tool to help mentees search for a mentor. Experience suggests that take-up by mentees is likely to be lower than when pairs are brought together by a scheme co-ordinator and prospective mentees might need continued encouragement to engage with your scheme.

Mentees find a mentor via a structured 'meet a mentor' event

In this model mentors' details are published in advance to mentees and as many mentors as possible are brought together; each is given a space in which to meet mentees and the mentees are invited to 'visit' perhaps three mentors whose details have interested them. This needs a facilitator who will signal e.g. by ringing a bell, when it is time for mentees to move on to meet another mentor. Mentees make contact with a chosen mentor after the meeting; they should be advised to have alternative choices in case their chosen mentor is already taken up.

A 'meet a mentor' event can be held in conjunction with the web-based approach. The University's Springboard Women's Development Programme mentoring scheme operates primarily by mentees finding mentors via the scheme website. When take-up dropped, holding a 'meet the mentor' event successfully increased it.

Co-ordinated matching

Mentors and mentees provide biographical and preference information; mentees should be asked for information about what they hope to achieve. A small team compares the information received and allocates mentees to mentors.

There is a large body of literature on mentor matching and there seems to be no firm evidence that matching by similarity based on information provided results in experiences that are more successful than when pairs are matched with less attention to detail. This is probably because compatible personality plays a large part in a successful mentoring relationship and can't be assessed on paper.

This model seems to work best where the matching team knows mentors and mentees well enough to be able to assess when personalities will be compatible and when difference rather than similarity might be the key to a successful partnership. This is the case with the Ad Feminam scheme, where mentees and mentors are told that:

- They will be matched through a 'light touch' process carried out by a small project team and taking into account, for example, the ambitions of a mentee relative to the career trajectory and current role of a mentor.
- The benefits and disadvantages of working in similar and differing fields will be considered when mentors and mentees are matched.

Possible pitfalls in matching

An important principle of a developmental mentoring scheme is that mentors and mentees should not be closely associated in their working lives. For example, someone with a vested interest in a mentee's work is not likely to be able to mentor him or her objectively and confidentiality may be a concern.

Similarly, someone who may have influence on a mentee's career should not be asked to mentor that person for fear that future decisions may not be impartial. For example, Heads of Division do not mentor an Ad Feminam mentee from within their own division.

There may be other unsuspected pitfalls and it is good practice to check first with a mentor that he or she is willing to mentor the proposed mentee. In a co-ordinated process, this will be done by a third party who will follow-up positive responses by putting the mentee in touch with the mentor, checking that he or she is content with the match. Negative responses from either party require a new mentor to be found.

Where models other than the co-ordinated one are used, mentees will make contact directly with mentors and mentors should be briefed to turn down requests which are unsuitable for any reason.

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7. What other practical matters should we think about?

Effective mentoring partnerships are often unique to the people involved in them. We therefore recommend that you give mentoring pairs or circles flexibility to establish working arrangements that suit them. However, most will appreciate some basic guidance and this section is divided into the kind of guidance that you might like to provide for mentors and mentees, followed by some matters that you might prefer to advise them to sort out for themselves and a reference to a more detailed advice note for mentors and mentees starting out together. We finish with further ideas for briefing and supporting mentors and mentees.

Departmental guidance for mentors

In addition to any briefing or support you provide for mentors, you might consider providing short written guides which they can continue to use for reference. [Annexe 4](#) comprises a short handout given to mentors in the scheme associated with Oxford's Diploma in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

A more detailed guide would typically cover:

- A statement of the aims and expectations of the scheme
- Information about how mentees and mentors are recruited and any eligibility criteria
- Information about how mentees and mentors are matched
- The period over which mentoring is expected to take place and any defined end date
- If applicable, arrangements for piloting and evaluating the scheme
- Any ground rules, including confidentiality, whether or not meetings may take place in working time and any expectations of time commitment, signalling the number or frequency of mentoring meetings
- Record keeping, both for the mentors' and mentees' personal use and for evaluation (respecting confidentiality)
- A contact who can provide information and support to mentoring partners. Partners often want to know that there is someone who can help if difficulties arise, such as when a mentoring partnership seems not to be working well.
- How and when to bring a mentoring relationship to an end, for example if it is not working or the mentee has achieved her or his goal.

In addition to these basics, you might include some ideas for techniques that mentors could use in working with their mentees. We have included some ideas for mentoring techniques as [Annexe 5](#).

Matters for determination by the mentor and mentee

It may be helpful to leave some or all of the following logistical issues to be determined by your mentoring partners:

Times, dates and places for meeting: experience suggests that, following an initial exploratory meeting, it is helpful if mentees and mentors agree a series of meeting dates. This helps to avoid other work preventing the arrangement of a meeting at shorter notice.

Duration of mentoring: even if your scheme establishes a framework, some mentees may want support for a more limited or extended period. A mentee's needs may change over time so duration should be kept under review.

Ground rules: which will include confidentiality and establish anything else that is important to one or both partners, such as time-keeping, completing agreed tasks and keeping in touch between meetings.

Expectations: checking that expectations of mentoring are shared, for example the mentor's role, primarily as a facilitator rather than an adviser.

Record keeping: it's important ethically to draw a distinction between records which are confidential to the mentor and mentee and those on which you might need a report from mentoring partners when evaluating your scheme:

- Confidential records could include, for example, notes taken by a mentor enabling him or her to reframe something that a mentee has said or an analysis of an issue undertaken by a mentee at the prompting of the mentor. Mentors and mentees are likely to be best placed to agree methods of keeping these private records.
- Records needed for evaluation are likely to include, for example, a note of techniques and approaches tried and the extent to which they were helpful and any particular points within the mentoring when the mentor or the mentee felt that the mentee had made progress. These do not need to, and should not, include specific details of what has been said, although some general context may be useful. Expectations of the records you will need reported should be made clear from the outset.

Reviews: mentors and mentees ideally evaluate their partnership at various points - at least at the mid-point and end of a period of mentoring. Questions that a mentor and mentee might answer together include:

- Are the practical arrangements working well?
- Is the mentee able to identify progress as a result of the mentoring?
- Is the mentor's style and approach working well for the mentee?
- Does the mentee's approach, for example to preparing for meetings and completing agreed tasks, suit the mentor?
- Has the partnership come to a natural end, or is an end in sight?

Advice for mentors and mentees

This guidance is written for those in departments and divisions who want to establish mentoring. It does not provide detailed advice for mentoring partners. Your mentors and mentees might find the note included as [Annexe 6](#) and written by Alison Trinder (MPLS) on mentoring in practice helpful when starting out.

Briefing and support for mentors

Depending on their experience, some mentors will be content with a short handout or written guide that they can refer to when needed and won't want any other support. Most are likely to appreciate an initial briefing meeting where they can discuss approaches with other mentors and clarify the practical details with the scheme co-ordinator. Some will appreciate training in some of the techniques that mentors can use.

Support once the mentoring partnership is underway may also be appreciated. A brief email every term asking mentors if there is anything they would like help with may be all that's needed. Some mentors might welcome group meetings in which they can share experience; if resourcing meetings is an issue, they could be encouraged to organise their own network.

Briefing and support for mentees

Mentees are likely to want to know what to expect from a mentor and many will welcome the opportunity to discuss this with other new mentees. A written guide for mentees mirroring the mentor guide suggested above may be helpful, as may an initial briefing meeting for mentees.

Some mentees will appreciate opportunities to network with each other as the scheme progresses. You could organise this around events linked to your scheme aims, perhaps involving guest speakers or facilitated sessions, for example around breaking down larger goals into smaller steps.

The Oxford Learning Institute may be able to help with mentor training and with facilitated sessions for mentees.

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8. How will we monitor and evaluate our scheme?

Monitoring and evaluation are both useful tools for checking that your scheme is meeting its aims and fulfilling its potential. Monitoring and evaluation can operate at two levels: in the short term you will want to check that the scheme is operating effectively and iron out any practical issues. In the long term you will want to make a judgement as to whether the scheme is meeting its goals, both in terms of the impact for individuals and in achieving any organisational change intended. We start with a short note on monitoring and go on to look at some options for evaluating a mentoring scheme. The extent to which you do either is likely to depend on your aims and resources.

Monitoring

Monitoring means taking stock of who is participating in your scheme so that you can decide if you need to encourage people who are eligible and stand to benefit but who are not yet participating. For example, in a divisional scheme, departments which are not participating; in a departmental scheme, a staff group or one gender which is under-represented compared with their numbers in the eligible workforce. To make your data meaningful, you will need figures on the breakdown of the staff who are eligible to participate. The Equality and Diversity Unit can help with getting this data. Email caroline.kennedy@admin.ox.ac.uk

Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation is to check that your scheme is meeting its aims – and to check that those aims are meeting the needs of mentees. Evaluating a mentoring scheme enables you to make any changes indicated by the experience of participants and to be able to report benefits for mentees (and often mentors) and gains to your department or division. We begin with some options for evaluation and finish by discussing pilot schemes.

Options for evaluation

These can be used in combination or as a single, stand-alone approach.

Online or emailed questionnaires to mentors and mentees

This is probably the simplest way of evaluating a scheme. In addition to collecting basic information such as whether someone is responding as a mentor or mentee, staff-group, job grade and length of experience which may help you to differentiate between varying needs, you could ask for views on all or some of the following:

- The purpose of the scheme
- The matching process
- Practical matters like finding time to meet
- Arrangements for co-ordinating the scheme, including any support sessions organised
- How well the mentoring partnership has worked and what happened during the course of mentoring that was most and least helpful.

Individual questionnaires may not elicit a good response rate and may therefore be more useful with a large cohort from whom a more limited response is likely to be more informative. It may help to tell respondents what the information will be used for.

A questionnaire used in the evaluation of the Ad Feminam scheme told respondents that:

'The survey aims to help the organisers of the pilot scheme understand what you hoped to get out of taking part in the scheme and to what extent you were able to achieve your expectations. This will help in the design of future schemes to support women into leadership roles at Oxford.'

A covering note emphasising confidentiality and stressing that you want to know about poor as well as good experiences may also help to increase the response rate.

Individual interviews

Selecting a representative sample of mentees and mentors for individual interviews can enable you to use a questionnaire in a more discursive style, probing responses to come to a better understanding of an interviewee's experience.

Focus groups

Bringing together small groups of mentees and/or mentors to discuss a specific topic can encourage participants to develop their feedback in collaboration with others. They might, for example, be jogged into remembering something important by a comment made by someone else at the meeting.

You'll need to have a clear topic for discussion by a focus group otherwise you'll risk tangential or too generalised discussion. Ask yourself what you want to know and keep it short, simple and in the form of an open question (one to which the answer can't be 'yes' or 'no'). For example:

- What should we change for next time?
- These were our aims – to what extent did we meet them?

External evaluation

Using an evaluator from outside your department can increase participants' trust that responses will be confidential. It can save time, although you will need to work with the evaluator to ensure their understanding of the scheme's aims and to check that questions and methods are appropriate. It may be possible to find a university colleague or student who would evaluate the scheme for you at no or low cost.

If your goals include organisational change, staff surveys checking the extent to which culture or practice has changed that go beyond scheme participants may also be useful.

Piloting a mentoring scheme

Reasons for running a pilot then pausing to evaluate, assess and adjust the scheme before launching it in full include:

- Gathering evidence to support continuing investment in mentoring
- Enabling you to manage resources by starting with a small cohort and growing it in light of responses
- Trying a variety of approaches e.g. different types of mentoring to assess what works best for your mentees
- Leaving open the possibility of changing something fundamental like the aims of the scheme in light of experience or of forthcoming developments such as the introduction of a PDR process, an audit or an Athena SWAN application.

Whether or not you pilot first is likely to depend on how clear you are about your aims and how simple or complex they are. The more complex your aims, the more likely it is that a pilot will help you to design a scheme that will meet them. The simpler your aims, the less likely it is that a pilot will be helpful in formulating them.

Sources of further support and advice

Within the University

The Oxford Learning Institute: email clare.wakeham@learning.ox.ac.uk

University of Oxford Careers Service (for alumni mentoring); email tracey.wells@careers.ox.ac.uk

Publications

Many are available. Those listed here are practical guides available on short-term loan from the Oxford Learning Institute: liisa.obrien@learning.ox.ac.uk

Jane Allen (2004), *The Art of Mentoring*, The Centre for Mentoring, ISBN: 0 9538 184 2 X (Out of print)

Christopher Conway (1998) *Strategies for mentoring*, Wiley, ISBN 0 471 98438 8

Belle Rose Ragins & Kathy E Kram (Eds), *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work*, Sage, ISBN 978 1 4129 1669 1

Margo Murray with Marna A Owen (1991), *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring – how to facilitate an effective mentoring program*, Jossey-Bass, ISBN 1 55542 333 7

Websites

There are many. These might be of practical assistance

<http://www.e-mentoring.net/>

<http://www.mindtools.com/index.html>

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Annexe 1 - Alternatives to mentoring

Buddying: is sometimes used interchangeably with mentoring. It usually means pairing up a new staff member for a short period with someone more experienced but at roughly the same level in the organisation. The experienced buddy helps the less experienced colleague to find her or his feet in a new environment.

Coaching: sometimes used interchangeably with mentoring and closely related, coaching is task-oriented and most often used to support an individual through the process of achieving an identified specific personal or professional result. Mentoring is usually more broadly developmental and can be used, for example, to help someone identify an as yet unknown next step. Coaching techniques can be useful in mentoring and we cover them in section 7.

Informal mentoring: describes a process where a mentor and mentee find each other without being brought together by a formal scheme. They may not refer to each other in those terms, except perhaps in hindsight, when the benefits of the relationship become apparent.

Networking: for example an advice network involving people willing to share skills, knowledge and expertise with others.

Sponsorship: sometimes called championing, happens when someone with seniority and status in an organisation recommends or nominates another staff member, usually more junior, for progress into a role, position or responsibility. There is evidence that male mentees are more likely than women to receive and benefit from sponsorship and this would therefore needs careful attention in designing and monitoring a scheme intended or likely to include sponsorship.

Supervision: mentoring has sometimes been used remedially, for example as part of managing poor performance. Developmental schemes are never remedial but, because some potential mentees might think they have been invited to join because 'there is something wrong' it is worth clearly publicising that the scheme is not remedial and being transparent about how and why mentees are approached.

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Annexe 2 - Examples of mentoring scheme aims

Oxford University Mentoring Diversity (for Black and Minority Ethnic Staff)

To provide support for BME staff at the University of Oxford in realising their potential and achieving their own career goals in the light of the under-representation of BME staff in senior University roles.

The Academy of Medical Sciences mentoring and outreach scheme

The mentoring and outreach scheme offers independent support and guidance to clinical scientists as they develop their careers.

University of Bolton Aspire mentoring

Career mentoring at the University of Bolton aims to match business professionals with undergraduate students in the hope of raising career aspirations and helping students to improve their employability. The aim is for students to acquire personal insights into graduate careers and professional life.

University of Oxford Ad Feminam (mentoring women for leadership)

Ad Feminam mentoring is intended to encourage women to explore their leadership potential within academic life, or within an administrative career, for example as leaders of departments and divisions or in university governance.

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Annexe 3 - Types of mentoring – case studies

- The Oxford University Mentoring Diversity scheme (for Black and Minority Ethnic Staff) has mentoring circles: each mentor works with three or four mentees.
- The University's Ad Feminam programme, mentoring women for senior leadership, modified its aims following the evaluation of a pilot scheme so that it now takes a bifocal approach, including an institutional purpose in its aims:

'As part of the University's gender equality strategy, Ad Feminam aims to support moves towards:

- *a change in the University's culture towards greater diversity among leaders*
- *a shift in leadership style towards one that promotes equality more actively*
- *the University having more women in senior roles.'*
- Some Ad Feminam mentors walk with their mentees rather than meet in an office environment.
- Nottinghamshire County Council has trained a cohort of care managers in mentoring and coaching their peers.
- The Student Enterprise Office at the University of Bath runs an e-mentoring scheme that matches people from local and national businesses with Bath students.
- When Oxford's Department of Chemistry hosted an alumni event they found that 30 per cent of delegates would be interested in mentoring current undergraduate and postgraduate students. The scheme will be organised through the Careers Service 'Link Up!' mentoring programme.

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Annexe 4 - Example of a short handout for mentors¹

The following are some discussion prompts you may find useful in mentor/mentee meeting in connection with the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching.

1. Main achievements in teaching
 - a) What are some specific teaching moments that you are particularly proud of?
 - b) What made it successful?
 - c) Can you give a specific example of an “ah-ha!” moment related to learning to teach? What was the realisation?

2. Challenges in teaching
 - a) What are the some aspects of teaching (facilitating learning) that you find particularly challenging?
 - b) Is there a particular incident (critical incident) that exemplifies this challenge?
 - c) What strategies did you try and what was the result of those “experiments”?
 - d) What does your learning through the PGDip suggest about this issue?

3. Subject specific teaching and learning
 - a) What is particularly challenging about teaching this subject?
 - b) What particular concepts or skills do students routinely have difficulty with? What makes it difficult? How can we help them learn this?
 - c) Are there particular “stages” of development students go through in learning this subject matter? Where do we expect them to be at the end of their first term? First year? Third year? How do we help them get to that point?
 - d) Is there a “canon” in your field – a particular text, demonstration, experiment, example or study that all students learn? Why do students need to be familiar with this? What does it contribute educationally? What do students struggle with in this canon? Are there other texts/demonstrations/experiments/examples that might achieve the same thing educationally? Are there other ways to teaching this concept, idea, skill or attitude?
 - e) What did you find difficult, exciting, inspiring when you were learning this subject? What does this suggest about how to help your own students learn this subject?

4. Key learning from the PG Diploma or other professional development activities
 - a) What are the key points you took away from the last seminar?
 - b) What are you learning from the reading?
 - c) From your colleagues in your small group work?
 - d) From your assignment this term?
 - e) How is this learning affecting your practice?
 - f) What are you doing or thinking about doing differently in your teaching?
 - g) How do these lessons specifically translate into teaching in this discipline/department/division/college?
 - h) Are there any ideas that seem to challenge conventional practice in our discipline? What are those?
 - i) How might these lessons be shared with our colleagues?

¹ University of Oxford PGDipLATHE Possible Discussion Prompts for Mentoring Conversations

5. Specific proposals for taking teaching work forward in the coming year through the PGDip?

- a) What would you like to achieve through the PGDipLATHE? What would you like to get out of it?
- b) How can I help with this?
- c) How might other individuals in your department/division/college contribute to these goals?
- d) What will you be addressing in your portfolio?

6. Feedback on your process of working together

In the introductory meeting: Seek input from mentee on what they would like to gain from your interactions, what are their hopes and expectations.

Frequency of contact? Where? How formal or informal?

At subsequent meetings, seek specific feedback:

- a) If I could change one thing in the way I work with you to what would it be? (or two or three?) Is there anything that I've done in this session that you'd rather I'd done differently? Is there something I've done that has been particularly useful and I should do more of?"
- b) What do you particularly like about the way we relate to each other professionally?
- c) How are the expectations evolving as the course progresses and your relationship progresses.

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Annexe 5 - Some mentoring techniques

Active listening and reframing: listening actively is more than simply hearing; it calls for attentiveness and a clear demonstration of that attentiveness to the speaker. This is conveyed by non-verbal signals such as nods, smiles and eye contact and by the listener responding in ways which pick up and reflect back what the speaker has said and, therefore, check understanding before the listener contributes substantively to the discussion. Responses which clarify, summarise or probe what has been said are examples of this technique. Active listening can help mentors wishing to encourage a mentee to reflect on a point of view or event, perhaps to encourage seeing what has happened from someone else's perspective. By feeding back what the mentee has said in a way that reframes it, the mentor may be able to prompt the mentee to reflect on his or her initial views.

Open questioning: closed questions can usually be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Open questions that mean the mentee has to answer more fully and thoughtfully. For example 'has your career generally been successful to date?' contrasted with 'tell me about your career to date, highlighting some successes'.

Mentoring diaries: Encouraging the mentee to use a notebook, or web-based equivalent, for recording meetings, and for noting action points, reflections and goals, can help mentees to recap discussions and objectives and can become the foundation for subsequent meetings. The mentor may keep a parallel diary. The diary could be organised into sections such as agenda items, issues discussed, and action points for the next meeting. A separate section could be headed 'reflections' for the mentee or mentor to record their own thoughts. This technique can be particularly useful where face-to-face meetings are infrequent.

Mind mapping: While diaries will appeal to those of us who like our note taking to be ordered and linear, mind maps, sometimes called radiant thinking, may be more useful for those who prefer a less formally structured diagrammatic approach. Starting with the issue or topic that needs exploring written and circled in the centre of a page, draw out the issues associated with the central theme and place them in the map as branches radiating from the central theme. Each of these associated issues can be explored and developed in the same way. The resulting mind map can be used to evaluate which ideas are most important and worth pursuing first and which are less pertinent to the situation at hand. This might be a useful technique when a mentee is having difficulty seeing her or his way forward.

Force field analysis: This can be a useful technique for considering the arguments for and against a course of action. A plan or proposal is recorded in the central of three columns. Favourable factors are listed in one adjacent column; unfavourable factors are listed in the final column. By carrying out the analysis you can plan to strengthen the factors supporting a course of action, and to reduce the impact of opposing factors. Use of line, colour and even drawings or doodles on the force field analysis can be helpful in uncovering hitherto unknown hopes and fears and unappreciated strengths.

Personal quality profile: This can help when a mentee appears to be suffering from low self-esteem. Asking the mentee to list his or her personal qualities can boost confidence. A follow up exercise might be to encourage the mentee to ask two friends to describe how they see him or her. If their opinions do not match the mentee's you might encourage them to work out why this is.

Appreciative inquiry: Similarly, when a mentee is 'stuck' or perhaps despondent you might ask them to recall a situation in which they felt successful or proud of an achievement. Then help the mentee to identify the factors which contributed to that achievement and feeling of well-being. Finally explore how some of those factors might be brought into play in the current situation.

Career scenarios: This is a longer term strategy which could form the basis for a series of meetings. The mentee maps out in writing or diagrammatically up to three different career visions, taking into account his or her aims, abilities, constraints and knowledge of opportunities that might be available. Encourage the mentee initially to add realistic timescales and to be prepared to move between differing visions rather than to stick rigidly to one so that failing at certain hurdles does not have such a big impact. In time one clear career path may emerge from this process. Identifying small steps towards bigger goals is likely to be important.

Coaching: coaching tends to focus on a specific outcome that the individual wishes to achieve or move towards. Coaching approaches are predominantly facilitating in style, in that the coach is mainly asking open questions and challenging the mentee to learn from his or her own resources and to take responsibility. This may be a useful approach in situations where the mentor believes that the mentee has the resources needed to make progress and is not fully deploying them.

Walking and talking: a change of scene and activity like taking a walk together can bring new energy into a mentoring discussion.

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Annexe 6 - Mentoring in practice: advice for mentors and mentees

These guidelines aim to outline the basic ideas and principles of mentoring /coaching for those who are embarking on being a mentor or mentee perhaps for the first time.

What is mentoring?

You may find it useful to be mentored (or coached) at different stages of your professional life – perhaps when new to the University; in transition between posts; when wanting to progress or change direction; or for some other reason. But what is mentoring? The term is sometimes used alongside ‘coaching’, because there is no one definition of either, and the boundaries between them are often blurred. One useful description is: ‘the practice of supporting an individual through the process of achieving a specific personal or professional result.’ This might happen at any point along a scale that has championing or sponsoring someone’s professional progress at one end; providing advice and support arising from the mentor’s seniority and / or greater experience somewhere in the middle; and a more facilitative process at the other end where the mentor or coach listens, questions and challenges the individual to encourage them to find answers and determine actions for themselves.

In the context of the University’s administrative functions, the way mentoring works will depend on the mentee’s individual objectives – although it is possible that all the elements mentioned above will play a part at some stage. Nevertheless, because what will happen will be based on the mentee’s individual objectives, a crucial first step in the process is for both parties to set out and agree upon expectations, objectives, and logistical aspects. This ‘contracting’ stage is essential to the success of the mentoring process.

Contracting

1. Logistics: You should aim to reach agreement on:

- *How often and for how long to meet*
- About once a month for about an hour is generally considered to be the normal arrangement, although this can be adjusted according to what is appropriate for the people and objectives involved. Consideration should be given to the time restrictions of both parties, particularly the mentor.
- *How many meetings / how long should the process last?*
- Again the usual cycle is about 6 meetings over 6 months, but this may vary depending on what suits the mentoring pair. Certainly there should be clarity at the beginning about how long the process will continue. You may also want to consider whether to set dates and times for all the meetings at the beginning of the process, or to set each one as you go along.
- *Where to meet*
- As well as considering the practicalities of a suitable place to meet, think about what kind of perspectives the environment might bring to the mentoring process. Somewhere neutral might be preferable to the mentor’s or the mentee’s office. Above all wherever you meet it should provide privacy and be a place where the mentee will feel confident and secure enough to discuss concerns openly.
- You may also want to consider whether ‘meeting’ by phone or virtually through something like Skype might be appropriate for you.
- *Communication between meetings*

- How much communication do you expect between meetings? How will you communicate? – By phone, email, face to face? Discuss and agree each party's preferences. What will happen if one party is unable to make a scheduled meeting?
- *Keeping records*
- Who will be responsible for keeping a note of what is discussed and actions to be taken? In what format?

2. Content

It is worth thinking about these aspects in preparation for the initial meeting so as to be clear about expectations.

Mentee

- What are your objectives for the mentoring? If these are not entirely clear don't worry, but discuss why they may not be clear with your mentor.
- What do you hope to get from the process? – sponsorship, advice or direction, sharing of your mentor's knowledge, experience and expertise, skills development, personal development, specific goals – something else?
- What do you hope or expect to get from your mentor in relation to your objectives?
- How will you know / measure whether objectives have been achieved?
- Is there anything you do not wish to discuss as part of the mentoring?

Mentor

- Are you clear about what the objectives are?
- What and how much are you able / willing to provide in respect of the mentee's objectives and expectations?
- How much 'work' are you happy to do for the mentee between meetings?
- What other boundaries do you have?

Both

- An understanding of confidentiality is essential to the process being productive. What is your individual understanding of what confidentiality means, and do your ideas align with each other? How will you manage it if they don't?
- How will you manage things if either of you wishes to end the mentoring relationship before the agreed time?

The Mentoring Process

Very broadly, the mentor is responsible for holding the process and the mentee for working on the content. However this is a flexible definition and the extent to which the dividing line is blurred depends on how the pair have agreed to work together. What is important is that you work to establish a relationship that is based on mutual respect.

What should the mentor do?

- Hold the process: maintain an awareness of the time; although the conversation will invariably explore many related areas, you should ensure that ultimately the focus stays on the issue in hand, and retains a constructive tone; hold any boundaries that have been agreed
- Listen actively: see separate notes
- Adopt an observational stance rather than an interpretive one
- Summarise and reflect back in your own words what you think you have heard (and seen)
- Ask questions appropriately: see separate note

- Challenge: you might challenge perceived inconsistencies or assumptions in what you are hearing from the mentee; or you might challenge them to take action to stretch themselves. Whatever the reason, it needs to be done sensitively and appropriately so as to open up possibilities rather than to close them down
- Encourage the mentee to explore a wide range of options and possibilities
- Provide advice / share expertise and knowledge appropriately and within what has been agreed at the contracting stage
- Encourage the setting of action points that are specific, realistic and time bound
- Review progress

If this is the first time that you have been a mentor, it might be helpful to talk about what you might expect with someone who has more experience.

What should the mentee do?

- Own and take responsibility for the content – don't expect the mentor to solve your problems or provide quick fixes. Remain aware that the purpose of mentoring is for you to work on your professional development
- Be open to developing your self-awareness and to making changes
- Be open to what the mentor has to say and to their advice; this does not mean you have to agree with it. It does mean you should receive it, reflect upon it and decide later whether you agree and whether to act on it
- Reflect between sessions on what has been discussed
- Take the action agreed

A selection of models and tools that might be useful in the mentoring process accompanies this document.

Finally....

However thorough your contracting has been, it is possible that issues will arise that have not been covered by the process – or that take you beyond its boundaries. It is important that you remain open in these circumstances and consider whether it would be appropriate to review and revise the agreement together, or to bring it to an end.

Whether this happens, or when the process comes to its natural end, do ensure that it and the relationship are closed appropriately. This can be done by reviewing and celebrating the progress and achievements made, and considering how the mentee is going to continue to work on their development.

Alison Trinder (MPLS Division), 2012

[Appendix 1](#) Tools and models for coaching and mentoring

[Appendix 2](#) *Listening and questioning for mentors*

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Appendix 1 - Tools and Models for Coaching and Mentoring

These are suggestions for things you may find useful in the course of the mentoring.

1. GROW (Adapted from John Whitmore, Coaching for Performance, 1992)

GOAL: What do you want to achieve?

REALITY: What is the current situation? Where are you now?

Options: What are the options available to you? (be creative and explorative, but also realistic and practical)

Will: What will you do now? How much will do you have to do it?

2. CLEAR (From Peter Hawkins and Nick Smith, Coaching, Mentoring and Organizational Consultancy, 2006)

Contract: establish the aims for the session

Listen: listen and understand what the mentee wants to achieve, and their situation

Explore: the situation, the options

Action: define and agree what the mentee is going to do

Review: review both the current session, and revisit at the beginning of the following session.

3. Drawing and Mind mapping

Using drawing to explore a situation or goal can sometimes open up new possibilities by engaging creativity. Another creative technique is to mind-map an issue, goal or situation. A mind map is a pictorial representation of an idea. The central concept, situation or idea is placed in the centre of a piece of paper and associated ideas are shown as radiating out from it. See *The Mind Map Book*, Tony & Barry Buzan or

<http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/make-mind-map.htm>

4. Journals (Adapted from Anne Brock bank and Ian McGill, Facilitating Reflective Learning through Mentoring and Coaching, 2006)

Keeping a mentoring journal is a way to capture and reflect on what has been discussed during sessions. You might simply record what was said; include your thoughts, feelings and any insights about the discussion. Or if you want to be more creative, some techniques are:

- Five minute sprint: take five minutes to answer these three questions: *Who am I/ Why am I here? What do I want?*
- List of 100: take 20 minutes to make a list under one of these headings: *'What I want'* *'How I feel'*; *'Why not?'*; *'Things to do'*; *'People to see.'*
- Perspectives: take 20 minutes to see thing from an altered point of view, e.g.: *a year from today; roads not taken – what if?*
- Dialogues: *write two sides of a conversation with anything or anyone.*

5. Walking and Talking

Changing the venue for the mentoring, or walking while you are talking can energise a session and bring fresh perspective.

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Appendix 2 - Listening and questioning for mentors

Active listening

Listening well is a key skill and one that needs practice. On occasion we may not listen well because our attention is on something other than what the other person is saying: perhaps comparing what is being said to our own experience; rehearsing what we are going to say when the speaker stops; solving the speaker's problem for them; or thinking about something else entirely such as what we are going to have for dinner. To listen well:

- Practise turning yourself off completely and concentrating on the other person and what they are saying. When you notice yourself not listening well, bring your attention back to the speaker, and gradually you will find that it becomes easier to concentrate on what is being said
- Practise listening for the unspoken messages underneath the words. Often these become easy to 'hear' when you turn your awareness to them
- Be aware of body language – both your own and the other person's
- Indicate you are listening with 'Mms' and 'Ahs'
- Keep your mind open and suspend judgement. Concentrate on the content of what is being said
- Develop an awareness of how you respond. Do your responses seek to explore, clarify, understand and reflect back what you think you heard?
- Reflect on a time when someone listened to you with their whole attention and demonstrated that they understood you and your issue. What behaviour and skills did they use to do this and how could you emulate them?

Asking questions

There are two main types of question – open and closed.

Open questions encourage the opening up, expanding and exploration of a topic and tend to start with words or phrases such as What, How, Where, Describe, Tell me about....', for example

- Tell me about your experience of.....
- How do you feel about....?
- What were your reasons for.....?

Try to avoid asking *Closed* questions 'Why?' as it can sound accusatory.

Control the limits of the person's reply and can be used to focus, summarise, move to action and round off a discussion. Examples might be:

- Have you completed that action?
- What are your next steps?
- When are you going to do that?

Both types of question are useful for different purposes and it is important to think about what results your different questions will have and which will best serve the purpose of the mentoring and any given time.

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