

DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING: DEVELOPING THE FACULTY SCHOLAR MODEL PROJECT

MENTORING GUIDELINES FOR MENTEES

APA citation for this resource: Parrish, D. & Lefoe, G. (2008). *Distributive Leadership Project: Mentoring guidelines for mentees*. Retrieved <Insert Date>, from <http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/DistributiveLeadership/>.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is primarily a relationship between two or more people. It is concerned with the growth and development of the mentee (herein referred to as the individual), in regard to their career and personal maturity. Mentoring is not an instructional exercise rather it is the private informal dialogue between the individual and the mentor that focuses on supporting the development of the individual. The mentoring relationship is non-judgmental and there are no formal reporting requirements associated. Mentoring is a valued staff development method. In a survey of over 350 companies involved in leadership development, those initiatives reported as most successful were ones that included mentoring programs (Giber, Carter, Goldsmith, 1999).

What is the role of the mentee?

Mentoring relationships are power free and should be based on trust, acknowledgment of mutual benefit, confidentiality, and sound, responsible and respectful communication. Individuals need to be open to new ideas, opinions and perspectives, and accepting of constructive and honest feedback and advice. The mentoring relationship is an opportunity for the individual to:

- receive support and advice for their development,
- discuss past actions and plan future actions in light of insights and lessons gained from the experience of both the mentor and the individual,
- access an informed second opinion,
- review personal work performance through the lens of a 'critical friend', and
- identify their development needs.

The role of the individual may vary depending on the context and purpose of the mentoring program. In the context of the Distributive Leadership Project, the role of the individual will be to:

- initiate meetings with the mentor, managing meeting dates and times and negotiating the agenda for discussion;
- listen, clarify, reflect on and, when called for, challenge the mentor's actions, thoughts and beliefs;
- take responsibility for identifying and achieving development goals;
- develop an understanding and level of competence in identifying and implementing solutions;
- appreciate, and respect different perspectives, views and opinions; and
- honestly share expertise and experience.

How can mentoring be done well?

The success of the mentoring relationship in the context of the Distributive Leadership Project, relies on:

- a considered and effective mechanism for the selection of an appropriate mentor based on the development needs and personal choice of the individual; and the mentor having an understanding of the institutional environment within which the individual operates;
- the voluntary participation of both the mentor and the individual;
- clearly negotiated roles, expectations and responsibilities for the mentor, the individual and the relationship; and
- a fault-free arrangement that enables the organisation of a new mentor in the case of the original mentor being a mismatch.

What does the mentee need to do?

The following information is provided as a checklist for the role and responsibilities of individuals in establishing and facilitating an effective mentoring relationship.

1. Establish the purpose (why you are participating) and desired outcomes (what you want to achieve) for the mentoring relationship.

2. Once you are clear about the purpose and outcomes of the mentoring relationship identify an appropriate mentor who will: help you meet your purpose and outcomes; has an understanding of your institutional environment; is not in your faculty or a person you report to in any way; and is someone you trust and respect. (Note: in some cases the mentor might be appointed.)
3. Confirm your mentor ensuring they understand the expectations and requirements of them as a mentor.
4. Schedule an initial meeting with your mentor. At this meeting:
 - a. share your purpose and outcomes for the mentoring relationship;
 - b. negotiate protocols and practices for the mentoring relationship (e.g. the pre-meeting preparation that is required by the mentee, possible discussion starters or triggers, a meeting agenda format etc.); and
 - c. negotiate a schedule of regular meetings (e.g. each month for the duration of the distributive leadership project, Feb-Dec) and meeting times, venue etc.
5. Ensure that you keep all your mentoring meetings
6. Prepare an informal agenda for each of your mentoring meetings to ensure you address all that you want to address in the meeting (hint: compile this agenda between meetings so that issues arising between meetings are discussed and managed in your briefings)
7. Accept that not all relationships are as productive or successful as might have been expected. In the event that the mentoring relationship is not working, do something to rectify the situation (e.g. address the problems with your mentor, organise a new mentoring relationship).

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