

FLINDERS IGNITE MENTORING

Mentor Guide



The Value of Mentoring

Flinders Ignite Mentoring aims to provide students with the best possible transition from university to professional employment.

The program recognises that to succeed professionally students benefit from professional skills development alongside their academic studies. Through conversations with a mentor, students can gain valuable insights into the professional world and have the opportunity to explore career aspirations, self-development and enhance their professional skills.

Mentoring allows students to identify, and critically evaluate, the range of career options open to them by exploring their mentor's knowledge and experiences. Students can also start to build an understanding of their professional identity, which supports an increase in their personal confidence.

The Mentor Guide

This guide provides information to assist you in understanding the role of mentor and for developing a productive mentoring relationship. The information is offered as a guide only, and we encourage mentors and mentees to negotiate plans to suit their individual circumstances.

Longer Term Mentoring

Mentoring a student over a longer period is the most ideal form of mentoring, allowing both of you to develop a deeper connection, and to progress and monitor outcomes.

The length of the relationship is up to you, however the recommendation is 4-6 months, over which time you connect 4-6 times.

You can connect via whatever method suits you both, which can include a combination of in-person or email, phone or other online methods.

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Mentoring Phases

As with any relationship, mentoring goes through a series of phases in its lifespan, with each having distinct components.

This guide outlines the phases of a mentoring and what to expect and achieve during each phase.



1 - Preparing for the Mentor Relationship

The Prepare Phase occurs prior to connecting with your mentee and can include:

- Thinking about your mentoring goals, and why you volunteered to assist a Flinders student
- Consider your level of availability and preferred method of contact with your mentee
- Review your mentoring skills and update your knowledge if required
- Review the student's Flinders Ignite Mentoring profile after they have contacted you.

Prepare to Meet

Consider your availability for connecting with a mentee. If you are not able to meet face-to-face it can be worth connecting via video conference or Skype for the first meeting, allowing you the opportunity to see each other. Whilst it is not essential it does assist in building rapport.

Preparation and Training

This booklet as well as the [online resources](#) are designed to help you prepare for, and support you through, the mentoring process.

Optional mentoring training sessions are also offered if you would like to learn more about the process of mentoring and how it can be applied to this current experience. Contact the [Program Coordinator](#) to organise training, or seek assistance.

Mentees must attend a training session prior to connecting with their mentor for the first time. During the training they will learn about the mentoring process, their responsibilities, and how to make the most of this unique opportunity.

Mentees also start planning their mentoring goals during training so they should have a clear idea of what they would like to achieve during the mentoring process.

Discovering Your Match

You can review a student's Flinders Ignite Mentoring profile before you accept their mentoring request. This will assist you in understanding a bit more about their current level of professional experience and their area of study. You can also ask for more information before accepting a mentoring request which can assist you in deciding to accept the request.

Mentoring Goals

Mentoring is a two way experience and the mentor's mentoring goals and experiences are discussed along with the mentee's goals. Before connecting with a mentee consider what you would like to get out of the mentoring relationship, and be prepared to share this with your mentee.

Think about why you chose to become a mentor and what your expectations are.

Mentees are expected to know their mentoring goals prior to connecting with their mentor.

Some students will have a clear picture of their career ambitions and their goals are likely to relate to achieving this.

Other students may be unclear on their career options and preferences, and their goals may be more focused on self-assessment and options analysis.

2 - Forming the Mentoring Relationship

The Form Phase is when you first connect with your mentee. It is valuable to invest time in developing rapport with your mentee before moving to the next phase. This can help provide a solid foundation for the rest of the mentoring, and will help build the trust and respect so vital to effective mentoring relationships. When you connect for the first mentoring session spend time breaking the ice, getting to know each other, and clarifying your mentoring goals.

Students have been provided advice about rapport building and networking skills, however for those students lacking experience and/or confidence in this area you may find you need to lead this part of the relationship.

Building Rapport

Don't rush through the rapport building stage. You have plenty of time to start addressing the mentoring goals once you have got to know each other better.

- **Break the ice**
Get the conversation going and start to relax. You can talk about almost anything at this stage. Ask a question or share some information that will help you to get to know about each other.
- **Find the connections**
Rapport builds faster when you are able to find a common interest or connection. Ask questions to try to find common interests or life experiences; for example where you grew up, interests/hobbies, life experiences etc.
- **Build the connection**
Once you are starting to feel comfortable you can share information about why you signed up to be a mentor and what you hope to get out of the experience.

Planning Future Connections

It is valuable to start planning your future mentoring connections early.

It is anticipated over the life of the mentoring you will connect with your mentee between 4–6 times, although you can meet more or less.

Although exact dates and times may not be agreed on at this stage, it is important to discuss availability and any issues which may have an impact.

- Discuss which days and times are most suitable, and any anticipated peak work periods.
- Establish a rough connection plan and agree on arrangement for the next connection if possible.

Consider when, where and how you will meet.

- You may not be able to meet face-to-face, so discuss the best method for connecting.
- If you are meeting in person, consider the preferred meeting locations, for example in or near a workplace, the University, home or somewhere in between.

If you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting remember to let your mentee know. If you do not hear from your mentee or you have difficulty contacting your mentee, you should contact the Program Coordinator.

Confidentiality

You are not obliged to share confidential information about your business operations or personal life, however if you choose to do so your mentee is expected to respect the confidential nature of the information provided.

Please respect the confidentiality of your mentee and seek consent before sharing information about them.

Connection Success

Successful connections require effort and commitment. Take the time to occasionally check in and make sure you are both comfortable with how the relationship is going.

Successful mentoring relationships are based on a number of key principles:

- Goals and expectations are discussed and mutually agreed
- Agreements are met
- Concerns or issues are dealt with as soon as they arise
- Both participants agree to:
 - share experiences, information and ideas
 - value individual opinions and experiences
 - demonstrate respect and professional behaviour
 - respond in a timely manner
 - recognise the voluntary participation in the program
 - be flexible
 - maintain an open mind and focus on achieving a positive experience
 - realise developing a career is an ongoing activity

Participant Responsibilities

Along with the shared principles outlined above, each role also has a set of responsibilities they are accountable for.

Mentors

- Modelling and encouraging professional behaviour
- Being open and generous in sharing your experiences and learning
- Providing support so mentees can achieve self-reliance
- Listening with an open mind, challenging and encouraging the exploration of ideas
- Responding to requests for support, guidance or knowledge
- Facilitating opportunities for professional networking and making industry contacts (if applicable)

Mentees

- Committing to positive participation
- Maintaining regular contact with you and meeting obligations
- Consideration of what they would like to achieve in their meetings and working towards attaining these goals
- Responding in a timely manner to any contact from you
- Willingness to accept advice and suggestions from you
- Behaving professionally and courteously
- Making the most of the opportunity and sharing their goals and ambitions
- Advising you in advance if they are unable to continue with the program
- Completing their reflections diary

Setting Goals and Strategies

There are two levels of goals to consider in the mentoring relationship:

1. Mentoring Goals
 - These form the basis of the discussions and are about why you both want to participate in a mentoring relationship, and what you want to get out of it.
 - You can both agree on if and how these goals will be achieved.
2. Career Goals
 - These form the basis of a mentee's career action plan and can cover the period of the mentoring relationship and/or beyond.
 - You may assist in developing an action plan, however it is the mentee's decision on what is included.

See appendix 1 for more information about goals and an action plan template.

3 - Achieving in the Mentoring Relationship

Most of the connection will be spent in the Achieve Phase.

The Achieve Phase is when you can assist your mentee address their key area/s of interest or concern. It is therefore important you understand their mentoring goals before starting into this phase, and have a plan on how the goals will be addressed.

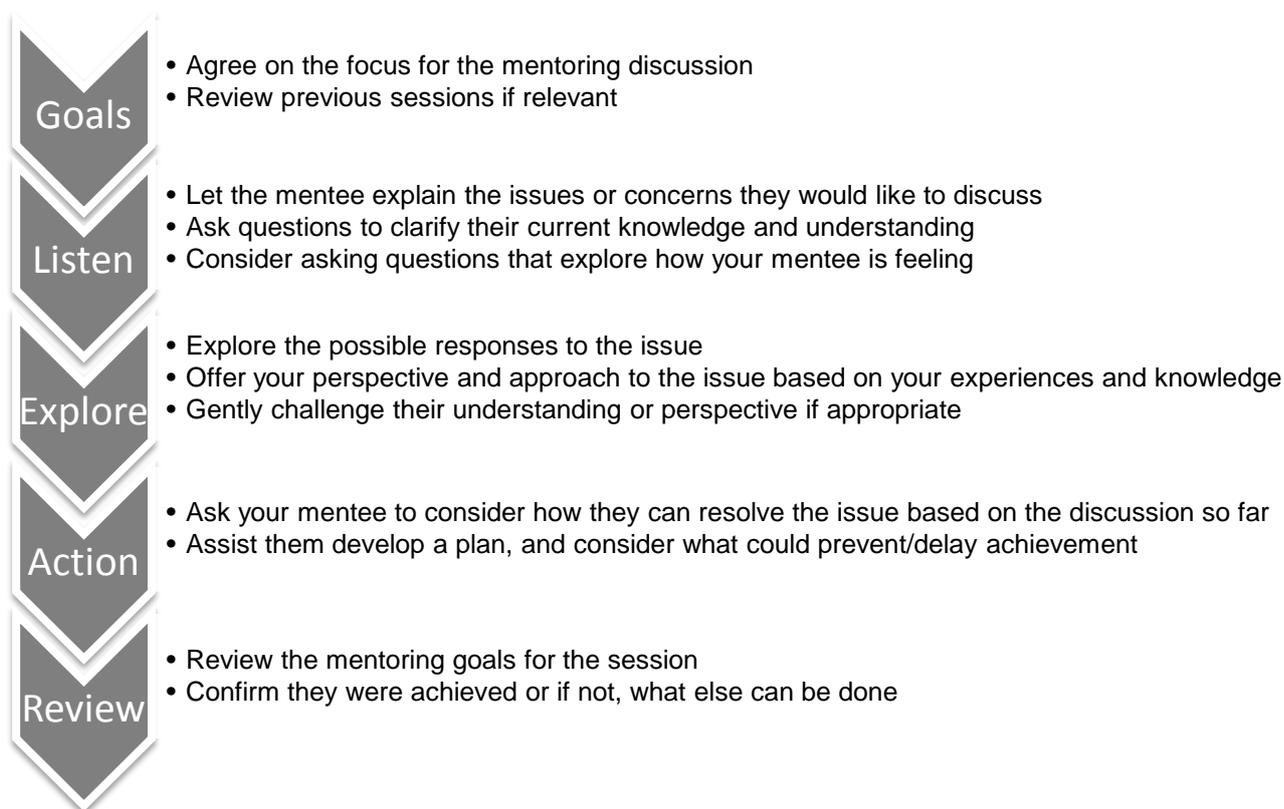
Maintain the Connection

Ongoing commitment and communication are critical in the success of the relationship. At the end of each conversation it is advisable to set the next connection date and time so lapses in contact don't occur. It is also recommended at the end of each meeting both parties identify actions they commit to achieve prior to the next connection. These actions can then be reviewed at the start of the next connection.

Also during this phase:

- Remain committed, even if there are setbacks
- Continue to review achievement of mentoring goals
- Ask questions and actively listen
- Help your mentee to explore options
- Provide constructive feedback
- Provide sufficient challenge to encourage the mentee
- Remain positive and sustain encouragement
- Encourage your mentee to make personal commitments via a career action plan

Hints for Structuring a Mentoring Conversation



Mentee Reflections Diary

Mentees are expected to complete a reflections diary after each connection in order to boost their learning and development. The diary can reflect on the information covered, what they gained from the experience and what they are going to do as a result.

4 - Concluding the Mentoring Relationship

An effective conclusion to the mentoring experience helps avoid an awkward or abrupt ending.

To conclude the mentoring take time to review the mentoring outcomes, both professional and personal, and if applicable what your mentee plans to do as a result of the mentoring.

Review the Connection

To review your achievements you could consider the following questions:

- What did we achieve?
- Were the mentoring goals achieved? If not, why not?
- Were there any unexpected achievements?
- Were there any disappointments?
- Where to from here?
 - o Set future goals
 - o You may agree to touch base at a relevant future time to review progress

Celebrate Success

To assist in the feeling of closure you may want to build some celebration into the final connection. You could do this by holding it in a different or special location, sharing some words on what it has meant to you and what you have found positive, and letting the mentee know what you see as their strengths and potential.

Appendix 1

Setting Goals, Strategies and Actions

To achieve the maximum benefit from the mentoring relationship it is important the mentee considers their career goals and identify what actions need to be taken to achieve these. Whilst the mentor can assist in guiding the goal setting process it is important the mentee has ownership of the goals.

Mentee's Mentoring Goals

Goal 1	
Goal 2	
Goal 3	
Goal 4	
Goal 5	

Writing SMART Goals

It is worth taking the time to develop sound goals that have meaning and foster commitment. Encourage your mentee to develop HARD goals when planning their future.

- Heartfelt** - You genuinely care about, and feel emotionally connected to, the outcomes
- Animated** - You can visualise what it is like to achieve the goal
- Required** - The goal matters and is necessary for success
- Difficult** - Pushing out of your comfort zone, even by a little, leads to new skills and a greater sense of achievement

Your Career Action Plan

Once your mentee has started identifying their career goals, together you can start defining the steps to get there. You can reflect on the steps you took to achieve your career goals, or progress through your career.

To assist your mentee you could ask:

- What can you do at university to help achieve your goals?
- What professional competencies do you think you will need?
- What experience do you have and how can you get more?
- How confident are you with networking?
- Do you know which companies are currently employing graduates similar to you?
- Are you willing / able to travel for employment?
- Are you a member of any industry associations?
- How much experience do you have with finding and applying for work?
- What will you do if your career plans do not work out?

The following page has a template of an action plan you may want to use with your mentor.

Action Plan Template

Goal	What action will help me achieve my goal?	When will I complete this action?	What could prevent me from achieving the action?	How will I overcome this?	What will happen if I don't achieve the action?

Appendix 2

Possible Discussion Topics

It can be difficult knowing what to discuss with your mentee. Below are some suggestions of topics and possible questions.

Your Experience

- Career pathway
- Biggest lessons learnt
- What employers really want
- Biggest challenges
- Job interview successes and failures
- Networking
- Work life balance
- What really matters
- Government versus private employment
- Pathways, choices and career progression
- Skills & personal qualities that enable this

Your Current Workplace Practices

- Expectations of new employees
- Dress standards
- Workplace etiquette
- What employers are looking for
- Networking
- Volunteer work
- Organisations and associations
- How to be most "marketable"/how to approach employers
- Techniques for job search, resumes and interviews – mock interview practice
- Advertised and unadvertised job vacancies

Possible Activities

- Discuss program goals (mutual), plan upcoming meetings, share information on each other's backgrounds
- Begin career planning activities: self-assessment; job search; skills development
- Review mentee's resume
- Support the practice of a specific skill such as interviewing
- Discuss how to research specific employers/jobs or target sector
- Invite your mentee to a networking event or professional activity
- Discuss communication expectations for a range of mediums: face to face; online and over the phone
- Suggest a set project and provide feedback

Appendix 3

General Program Information

Difficulties, Issues or Concerns

If at any time throughout the mentoring process you have any difficulties, issues of concerns it is important you discuss these with your mentee if appropriate, and/or with the program coordinator so they can be resolved quickly.

Issues may relate to:

- your ability to continue with the program due to unforeseen personal or professional issues;
- difficulties working with your mentee due to incompatibility or personality concerns;
- difficulty contacting your mentee;
- need for clarification on objectives or methodology; or
- inappropriate behaviour.

Work Experience, Internships and Employment

There is no expectation for a mentor to offer or arrange work experience, internships or employment for their mentee. It is not appropriate for the mentee to apply pressure in seeking such an arrangement from their mentor.

Insurance Cover

If your mentee attends your workplace for meetings, or for observation there should be no need for insurance. Insurance is required if you would like to arrange some form of work experience for your mentee, and can be organised by the university. Visit the [WorkReady website](#) or contact a [WorkReady Officer](#) for more information.

Work Health and Safety

If mentees will be entering a mentor's workplace it is important the mentor meets all work health and safety obligations for the site.

Distance Mentoring

For those mentoring relationships where in-person interaction is not possible the phases of mentoring remain the same, though some can seem more challenging.

In order to build rapport it is recommended at least the first meeting is held via Skype, video conferencing, or some other method where you are able to see each other.

Any meetings held via phone, chat or email should still follow the phases of mentoring and focus on achieving meaningful outcomes. There are some additional considerations you may need to agree up-front such as frequency of contact (particularly via email which may require more frequent contact than 'real-time' connections) and reasonable response time.

Be aware that with no face-to-face contact it is important to demonstrate a high level of communications skills so you don't misinterpret what is being said and to provide an example for the mentee. Seek clarification from your mentee if you are unsure, or feel uncertain about the 'tone' of the communication.

More Information

There is a large amount of information available about how to be a mentor both on the internet and on the [Flinders Ignite Mentoring website](#).

Contacts

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