

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 be professionally successful students benefit from professional skills development alongside their academic studies. Through support from 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 their professional identity and 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.

Advice via Phone or Email

Providing advice via phone or email is a short form of mentoring and is ideal for mentees wanting to address a single issue. It can be a viable form of mentoring if you don't have a lot of time to commit to the mentoring process, or if you would like to support more than one mentee at a time.

Advice via phone would normally involve a single phone call, but possibly a second follow-up call if applicable.

Advice via email may involve a series of emails addressing a single issue and may last over a period of time, however it is not designed to be a longer mentoring process and needs to be managed so it does not expand beyond the expected parameters.

The Mentoring Process

There are four key phases to any mentoring relationship, no matter what style of mentoring or how long the experience lasts. For email and phone mentoring the phases are compressed.

Below is a brief summary of the key phases. The online [FAQ Guide](#) provides more detailed information.

1. Prepare

The Prepare Phase occurs prior to connecting with your mentee for the first time. During this phase you may:

- Think about your mentoring goals, and why you volunteered to assist a Flinders student
- Review the student's Flinders Ignite Mentoring profile after they have contacted you.
- Review your mentoring skills and update your knowledge if required.

2. Form

The Form Phase is when you first connect with your mentee. Even for a short mentoring interaction via phone or email it is valuable to invest time in developing rapport with your mentee before moving onto the next phase of mentoring. This can help provide a foundation for the rest of the mentoring discussion.

If connecting via phone this could involve a short conversation at the start where you share information about yourself and talk about your goals.

If connecting via email it may involve each of you sharing an introductory email, and possibly a link to your website or online profile with more detailed information.

You don't need to spend a large amount of time on this, but it helps to feel comfortable with each other before progressing further.

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.

3. Achieve

Most of the connection will be spent in the Achieve Phase. The Achieve Phase is when you can assist your mentee in address their key area of interest or concern. It is therefore important you understand their mentoring goals before starting into this phase, and that you have the capacity to assist via phone or email.

If connecting via phone it may be worth asking them to outline all the questions they have or the areas they would like to cover, so you can manage the time and your response.

If connecting via email if you do not fully understand what the student is asking, don't feel you have to respond immediately, it may be more appropriate to seek clarity before you respond.

The mentee is responsible for driving and directing the discussion during this phase, however, you may need to take on this role for parts of the experience. Be aware your mentee may lack confidence visiting your workplace and be unsure how to behave and respond. Some assistance in building confidence in the work environment may be a critical part of the mentoring experience.

Be careful not to fall into the trap of becoming the problem-solver. Provide information and feedback based on your experience, and suggest ideas for action, rather than telling them what to do. Allow time for your mentee to ask you questions and to make their own conclusions and decisions. Ensure they understand the information you are sharing and that it's assisting to achieve their mentoring goals.

Hints for Structuring a Mentoring Conversation



- Agree on the focus for the session, including both yours and your mentees
- Let the mentee explain the issue or concern they would like to discuss
- Ask questions to clarify their current knowledge and understanding
- Consider asking questions that explore how your mentee is feeling
- Explore the possible responses to the issue
- Offer your perspective and approach to the issue based on your experiences and knowledge
- Gently challenge their understanding or perspective if appropriate
- Ask your mentee to consider how they can resolve the issue based on the discussion so far
- Assist them to develop a plan, and consider what could prevent/delay achievement
- Review the mentoring goal/s
- Confirm they were achieved or if not, discuss further if there is time

4. Conclude

An effective conclusion to the mentoring experience helps avoid an awkward or abrupt ending, even for phone or email mentoring.

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

If you are not interested in maintaining contact with the mentee following the session then it is important you make the mentee aware of this.

If you are willing or interested in continuing the relationship then discuss this with your mentee, and spend time defining what the continued relationship may look like. For example you may commit to following up some information or contacts for them; you may want to hear from them when they achieve certain milestones; or you may want to continue the discussion for a longer period.

Whatever you decide it is important you are both clear of the arrangements.

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](#).

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