

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.

Work Experience

Being able to undertake work experience, whilst gaining mentoring support, is a great way for a mentee to gain a realistic understanding of what is involved in a particular profession and what the workplace is like.

Many students have never been in a professional workplace before, and some may not have anyone within their network who can provide an understanding of what it is like. Supporting them to understand the workplace as well as work practice will help your mentee achieve a higher level of insight and learning.

Information about work experience is available on the [WorkReady website](#).

The Mentoring Process

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

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 what your mentoring goals are, and why you volunteered to assist a Flinders student
- Consider when the best time would be for the mentee to attend, what they will do whilst they are there and the amount of time you have to commit to mentoring them.
- Review your mentoring skills and update your knowledge if required.
- Review the student's Flinders Ignite Mentoring profile after they have contacted you.
- Contact the WorkReady Coordinator to discuss the work experience and ensure university insurance cover for the student.

2. Form

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 onto the next phase. This can help provide a foundation for the rest of the mentoring, and may help you decide how to structure the work experience. Ideally set aside time either before the work experience starts or at the beginning of the first day (e.g. in a café or your workplace), to break the ice, get to know a bit more about each other, and clarify the mentoring goals. You don't need to spend a large amount of time on this, just enough to feel comfortable with each other.

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. In this case most of this phase will involve the work experience. The remainder of the phase may involve mentoring discussions.

The Achieve Phase is when you can assist your mentee in address their key area/s of interest or concern. It is therefore important you understand their mentoring goals before starting into this phase, and that opportunities to address these goals are provided.

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.

For the mentoring element allow the mentee the time to ask you questions, and explore issues arising from their work experience, as well as move into other areas of discussion that may not relate directly to the work 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 goals for the mentoring, including both yours and your mentees
- Let the mentee explain the issues or concerns they would like to discuss in more detail
- Ask questions to clarify their current knowledge and understanding
- Consider asking questions that explore how your mentee is feeling about the issue
- 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 goals
- Confirm they were achieved or if not, discuss how they can be addressed

4. Conclude

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.

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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