

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.

Visit to Place of Work

Providing the opportunity for a student to visit your place of work is an ideal way for a mentee to gain an understanding of a professional workplace. The depth of the mentoring experience will depend on the time available and the interests of the student, however even just visiting a workplace can provide new insights and positive learning experiences for the mentee.

The length of the visit is up to you and your mentee to decide, but should include enough time for your mentee to experience the workplace and ask you questions. It is also a good opportunity for the student to meet other professionals and observe their various roles if appropriate.

Don't be concerned your work does not offer enough variety or interest for a mentee as many students have never been in a professional workplace, and some may not have anyone within their network who can provide an understanding of what it is like.

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 work visit mentoring the phases are somewhat 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 what your mentoring goals are, and why you volunteered to assist a Flinders student
- Consider when would be the best time for the mentee to visit, and what they will do whilst they are there.
- Review your mentoring skills and update your knowledge if required.
- Review the student's Flinders Ignite Mentoring profile after they have contacted you.

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 discussion, and may help you decide how to structure the visit. Ideally set aside time at the start of the visit (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 some of the phase will involve a 'tour' of the workplace and possibly meeting other team members. The remainder of the phase may be spent in a mentoring discussion.

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.

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 issue/s or concern/s 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 their 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/s based on the discussion so far
- Assist them to develop a plan, and consider what could prevent/delay achievement
- Review the goals for the session
- Confirm they were achieved or if not, discuss further

4. Conclude

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

To conclude the mentoring take time at the end of the visit 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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