Detailed Guidance on Mentoring for New Colleagues

Whilst the word mentoring comes from the story in Homer’s Odyssey when Odysseus left the upbringing of his son to his trusted friend Mentor. In a more modern context, mentoring is used by organisations who want to support new colleagues and/or potential high flyers.

The University of Salford doesn’t operate a formal mentoring programme, however we recommend that an opportunity for mentoring is made available to all new colleagues as part of their Induction to the University. These notes will offer some suggestions as to how that might be undertaken.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is defined by the European Mentoring Centre as “offline help given by one person to another to make significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking”. It is often seen as an alternative to coaching, where coaching looks at the job and the skills of the here and now and mentoring is more about the career path and future development.

The skills of a mentor and coach are very similar, however, a mentor usually requires knowledge and experience to be effective whereas a coach possesses generic coaching skills and doesn’t need to be an expert in a particular field.

A less formal alternative to mentoring is allocation of a “buddy” within the department to support the individual’s induction to the team. Ultimately the success of any mentoring/buddy arrangement is the quality of the working relationship between the individual and the mentor/buddy.

When should it be used?

Mentoring is commonly used to:

- Help new employees acclimatise to the working environment
- Facilitate better communications between different functions or management tiers
- Provide support to specific individuals (e.g. women, ethnic minorities, board directors)
- Promote and support changes in the culture of an organization
- Support employees through a course of professional study

General objectives for the use of mentoring are:

- Assist in the induction process
- Provide professional and personal support
- Assist in the rapid integration and professional development of new members of staff
- Motivate and encourage new members of staff
- Provide support, guidance and advice during the probationary period
- Contribute to a supportive culture within the school/unit and the University
# Benefits of Mentoring for New Colleagues

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<td>Improves self-confidence</td>
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<td>Enables faster induction of new staff</td>
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<td>Offers professional development</td>
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<td>Provides advice and information</td>
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<td>Encourages reflection on practice</td>
<td>Develops professional relationships</td>
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<td>Builds mentoring capacity</td>
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<td>Gives access to a ‘sounding board’ for concerns, issues and ideas</td>
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Roles, Responsibilities and Guidance

Dean of School/Director of Professional Service/Line Manager

1. Deans of School/Directors of Professional Service should ensure that all appropriate managers are aware of their responsibilities with regard to mentoring support for new staff although they may delegate this when necessary.

2. All new full time and part time members of staff should be allocated a mentor to support them for the duration of their probationary period. For transactional roles, it may be more appropriate to identify an experienced colleague to act as a “buddy” (rather than a mentor) to provide practical support and guidance for new members of staff in their day to day operational duties.

3. Mentors should be selected for their knowledge and understanding of the vision and values of the University, their ability to support, advise and encourage and their ability to perceive the needs of a new member of staff. Although the mentor should be a more experienced member of staff, they are not usually the line manager (see also point 8). A member of staff who has recently been successfully inducted into the institution (within the last 3 years) often makes the most appropriate mentor. The matching of mentor and mentee should also be sensitive to the protected characteristics of the mentor and mentee.

4. Where possible, any issues that may arise should be dealt with by the mentor and mentee however if these cannot be resolved then the line manager should help deal with any difficulties.

5. The line manager should oversee the initial pairing of mentor and mentee, and inform the new starter who their mentor is within the first week of appointment. The mentor should be encouraged to make contact with their new colleague within the first 2 weeks of appointment. Therefore the mentor needs to be informed of the start date and contact details of their mentee as soon as possible.

6. Mentoring is not a line management role. It does not include formal supervision of the probationary member of staff, it is outside the direct reporting line, and has no formal input into either the Performance and Development Review (PDR) or the successful completion of the probationary process. That responsibility still sits with the line manager.

7. Support for effective mentoring within a School or Professional Service includes:
   - Acknowledgement of the contribution mentors make to the induction of new members of staff and a recognition of the skills and qualities required
   - Opportunity to participate in staff development, to support the mentor role and the processes which underpin it.
   - Access to this guidance for the mentor and new member of staff.
   - Examples of mentoring agreements (see Appendix 1)
   - Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the relationship as appropriate (See Appendix 2 and 3 for possible aids to this process)
The Mentor

1. The main responsibility of the mentor is to support the integration and initial professional development of the new colleague. The knowledge the mentor has about the University together with his/her commitment, enthusiasm and values will play a central role in the achievement of this goal.

2. The mentee will be told the mentor’s name within the first week of their appointment. The mentor should be informed of his/her mentee’s start date and it is the responsibility of the mentor to make contact in the first instance, within the first 2 weeks, to arrange the first meeting.

3. The first meeting will provide an opportunity to clarify the purposes of the mentoring support and to negotiate how to work together.

4. The arrangements agreed should cover both formal regular meetings and informal contact between meetings, and will normally encompass the following:
   - The aims of the early agenda setting meeting
   - The establishment of an informal mentoring agreement to clarify what the new member of staff hopes to achieve through the mentoring partnership, and in what ways the mentor will support his/her integration and development (see Appendix 1 for an example)
   - On-going informal support (including guidelines for ad hoc contact between meetings, e.g. where and when can the mentor can be contacted)
   - Regular formal meetings (please be mindful that the frequency of demand to meet by the mentee will usually be greater at the start of the probationary period e.g. weekly, fortnightly, monthly and then as requested)
   - A final review meeting at the end of the probationary period

6. It is a good practice to keep a record of the meetings, noting what has been discussed, and agreed, and the date and objectives for the next meeting so that this may be used by the mentee to track their progress.

7. It is important to remember that the mentor relationship and discussions are totally confidential. However with the agreement of the mentee, issues arising from the discussions may be followed up with relevant persons.

8. Mentoring does not include formal supervision of the probationary member of staff, is outside the direct reporting line, and has no formal input into the Performance and Development Review (PDR) the successful completion of the probationary process. That responsibility still sits with the line manager.

8. The mentor’s role is to
   - Act as a ‘critical friend’ to, and confidante of the new member of staff
   - Be accountable primarily to the new colleague and not the line manager
   - Build a relationship based on trust to foster learning
   - Take no role in judging probationer achievement of the Probation Plan

9. The mentoring relationship has a fixed time period. The end of the formal relationship should be marked with a final review meeting on completion of the probationary period. However if it is agreed by both the mentor and mentee to continue an informal mentoring relationship beyond the probationary period that is left to the decision of the mentor and mentee.

10. Should any difficulties arise between the mentor and mentee every effort should be taken to resolve these themselves, escalating to the line manager only when necessary.
The Mentee

1. The University’s approach to mentoring aims to provide a structure of professional and personal support adaptable to the individual needs and interests of the new colleague. It is intended to assist in the development of confidence and experience within the new work environment. The mentor is a more experienced colleague who will help and support you in this process.

2. The name of your mentor will be provided within the first week of the commencement of appointment.

3. The mentor will arrange the first meeting. This meeting should be held within a few days of arrival in the school or department. At this meeting agree how to work together. Play a full part in negotiating the forms of support you will find most helpful. This can be reviewed and revised at later stages as confidence and experience is developed.

4. The framework of mentoring support can involve:
   - An early initial agenda setting meeting
   - The establishment of an informal mentoring agreement which clarifies agreed outcomes, the overall framework of the mentoring arrangement, and the roles and responsibilities of both mentor and mentee *(see Appendix 1 for an example of a mentoring agreement)*
   - On-going informal support
   - Regular formal meetings (e.g. once a month but initially this is most likely to be weekly or fortnightly)
   - A final meeting at the end of the probationary period.

6. It is a good practice to keep a record of the meetings, noting what has been discussed, and agreed, and the date and objectives for the next meeting so that this may be used by you to track your progress.

7. Remember the mentor relationship is totally confidential but in certain situations, you may wish the mentor to follow up issues arising from discussions with other relevant persons.

8. Mentoring does not include formal supervision of the new staff member, is outside the direct reporting line, and has no formal input into the Staff Development and Performance and Development Review (PDR) or successful completion of the probationary process. This will still be conducted by your line manager.

9. The onus is on you, the mentee, to request formal meetings with the mentor and to take the lead in raising the issues for discussion between you.

10. Should any difficulties arise between your mentor and yourself, every effort should be made to resolve these between yourselves. If this is not possible then issues should be escalated to your line manager.

11. The mentoring relationship has a fixed time period. The end of the formal relationship should be marked with a final review meeting on completion of the probationary period *(see Appendix 2)*.

12. However if agreed with the mentor, you may wish to continue an informal mentoring relationship for a longer period of time – this is your decision.
13. A questionnaire is supplied in Appendix 3 to monitor the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. At the end of the formal mentoring process please complete this, retain a copy and send the original to the mentoring co-ordinator in the school/unit.

How Does Mentoring Work?

For Mentors

The mentor can be expected to offer advice, guidance and support throughout the probationary period. There are a number of different ways in which the new member of staff can be helped. Strategies may include:

**Reviewing:** enabling the mentee to:
- Reflect on recent and present experience in relation to the requirements of the new role and responsibilities
- Explore options and strategies for dealing with problems and difficulties
- Develop greater understanding of the vision and values of the University
- Identify initial areas for learning and development

**Advising:** giving advice on issues raised by the mentee

**Informing:** providing information on:
- Issues and concerns as they arise
- Useful contacts and resources
- The school/department, the University, and where relevant, the wider context of higher education

**Facilitating career development:** helping the mentee to develop understanding and skills related to his/her new role e.g. through:
- Providing an introduction to colleagues and administration procedures, etc.
- The giving and receiving of constructive feedback as appropriate
- Providing access to other support such as internal and external networks
- Passing on experience and knowledge
- Questioning and challenging

**Advocacy:** representing the new member of staff’s interests in certain contexts if appropriate

The mentor should not feel he/she has to “know all the answers”, aim rather to be an access point to other people, agencies, information and resources. The new member of staff should feel comfortable asking "naive" questions about the institution and their role.

For the New Colleague

Your mentor can be expected to offer you advice, guidance and support throughout the probationary period. This may involve all, or some of, the following elements:
- Induction at school/department level e.g. introduction to colleagues, staff, administration procedures etc.
- Provision of opportunities to reflect on the requirements of the role
- The identification of areas of initial learning and development
- Passing on experience, information and knowledge
• Questioning and challenging
• Helping to set short term targets
• Supporting the development of understanding and skills
• Offering support and advice on issues you raise
• Helping to develop an understanding of the school/department, the University, and where relevant, the context of the higher education sector
• Providing access to other support, and internal and external networks
• Representing your interests in certain contexts

Don't worry about asking "naive" questions about the institution and the role, and don't expect the mentor to "know all the answers"; rather see the mentor as an invaluable access point to other people in the institution and beyond.

**Tips for Successful Mentoring**

The success of the mentoring relationship is dependent on the professional approach adopted by both the mentor and the new member of staff (mentee). Below are some tips to help develop such a relationship:

• Commit to the goals of the mentoring process
• Be professional
• Be candid
• Be keen to learn (remember this is a two-way relationship)
• Question one another
• Believe in one another
• Contribute your time
• Listen actively
• Show appreciation
• Ask for specific help
• Work through any conflict
• Give and receive feedback
• Trust one another
• Agree to periodically review the relationship and the process *(See Appendix 2 for a possible framework for this process)*

This professional approach coupled with a helpful framework to enable reflection and evaluation *(see Appendices)* should help to ensure a productive and effective mentoring partnership.

**Additional Support Materials**

Additional support materials regarding mentoring can be found on the Human Resources webpages *(HERE)*

Here you will find a useful for guide for mentoring that covers the general skills, activities and models used within mentoring and a mentoring essentials guide with some generic hints and tips. Both of these guides will support the effective implementation of a mentoring partnership for new colleagues as well as existing colleagues needing guidance about their future careers.
Appendix 1. Example of a Mentoring Agreement

This agreement supports the mentoring partnership between:

Mentor: ....................................................... and Mentee: ...............................................

Date: ........................................

Agreed objectives:

Probationary member of staff: (What I hope to get from this mentoring partnership....)

Mentor: (I will provide support in the following ways............):

The ground rules for our mentoring partnership are: This should include your agreed responses to issues of confidentiality, time commitment, programme of formal meetings, availability (when and where you can both be contacted between formal meetings), how you will review and revise the partnership arrangements.

Reviewing partnership objectives: (It is a good idea to review this agreement and your objectives at an appropriate time).
We will review this agreement on: ..............................
Appendix 2. Periodic Mentoring Partnership Review

Periodic mentoring partnership review

Over time the nature of the mentoring relationship may alter and support needs could change. Therefore it will be valuable for a mentor and mentee to review the progress of the relationship at appropriate points and make any adjustments as necessary to the way they work together and the type of support provided. Also it will be important both for those experiencing the scheme and those with responsibility for implementing the scheme to give feedback on its effectiveness. Such periodic reviews will demonstrate a number of things:

- That learning within the partnership is two way
- That the views of the mentee are important
- That feedback is important for all involved
- That staff acting as mentors are also reflective practitioners – in this case reflecting on their practice as mentor

Below is a list of some questions that might be useful in this process:

- How is the mentoring partnership working?
- What is working well?
- What are you both gaining from your experience of the process?
- What does your mentee appreciate about the support you are providing?
- What, if anything, is not working well?
- What additional support might your mentee welcome?
- What external or organisational constraints or difficulties are affecting the partnership?
- How might these be resolved?
• What changes in the way either party operates within the relationship might it be helpful to make?

• How do you both think you are progressing?

• What stage in the life of the partnership would you say you have reached?
Evaluating the mentoring relationship
Mentee questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore how helpful the formal mentoring process has been to you as a new member of staff at the University of Salford. Please answer the questions by ticking the appropriate box and/or supplying brief supplementary information.

Your Name (optional):…………………………………………………………………….

School/Department ………………………………………………………………………

1. Were you happy with the mentor selected by your School/Department?

   Yes ☐ No ☐
   Please comment if appropriate:
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2. What did you perceive to be the purpose of the mentoring relationship? *(Please tick any that apply)*

   To act as a ‘signpost’ in the organisation ☐ To support and encourage ☐
   To enable reflective practice ☐ To give advice and guidance ☐
   To give you access to someone with more experience ☐
   To give insight into the culture and ethos of the organisation ☐
   To act as a ‘sounding board’ for ideas ☐ To discuss problems with ☐
   Other *(please specify)* ☐
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Appendix 3: Monitoring and Evaluating the mentoring relationship
3. What have you gained from your support from your mentor? How has it helped you?
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4. What has been the most positive aspect of the relationship?
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5. What, if anything have you found difficult or unhelpful?
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6. What within the school/unit/organisation has helped or hindered your experience of mentoring support?
Helped:…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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Hindered:……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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7. Did you receive any training or guidelines or other information/help about the mentoring support process?

Training ☐ Guidelines ☐ Other ☐

Please comment on how helpful you found this preparation: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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8. What changes, if any, would you suggest to the mentoring support you have experienced?

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9. Overall, how worthwhile have you found the process?

Very worthwhile ☐ Worthwhile ☐ Unhelpful ☐

10. Please make any other comments that are relevant to evaluating the effectiveness of the formal mentoring process below:

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