

Meet a Mentor Program Handbook



Contents

Welcome	3
'More than just a chat': the idea of mentoring	3
The role of a mentor	4
Features of a good mentoring relationship	5
Mentoring across differences	5
Traits of an effective mentor	5
Confidentiality	5
The role of a mentee	6
Qualities to Cultivate	7
What to discuss	8
G.R.O.W: a coaching tool	9
Expectations and Guidelines	10

Welcome

Welcome to the Meet a Mentor Program, an industry professional mentoring scheme within the Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology.

The wisdom, experience and leadership of our industry professionals can help the University's future engineering, architecture and information technology penultimate (students in the second last year of their university program) and final year students on their path to success.

The program aims to connect penultimate and final year engineering, architecture and information technology students with established alumni and industry professionals. It aims to help them feel motivated, encouraged, empowered and transformed as the next generation of professionals entering the industry.

The Meet a Mentor program complements mentees' academic knowledge by offering a real industry perspective and practical advice to prepare them for their career. This invaluable guidance enhances all aspects of a mentee's employability, including their transition to work, applying academic knowledge in the workplace, goal setting and career options. Mentors can play a key role in a mentee's development while enhancing their leadership and coaching skills and might even identify new talent for their organisation.

Mentors:

- Engage, influence and help to prepare the next generation of engineering, architecture and information technology professionals entering the workforce
- Share the value of their expertise
- Expand their networks
- Give back and gain valuable experiences

'More than just a chat': the idea of mentoring

For a successful and productive mentoring relationship it is important for both the mentor and mentee to have a common view of their roles and to understand how to get the best out of the mentoring experience. These guidelines aim to provide a useful framework for both mentors and mentees that will help you reflect on your roles and the skills that are involved in the mentoring process.

Mentoring is about developing a relationship between the mentor and mentee. Mentors have a particularly important role in building the mentee's confidence and helping them to develop a perception of themselves as successful graduates and future leaders within the industry.



The role of a mentor

A mentor acts as an adviser. You have the knowledge and skills, information and experience in your industry, and are willing to share these in order to help your mentee’s professional and personal growth.

Mentors have multiple roles – being an adviser is certainly one of them. There are also other roles you may perform at certain times depending on the needs and the nature of your mentee’s objectives.

Mentors are:

- Advisers: industry experts with experience and expertise who are willing to share their knowledge and experience
- Supporters: people who give emotional and moral support and encouragement
- Coaches: people who provide feedback on a colleague’s performance of specific tasks
- Sponsors: people who serve as valuable sources of information about opportunities and can introduce mentees to contacts or networks, and be an advocate for them
- Role models: high achieving people who demonstrate excellence in their profession and industry

In reality, one mentor is unlikely to have all the experience and expertise that is needed to support their mentee. A mentor thus needs to know when to advise their mentee to seek information or feedback from someone else and who they might approach.

Many mentees will have a number of informal mentors (eg. an academic, colleague or industry connection) who they can ask for assistance on various issues when needed.

‘Your wisdom, experience and leadership can help the University’s future engineering, architecture and information technology graduates on their path to success’

Your responsibilities	Your Mentee’s responsibilities
Act as a source of information and/or insight into your chosen occupational field	Take time to contact and meet with their mentor, both in the initial stages and on an ongoing basis
Counselling regarding career development or strategies for achieving professional goals	Work to foster the mentoring relationship
Assist with personal goal setting and planning	Think about goals before meeting with their mentor and be willing to openly discuss these goals with them
Teach specific skills including job seeking strategies and resume writing	Communicate expectations, needs and feelings
Listen with an open mind, challenging and encouraging the exploration of ideas	Develop a trust relationship and share concerns
Encourage professional behaviour	Negotiate activities in order to obtain goals
Facilitate self-directed learning	Embrace learning and exploration with enthusiasm and commitment
Provide feedback on observed performance	Facilitate self-directed learning
Coach for effective coping strategies	Learn to accept feedback and use it positively

The role of a mentee
Mentees are typically students looking to bridge the gap between being a student and entering the workplace, they identify mentors as an invaluable resource during this transition period. Mentees are the drivers of the relationship and ideally will take most of the responsibility for their self-directed learning and exploration.

A good mentor is:

- accessible
- supportive
- practical
- caring
- motivating
- respected (professionally/ personally)
- enthusiastic
- willing to share skills, knowledge and expertise



Features of a good mentoring relationship

An effective mentoring relationship is characterised by:

- Clear roles and expectations
- Excellent two-way communication
- High level of trust with regard for confidentiality
- Clear planning framework with a focus on the mentee's needs and objectives
- Additional support for both mentors and mentees

Mentoring across differences

Each individual mentee will require different levels of support and encouragement. Mentors thus need to be flexible, sensitive and open minded when working with different mentees. This may be especially the case where cross gender or cross cultural mentoring are involved. In these situations a mentor can learn a lot about the various issues that arise for a person of another gender, culture or sexuality or who has a disability.

It is important for both the mentor and mentee to respect and understand their

difference in backgrounds and attributes, to be sensitive to styles of communication that may be gender or culture based, and for mentors to understand the mentee's needs, taking into account their background and career circumstances.

Traits of an effective mentor

The traits of an effective mentor will usually include most of the following:

- Accessibility and reliability: is approachable, sticks to meeting times, provides feedback
- Empathy: has personal insight into a mentee's skills, needs and personal circumstance while understanding that these will differ from their own experience
- Open-mindedness: has respect for mentee's individuality, working style, background, gender, cultural background and career goals
- Consistency and integrity: acts on principles, demonstrates good values and ethical practices both personally and in a research context
- Patience: is a good listener, doesn't teach or instruct, assists the mentee to explore their options and supports

them in taking action and risks

- Honesty: provides honest feedback, sensitively and in a positive spirit
- Savvy: understands the pragmatic and strategic aspects of working in their industry and developing a career.

Confidentiality

As a mentor you may be party to certain kinds of information about your mentee: from their past professional struggles and achievements, to their future plans and their personal circumstances (e.g. health, family responsibilities etc.). Your mentee should feel that they can trust you with personal information that is affecting their progress generally and which may have relevance for the mentoring relationship.

Similarly, mentees need to be sensitive to information that mentors confide and to keep things discussed in the mentoring context confidential. As a rule, mentors and mentees should respect the confidentiality of all their discussions. Information that could possibly be regarded as sensitive by either the mentor or mentee should be kept confidential unless the level of disclosure has been discussed and agreed.

The role of a mentee

Mentees are:

A mentee is willing, proactive, and ready to improve. As a mentee, you actively seek support and guidance from your mentor to help develop your skills, confidence, and knowledge through their advice.

Through your mentoring relationship you will have the opportunity to ask questions of uncertainty, grow under your mentor’s guidance, and begin bridging the gap between being a student and entering the workplace.

Remember that your mentor may not always have all the answers – no one does. However, having an open-mind and being self-aware will help you get the best out of your mentoring relationship.

Don’t always expect your mentor to be able to give you hands-on industry experience, in reality, this isn’t possible for some companies. Using this opportunity to develop your confidence and knowledge, can lead to better growth and provide more purpose to your future career.

Your responsibilities	Your Mentor’s responsibilities
Take time to contact and meet with their mentor, both in the initial stages and on an ongoing basis.	Act as a source of information and/or insight into your chosen occupational field.
Work to foster the mentoring relationship.	Counselling regarding career development or strategies for achieving professional goals.
Think about goals before meeting with their mentor and be willing to openly discuss these goals with them.	Assist with personal goal setting and planning.
Communicate expectations, needs and feelings.	Teach specific skills including job seeking strategies and resume writing.
Develop a trust relationship and share concerns.	Listen with an open mind, challenging and encouraging the exploration of ideas.
Negotiate activities in order to obtain goals.	Encourage professional behaviour.
Embrace learning and exploration with enthusiasm and commitment.	Facilitate self-directed learning.
Facilitate self-directed learning.	Provide feedback on observed performance.
Learn to accept feedback and use it positively.	Coach for effective coping strategies.



The role of a mentor

A mentor is an industry professional with a minimum of 7 years hands-on experience. They have invaluable expertise, knowledge and skills in their chosen industry and are willing to share these to help mentees. A mentor could have multiple roles from career advising, moral support, role models and sponsors.

A good mentee is:

- respectful
- grateful
- responsible
- reliable
- inquisitive
- flexible
- responsive
- enthusiastic
- willing to listen, watch, learn and grow



Qualities to cultivate

Plan

- Spend part of your first meeting discussing what you want to achieve and what you hope to get out of the mentorship. Leave each meeting with a plan for the next.

Keep a log

- Make a record of what you discuss in each meeting and what you aim to do before the next one – don't forget to jump into Chronus every so often to tick off your tasks (this helps the program facilitators make sure everything is running smoothly).

Be organised

- Doing your homework before catch-ups will avoid wasting both your time and your mentors. It will enable you to get the most out of the meetings.

Ask useful questions

- Don't pretend you understand what the mentor is saying if you don't. The mentoring meeting is your time and the

mentor will expect you to want to make the most of it and draw upon their knowledge and expertise.

Be proactive

- Don't expect to be looked after or given all the answers – your mentor is just your guide. Be responsible for your own decisions regardless of the mentor's advice. Maintain your independence.

Have respect

- Remember your mentor is busy and taking the time out of their personal and professional schedule to meet with you, so ensure you keep your appointments. Be considerate and don't overstay your welcome.

Show appreciation

- Everyone likes to be thanked. Remember that your mentor has volunteered to help you. When you achieve any outcome, big or small, let them know and acknowledge their role.

Reciprocate

- Mentors will be interested in learning from their mentee as well as sharing their own knowledge and expertise. Share what you know with your mentor and be willing to share what you have learnt by mentoring others.

Have humility

- Be willing to accept critical feedback so that you are open to new ways. Your mentor is there to provide constructive criticism. You may not always see eye-to-eye, but keeping an open mind will help you in the future.

Take appropriate risks

- Your mentor is there to help you remove barriers and pull you out of your comfort zone to be prepared for the real world. Try new things and allow yourself to make mistakes.

Stuck? Questions to ask your mentor.

Did you think you would be where you currently are today five years ago?

Which leadership skills do you think are the most difficult to develop?

What are the 3 key things I need to be prepared for when going into my first graduate job?



What to discuss

The first meeting

The initial formal meeting is important for providing a framework for how the mentoring relationship is going to proceed. Suggestions as to what needs to be discussed in the initial meeting include:

1. Objectives

Discuss and review some mutual objectives and outline constraints that may affect the mentoring relationship:

- Discuss whether the objectives are reasonable, achievable and appropriate at the mentee's career stage
- Decide which goals are short, mid or long term. Revise and reprioritise them as necessary

2. Planning

Draw up a plan for working towards the agreed objectives over the period of the program. Some objectives may require key dates for completion of particular tasks along the way.

Other objectives may require only one or two discussions to identify useful strategies for the mentee to try out. It may not be feasible to focus on all objectives in the time available.

3. Agreement

The decisions may need to be revised as you proceed if there are changes in circumstances of the mentor or mentee.

4. Confirm whether you want to continue

After the initial meeting is a good time to discuss whether or not you think the match is going to work well. If either person feels that the match is not going to be productive and satisfying, this is the time to talk about it. It may be possible to clarify or resolve any concerns you have while still meeting the mentee's needs and having a very worthwhile outcome. This could be achieved, for example, by re-examining expectations, reviewing the mentee's objectives, changing the meeting arrangements, or identifying other informal mentors who can also be called upon if needed (for example, to provide very discipline specific information).

What if the mentoring is not progressing well?

Not all mentoring relationships are successful though sometimes the value of the mentoring isn't apparent until much later – even years later! Problems may arise for a number of reasons. For instance:

- you have different communication styles
- you have different expectations of the mentor or mentee role
- an unforeseen conflict of interest arises
- the mentoring discussions have simply run out of steam

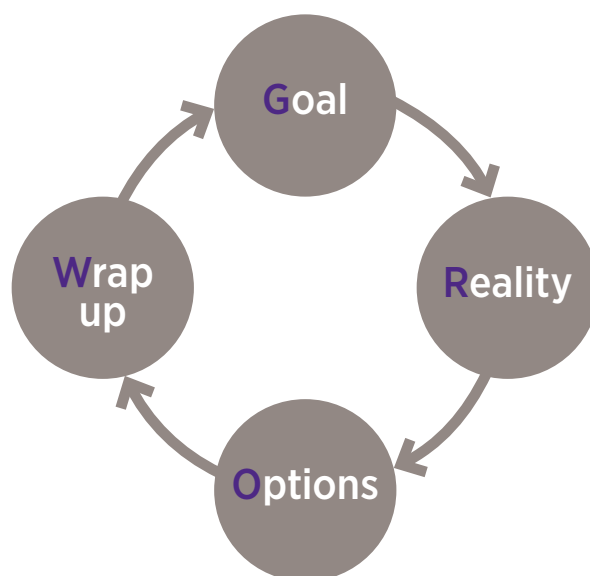
The initial meeting is important for providing a framework for how the mentoring relationship is going to proceed.

If you are having problems, do raise it with your mentor or mentee and talk it over between you. After all, you have both volunteered to participate in the program and want the experience to be successful.

Suggestions for maintaining a network of informal mentors:

- don't let go of past mentors!
- establish a relationship with more senior level people who can act as informal mentors. Take care to maintain a good relationship with people in this group. Value these professional relationships and treat them with respect.
- establish a set of confidantes. These are people with whom you can openly share information about personally or politically sensitive issues. Choose them carefully as they need to be trustworthy and prepared to look after your interests.

G.R.O.W: a coaching tool



Goal

The conversation starts with where do you want to head or what do you want to achieve from the conversation.

Reality

Here we are detailing and discussing the reality of the situation. Sometimes this discussion can mean that the original goal is redefined.

Options

Here we are trying to explore as many options as possible and really want to move beyond the obvious first responses.

Wrap up

Very often this is called “where to from here”. Here we are action planning – getting clear about what the person is going to do, by when, what support may be required and when a review / follow-up will take place.

Short version of G.R.O.W

What do you want to achieve/move forward with?

- Tell me more about the issue...
- What are some of the ways you can approach this?
- What else can you do?
- What do you think is the best thing for you to do?
- How can I help you? When will you do this?
- When should we chat again to see how you went?

Tips for effective questioning

1. Ask the question and listen
2. If they say they don't know... this is not an invitation for you to start telling. Be creative! Ask “if you did know, what would you do?” In most cases they will come up with an answer. If they still say they don't know, allow them time, invite them to stop and think and see what happens.
3. Use the power of silence. Most of the time people know the answer they
4. Create more options: sometimes the person will give you an answer and it is easy to accept that and move into action planning. Support the person to come up with a number of potential answers, ideas or solutions before inviting them to choose the best solution.
5. Getting ideas outside of the person's routine thinking. To help the person develop even more ideas, ask them, “if X person was advising you what to do, what would they say?” This technique usually gets them out of their own thinking.
6. Challenging beliefs. This is useful for when people say they can't do things – invite them to reframe.
7. Questions that are really answers. Avoid making suggestions that are phrased as questions.
8. YOU rather than WE. Use YOU so that it is clear who is accountable and responsible.





Expectations and guidelines

- Mentors and mentees must complete at least four 1-on-1 sessions over a six month period. This could be in person, on the phone or online (video call).
- At least two of these should be either in-person, over the phone or via video call (Skype, FaceTime etc).
- On average we recommend each meeting to last for approximately one hour, and the relationship to be maintained for the durations of the six month period. However, we understand all mentoring relationships are different and you may be satisfied with your outcome earlier than September.
- During the first session, the mentor and mentee should clearly outline their goals for the program, and schedule the proposed dates/times/format/venue for their regular meetings over the six month period
- At the end of each of the scheduled sessions, the mentor and mentee should develop a short overview of their activities and progress
- Throughout the program, the Program Coordinator will complete brief check-ins with all mentors and mentees via chronus (not phone or email)
- Upon completion of the six month period, the mentor and mentee will provide feedback on their involvement with the program to the Program Coordinator through completion of a short survey
- Mentees should be aware that participation in the Meet a Mentor program does not guarantee paid or unpaid work placement with the mentor or through any connections made during participation in the program; and
- Any issues between the mentor and mentee should be worked out as part of the mentoring relationship. If a resolution is unable to be met, please direct any queries to the Program Coordinator on an as-needs basis.

Safety

Sessions can take place in a variety of ways, including in-person or via phone, email or online. For those scheduling sessions in-person, it is recommended that they take place on campus, at the mentor's place of work, or at a neutral venue.

We do not recommend any meetings to take place at the private homes of the mentor or mentee.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.





Thank you

Thank you kindly for your involvement. We appreciate your time and hope you find the experience valuable.

For more information please contact:

Alumni and Community Engagement Team

Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology

Email: meetammentor@eait.uq.edu.au

Phone: +61 7 3346 7533

www.eait.edu.edu.au/meet-mentor



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE