## Ulster University

## Research Mentoring Programme



## Mentee Guide

# Overview

The research mentoring programme is an opportunity to support academic and research staff in building their research capacity and capability. Experienced researchers (Professors and Readers) will provide focused mentoring support to academic and research staff within their faculty (whether research active or not).

How it works…..

* Mentoring will be on a one-to-one basis
* Each mentorship match will be for a six months period
* Mentors and mentees meet a minimum of once every two months with meetings normally lasting 60/90 minutes
* Mentoring support will be across all aspects of research, for example: research outputs; research funding; research impact; networking; public engagement; working with industry etc.

# Benefits of being mentored

* Support to improve your research performance and confidence.
* The opportunity to be inspired and encouraged, to tackle challenges and change, and to realise your potential.
* The opportunity to learn new insights and new approaches.
* Become more research active.
* An expanded network.
* The opportunity to challenge your assumptions, broaden horizons and enhance your aspirations and achievements.
* Support for proactive career development, planning and progression.

## The Mentee’s role

The relationship between Mentor and Mentee is very much ***Mentee-centered***. The expectation of the Mentee is to take ownership and drive the relationship, drawing on the Mentor’s knowledge and experience. The Mentees role is to seek guidance and constructive feedback on his/her research development.

Mentoring is not a passive activity. As a mentee, you play an important and active role in developing mentoring relationships with colleagues. Understanding that you, and *not* your mentors are ultimately responsible for your success, underscores the importance of driving your mentoring experience!

## Mentee Responsibilities

* Takes responsibility for keeping in regular contact with your mentor and actively participate in the relationship.
* Assesses academic/ professional strengths, learning and development needs, values and short and long term research goals.
* Develops a plan with mentor for achieving these goals.
* Respects the mentor’s time.
* Maintains confidentiality at all times.
* Openly shares successes and failures.
* Is receptive to feedback and coaching.
* Takes advantage of opportunities presented by the mentor.

## Key points to Remember

# Contacting your mentor

You will be introduced to your mentor via email and you are then expected to make contact with your mentor within one week.

# Meeting your mentor

Wherever possible you should try and meet your mentor in person at least once every two months although further meetings are encouraged. The mentoring relationship will last for six months.

A ‘getting to know you document’ ***(Appendix 1)*** has been included to help guide you with your initial conversation.

# Setting objectives and action planning

Soon after contacting your mentor, you should set the objectives that you wish to achieve by the end of the programme. As a mentee, you need to be in the driver's seat of your mentoring relationships and do a personal inventory and know your research goals. You need to be able to articulate what research support you need and where you would like to go over the next period of your research career and beyond. Once you've articulated your goals clearly, your mentor will be better able to advise and guide you on possible steps and opportunities.

A goals/objectives and action plan template has been included (***Appendix 2 and 3)*** to help set your objectives and track your progress.

## Confidentiality

## Although this sounds simple, at the core of mentoring is a commitment of trust and mutual respect between the mentee and the mentor. It is essential that the mentee and the mentor mutually agree that their discussions will be kept confidential and this commitment to a safe environment will enable a mentee to try out preliminary ideas and directions that he or she may want to explore before sharing in a wider venue. Take care to respect the boundaries of this relationship by being a true professional colleague.

## Practice good communication

Mentoring relationships thrive on good communication. Take time to keep your mentor up to date on how things are going (or not going), provide feedback on how well a strategy or approach you tried worked (or failed), and try not to over interpret a comment from your mentor--who is probably just as busy as you are. Stick to the facts and make sure you keep in touch!

## Recognise that your path is your responsibility

Remember that you--the mentee--own the mentoring relationship. You need to bring your energy, passion, vision, and enthusiasm. Remember that you direct your research program and the best mentors are there to challenge you by asking great questions.

## Learn to accept and give feedback

The good news in a mentoring relationship is that you will receive feedback and insight from a knowledgeable and caring colleague. Many times this feedback will confirm that you are on the right track and/or be congratulatory when you have achieved a successful milestone to celebrate together. But sometimes the feedback will be less than flattering. You need to be receptive to both kinds, positive and negative, and learn to accept feedback that's intended to improve your performance, your work, or your path.

The key is to learn to listen carefully to this constructive feedback, make adjustments, and then seek more feedback so that you can continue to improve.

## Evaluation

You will be asked at the end to complete an evaluation form and you may be asked to participate in further feedback sessions to discuss successes and make recommendations for improvements for future programmes.

## Ending the relationship

Keep the end in mind – mentoring relationships don’t have to last forever, and if it has run its natural course then end it constructively.

***Successful mentee/ mentor relationships:***

*Both parties are engaged, flexible, and authentic and there is reciprocity.*

**Appendix 1 – Getting to know you document**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Mentee:** |  |
| **Position:**  |
|  |
| **Background of current research:** |
|  |
| **Background of previous research** |
|  |
| **Hobbies and interests:** |
|  |
| **Any specific area of interest for Mentoring sessions? i.e. particular project** |
|  |

**Appendix 2 – Goal Setting Action Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal**  | **Actions** | **By Who?** | **By When?** | **Notes**  |
|   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |

**Appendix 3 – Mentoring Objectives and Goals**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mentor:** |  |
| **Mentee:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Objectives / Actions / Outcomes** |
| *1. What are our goals/ objectives for this mentoring partnership?**2. How will our actions/ progress be captured and success measured?**If you are seeking to continue into a further phase of your mentoring partnership:* *3. How will this new phase add to what has already been achieved?*  |
| The **ground rules** for our mentoring partnership are: |
| **Commitment** - As a mentee I will openly discuss my research goals and experiences for the purpose of shared learning and career enhancement. As a mentor I agree to respect my mentee in regard to their independent goals.**Confidentiality -** we agree to maintain the confidentiality of the person and experiences that we share with each other. Furthermore, we understand that we will both uphold the same standard of confidentiality.**Meeting times** – at least **once every two months** for a **period of six months**  |
|  **Reviewing partnership objectives**:*(It is a good idea to review these goals/ objectives at an appropriate time)* |
| We will review this on: |  |