**Guidance for Mentees**

These guidance notes have been designed to provide you with information about mentoring, your role in the mentoring partnership and factors to consider both before and throughout working with your mentor.

Mentoring is an equal, non-hierarchical partnership between two people in which a series of development conversations take place. Commonly, one person (the mentor) uses their experience, expertise and professional skill set to aid the development of the other person (the mentee).

**What does mentoring mean at the university?**

Our university is a thriving learning environment for all.

Whilst some learning is gained through formal routes such as workshops and courses, the power of learning informally through methods such as mentoring is not to be understated.

Effective mentoring can not only empower and inspire all members of our university community to fulfil their potential but, over time, support the creation of a culture of collaboration where we openly share our work, achievements and knowledge with colleagues across the organisation to aid the development of others.

**Being mentored:**

Your mentor should be someone who serves as a role model to you by sharing their experience and understanding of the workplace to best help you develop yours.

It is therefore important to reflect upon the type of knowledge and skills you want to develop before you begin your mentoring partnership. This needs to be expressed to your prospective mentor so they have an idea of how they can best support you

Identifying a colleague to become your mentor is also very important. You should speak to your line manager who can help provide suggestions on colleagues to mentor you based upon the skills and knowledge you would like to develop.

**Your mentor:**

You can expect your mentor to:

* **Remain non-judgemental.** Whilst your mentor may be more experienced than you in certain areas, you can expect them to be non-judgemental and supportive if a decision you make is different to what they would have chosen.
* **Share their experiences.** Your mentor will be open with you and share what they feel comfortable with.
* **Not act on your behalf.** It is up to you to take action as a result of your conversations. Although there may be things that your mentor can help with, all further action should be determined and initiated by you.
* **Challenge, encourage and support you.** Your mentor will provide constructive feedback and challenge you to think differently. This will enable you to greatly explore the situation at hand from different perspectives and help you to identify the subsequent actions you may choose to take.
* **Empower you.** Your mentor will support you to gain confidence and independence.

It is important to remember that your mentor will not:

* Provide you with the answer to all of your problems.
* Act on your behalf to solve your problems- it is your responsibility to take action as a result of your conversations.

**Getting started - your first meeting.**

Although mentoring partnerships do not need to be overly formalised, it is important that you both discuss your expectations and hopes when you first meet.

It is also useful for you both to discuss and agree to the guidelines below:

* **Confidentiality:** in regards to mentoring partnerships, this term means any matters that are discussed between a mentor and a mentee should be treated as confidential unless there is concern that a party is at risk of harm to themselves or others.
* **Openness:** the mentor and mentee should be open and truthful with each other. They should also feel comfortable to express any matters that they do not want to discuss or talk about.
* **Respect:** in addition to respecting each other, both mentors and mentees should respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.
* **Meetings:** the frequency and length of meetings should be mutually agreed. It may also be helpful to discuss the means of contact between meetings for minor issues.
* **Location:** both you and your mentor must be comfortable with the location of meetings. Whilst casual settings often work well, you must give due regard to confidentiality.
* **Voluntary:** the mentoring partnership is entirely voluntary for both people and it may be terminated by either person after discussing the matter with one another first, ensuring mutual respect and understanding of the conclusion.

Once the initial framework for the mentoring process is established, you are usually expected to outline what you would like to talk about during the meeting.

For further information, please contact develop@essex.ac.uk