

Mentoring in CSIRO

Guide for Mentors and Mentees

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1 What Is Mentoring?

Mentoring is the pairing of people who want to learn and grow with those people who are willing and proficient at imparting knowledge and skills. The essence of “pairing” is to match the needs of the mentee with the strengths and experience of the mentor. Mentoring relationships involve a balance of nurturing and supporting on the one hand, together with stretch and challenge on the other.

Access to a mentor’s knowledge and experience enables the mentee to enjoy a quick start in a new environment and/or to receive support in the development of his or her professional career. Mentoring within CSIRO encourages and teaches mentors to adopt a coaching manner. Sessions should involve the mentor guiding the mentee through the thinking process, helping them to discover the answers to their own questions, rather than imposing a solution or advising.

Mentoring can help develop the capabilities of CSIRO’s employees by supporting and encouraging:

- **A Learning Organisation:** Mentoring is one way to encourage and support people (both mentors and mentees) to learn continuously and to control and reflect on their learning and thinking processes.
- **Knowledge Transfer Culture:** CSIRO is a knowledge-based organisation that relies on its intellectual capacity for innovation and competitive advantage, therefore the transfer of existing knowledge and experience is imperative to the long-term success of the organisation.
- **Succession Planning:** Mentoring provides professional and personal development for potential managers and leaders of tomorrow.

The goals of mentoring will vary between mentoring partnerships. However, generally it should be a proactive and positive experience that enhances and increases both individual and organisational effectiveness.

Mentoring is often viewed as a highly efficient career development process that:

- Improves organisational satisfaction.
- Enhances performance.
- Increases productivity and contributions.
- Promotes a professional community.
- Creates a more diverse pool of leaders.
- Provides management training – teaches up-and-coming employees to become productive managers and leaders of the future.
- Encourages multi-tasking and stretches the workforce.
- Preserves organisational knowledge.
- Improves employee retention and enhancing their value to the organisation.
- Retains our most valuable asset, our people.

Individual mentoring partnerships are owned and driven by the mentee, with support from in-Business HR when required.

2 What are the Roles and responsibilities?

If mentoring is to be successful, all parties must understand their part in the process. At all times the mentee, mentor and line managers must demonstrate CSIRO's values and support the Code of Conduct.

2.1 Role of the Mentee

The role of the mentee is to:

- Identify their objectives including the new skills and knowledge they wish to gain from the mentoring relationship.
- Seek guidance and advice on their professional development.
- Be open and honest in discussions with their mentor.
- Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- Carry out tasks and projects agreed with the mentor by agreed times.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Demonstrate commitment by attending and being prepared for all organised mentoring meetings.

The mentee should keep their line manager informed of upcoming meetings, and overall progress (without the need to break confidentiality agreements).

2.2 Role of the Mentor

The mentor's role in staff development is one of providing the mentee with access to their skills, experience and knowledge. This will assist the mentee to reach their full potential in terms of their own development plans. In their role, mentors will:

- Facilitate the mentee's professional growth by:
 - Acting as a coach and guiding the mentee through the thinking process, helping them discover answers to their own questions.
 - Encouraging the mentee to explore options.
 - Helping the mentee clarify their thoughts and move beyond their comfort zone.
 - Listening to the mentee.
 - Confronting negative behaviours.
- Assist the mentee to extend their networks, either within or outside the Business Unit, by connecting them with others where they see potential intersection around the science or the customer interface, and/or have experience relevant to challenges the mentee is facing.
- Share their own experiences and learnings in a constructive manner.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Demonstrate commitment by attending and being prepared for all organised mentoring meetings.

It is not the role of mentors to create development opportunities for mentees nor to take part in the mentees APA process

2.3 Role of the Line Manager

The line manager must at all times be interested in, supportive and responsible for the development of their people. They must:

- Create an open work environment, where the mentoring relationship is encouraged and valued.
- Allow and encourage participants in their work group to participate in mentoring.
- Facilitate their staff's professional development.
- Encourage individuals to look for and learn from others in the organisation who have relevant knowledge and skills, and to extend their networks.
- Foster the concept of continuous learning and improvement.
- Openly discussing the mentee's development, linking the outcomes to their APA and any succession plans.

2.4 Role of Human Resources

Your HR team is available to assist with:

- Clarifying the goal of the mentoring partnership.
- Assisting with identifying an appropriate mentor.
- Providing assistance if there are concerns.

3 Mentoring Steps

3.1 Suggestions for the first meeting

- Establish rapport – introduce yourselves and share some background life experiences.
- Review the learning needs as identified in the mentee's expression of interest. Explore the underlying motivations and values.
- Discuss how the mentor can assist with achieving these learning needs.
- Establish a mentoring agreement (see template mentoring agreement attached).
- Discuss some of the practical elements of your mentoring relationship including:
 - confidentiality
 - frequency and length of mentoring meetings
 - duration of the relationship
- Agree preparation for the next meeting and schedule a time and place.

3.2 Suggestions for the second and subsequent meetings

- Share work experiences since the last meeting.
- Provide feedback to each other on what was valuable from first meeting.
- Describe actions including successes and learnings taken since last meeting (see template discussion sheet attached).
- Review any new issues that relate to the mentee's identified learning needs.
- Agree actions and preparation for next meeting and schedule a time and place.

3.3 In subsequent meetings you may also like to consider

- Review if mentee learning needs are being met or have changed.
- Review if the relationship is still working for both parties. If it is not, discuss options and seek advice from HR.
- Agree to end or continue the relationship.

3.4 The final meeting

- Reflect on the whole mentoring experience.
- Consolidate learnings.
- Discuss any further support the mentor might provide to the mentee.

4 Mentoring Tools

The following tools are designed to be used to assist with mentoring relationships:

- Mentoring Agreement (Appendix A)
 - To record and set objectives for the relationship
- Mentoring Meeting Discussion Sheet (Appendix B)
 - To record discussions and outcomes from each formal meeting
- Mentee Guidelines for Mentors (Appendix C)
 - To act as a guide for what is required of a Mentee
- Guidelines for Mentors (Appendix D)
 - To act as a guide for what is required for a Mentor

Appendix A Mentoring Agreement

Mentor / Mentee details
Mentee name:
Mentee position:
Mentor name:
Mentor position:

We are voluntarily entering into a mentoring partnership and note the following features for this arrangement:

Meetings
Date partnership commencing:
Expected completion date of partnership:
Frequency of meetings:
Duration and location of meetings:
Who is responsible for scheduling meetings:
Anything to note about mentor and mentee availability for meetings:

Expectations
What type of assistance is the mentee looking for from the mentor?
What are the ground rules for the discussions?
Are there any areas that are off limits for discussions?
If problems arise, how will they be resolved?

Code of Conduct

Participants must understand that the mentoring partnership will require time commitments and they must be prepared to give up some of their time to participate and communicate with their mentee/mentor.

Participants must enter into the mentoring partnership with a commitment to develop and learn in an environment that supports honesty, fairness and respect.

The mentoring partnership can be ceased at any time in the event that it is not working for any reason. If the mentee or mentor has any concerns they must notify the HR team immediately to ensure that the matter is addressed, including assisting with sourcing a new mentor if required.

It is expected that within the mentoring partnership there will be no bullying, abuse or misconduct on the part of the mentee or mentor and that failure to abide by this may result in misconduct procedures being implemented.

Participants must act professionally at all times.

Participants must maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the mentoring partnership. Failure to do so may result in further action if necessary.

We agree to abide by the Code of Conduct and agree that anything discussed in these meetings will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed.

Confidentiality

Mentee signature:

Date:

Mentor signature:

Date:

Appendix C – Mentee Guidelines

- The responsibility for this process lies with you, the mentee, so you are responsible for driving this process.
- Maintain regular contact to keep the momentum going and plan for it.
- Respect your mentor's time as it is valuable- be prepared for meetings and respect the boundaries, so you make the most of the time together.
- Internalise and apply what you learn - stretch yourself a little and try new things. Let your mentor know the outcomes.
- Follow through on what you say you will do. If you can't, advise your mentor as soon as possible.
- Be open and honest in your discussions with your mentor, and be realistic with your goals. Show appreciation - let your mentor know you appreciate their time. Be specific in your feedback by letting them know what worked for you and why.
- Give back to your mentor. Think of ways you can provide assistance to them where appropriate e.g. sharing valuable expertise, contacts or information you may have.
- Keep your line manager informed about your mentoring relationship. This does not include the content of your meetings, unless you choose to.
- Ensure your mentoring objectives are linked to your APA and if applicable, any career development plans in place.
- Demonstrate behaviours that support the CSIRO Code of Conduct.

Appendix D – Guidelines for Mentors

- Make your mentoring relationship a priority.
- Take time to understand your mentee's work environment.
- Give advice where appropriate.
- Guide your mentee through their thinking process, helping them to discover the answers to their own questions, rather than imposing a solution.
- Arrange some meetings over breakfast, lunch and/or dinner.
- Give examples and relate your experiences with your mentee – both successes and mistakes as well as any learnings.
- Confirm the confidentiality of your discussions with your mentee.
- Create and discuss likely scenarios and “what if” situations.
- Give your mentee a different perspective.
- Encourage your mentee to move beyond their comfort zone.
- If personal issues are raised, refer your mentee to CSIRO's EAP or HR for support.
- Play devil's advocate – present different options.
- Set expectations up from the start and provide feedback on the value you are getting from the program to your mentee.
- Demonstrate behaviours that support the CSIRO Code of Conduct.

