



**MENTORING GUIDELINES**  
**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES**

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## **1. Introduction**

Stellenbosch University (SU) recognizes the value of mentoring as an instrument of organizational learning and as a key activity within the University's overall approach to staff learning and development. The SU mentoring programme provides an opportunity for mentors to share wise counsel and knowledge, and advise new or junior employees. Through mentoring we hope to create an environment where all members of staff feel supported in their pursuit of a satisfying and successful career.

## **2. Statement of purpose**

The purpose and scope of the program is to provide general development and growth opportunities to employees at all levels in SU.

We hope to achieve the following specific outcomes:

- ❖ Orientation to the University/induction into a new job and culture / understanding the formal and informal structures of the University.
- ❖ Enhancing the desired organisational culture.
- ❖ Managing expectations for performance.
- ❖ Enabling professional and personal networks to be developed / Finding collegiality and community.
- ❖ Assistance in identifying sources of support.
- ❖ Creating balance between professional roles and also between work and family life.
- ❖ Assisting individuals with career advancement, self-development and continuous professional development.
- ❖ Contribute to effective succession planning.
- ❖ Encourage and support top talent.
- ❖ Improve career satisfaction.
- ❖ Improve the recruitment and retention of staff by demonstrating the University's commitment to investing in employees.
- ❖ Help individuals cope with transitions such as moving into a new job or role.
- ❖ Contribute to knowledge transfer and knowledge continuity in the University.

### **3. How we define mentoring**

Mentoring is a sustained, voluntary, supportive relationship between an experienced person (mentor) and another who is less experienced (mentee), where the mentor shares the benefits of their experience and their understanding of the values, goals, practices and culture of the organization.

The primary goal is the nurturing, guiding and supporting of the mentee's personal and professional development. The agenda is based on the mentee's needs and the learning agenda identified by the mentee.

Mentoring is about helping the mentee to grow in self-confidence and develop independence, autonomy and maturity. It is a relationship built on mutual trust and respect, openness and honesty where each party can be themselves.

### **4. Underpinning philosophy, values and principles**

The mentoring philosophy at Stellenbosch University revolves around the holistic development of individuals who seek growth and development in certain aspects of their lives (including work, professional and personal areas).

This is underpinned by the following values:

- ❖ Realising that people can change and want to grow.
- ❖ Recognising individual differences.
- ❖ Encouraging capability and developing competence.
- ❖ Encouraging collaboration.
- ❖ Encouraging scholarship and a sense of enquiry.
- ❖ Searching for new ideas, theories and knowledge.
- ❖ Reflecting on past experiences as a key to understanding.
- ❖ Looking forward and developing the ability to transfer learning and apply it in new situations.
- ❖ Realising potential, through raising awareness and thus making more informed decisions.
- ❖ Enabling change.
- ❖ Championing growth and learning.

- ❖ Regarding people from a positive stance.

The following principles underpin this particular mentoring programme:

- ❖ The aim of mentoring is a long-term sustainable, constructive, developmental form of support – of mutual benefit to those taking part. It is not a quick fix solution.
- ❖ There will be adequate training, preparation and support for those taking part in the mentoring scheme.
- ❖ The mentoring programme must be aligned to the relevant learning and development frameworks of University of Stellenbosch.
- ❖ There must be shared understanding of and agreement with the purposes of the mentoring scheme.
- ❖ A clear understanding of and agreement on the level of confidentiality which will be required within the mentoring relationship.
- ❖ The mentoring scheme will reflect and promote a commitment to equal opportunities.
- ❖ The matching process supports mentors and mentees to establish the most appropriate match, according to the mentee's needs.
- ❖ Participants will create a time frame both for the frequency of meetings and for the duration of the relationship.
- ❖ An appropriate reporting procedure will be designed for each mentoring partnership, respecting confidentiality, whilst ensuring sufficient monitoring for the progress of the mentoring engagement.

## **5. Who is eligible to be a mentor?**

Mentors are generally experienced staff members familiar with the system, recognized teachers/scholars/experts in their field and usually higher up the organizational ladder than their mentee.

**All staff members of 60 years and older who are continuing to work will be expected, as part of their employment contracts, to make themselves available as potential mentors.**

**The mentor is not normally the mentee's appraiser or head of department or equivalent (in order to separate the mentor role from 'line management' and judgements required about probation, promotion etc.).** Where for practical reasons this is impossible to achieve, it is emphasised that great care should be taken to ensure that the two roles are clearly defined, with thorough exploration and agreement of the boundaries required in the mentoring and line management function.

The mentor offers his/her services **for free**.

Individuals who are passionate about the career development of others and who want to become a mentor will be invited to volunteer.

#### **A good mentor:**

- ❖ Is considered a role model in their position or area.
- ❖ Is committed to the mentoring process and value thereof, and willing to commit time to be a mentor.
- ❖ Is able to encourage and motivate others.
- ❖ Is able to facilitate learning in others, whilst modelling continuous learning themselves.
- ❖ Has obtained the respect of others at the university.
- ❖ Is willing to share knowledge.
- ❖ Possesses good interpersonal communication skills.
- ❖ Is empathic towards their mentees, holding positive regard for them.

#### **Mentors versus line managers**

- ❖ Mentors have no supervisory responsibilities or authority over mentees.
- ❖ The mentoring relationship does not deal with issues of underperformance or non-compliance.
- ❖ The mentoring relationship is confidential, non-judgemental and non-directive.
- ❖ The mentor and mentee are equal partners in the relationship and share equal responsibility.
- ❖ Line managers have no direct role in the mentoring relationship and should not expect to receive information that is confidential to the relationship.

## **6. The roles and responsibilities of the mentor**

The primary role of a mentor is to provide additional support, guidance and encouragement to the mentee to enable the mentee to be able to:

- ❖ Settle into the role – and for new staff, the University.
- ❖ Take responsibility for their own learning and development.
- ❖ Identify opportunities and obstacles.
- ❖ Identify goals and action plans for achieving those goals.

### **A mentor's role includes:**

- ❖ Acting as a sounding board and confidante.
- ❖ Listening and facilitating.
- ❖ Sharing expertise and experience.
- ❖ Providing appropriate information on further professional contacts.
- ❖ Providing guidance and advice to the mentee

### **Mentor Responsibilities include the following:**

- ❖ At a minimum, mentors and mentees should meet regularly at least once per month for at least a year.
- ❖ Helping mentees set appropriate professional goals.
- ❖ Maintaining strict confidentiality (the mentor will not provide input to the performance review of the mentee).
- ❖ Listening and give feedback/guidance.
- ❖ Asking questions to help the mentee to raise awareness of their current situation and desired outcomes.
- ❖ Monitoring, reviewing, critiquing, and discussing potential actions.
- ❖ Following up on actions taken and encouraging mentee to define their next steps forward.
- ❖ Referring mentee to appropriate office/individuals for specific information when appropriate.
- ❖ Increasing networking potential.
- ❖ Reinforcing relationship between employee and line manager.

## 7. Who is eligible to be a mentee?

All staff members needing career guidance/career development/professional support. The mentoring programme is voluntary.

## 8. Responsibilities of a mentee

- ❖ To commit themselves to the mentoring programme and their mentor.
- ❖ Initiating meetings with the mentor and managing meeting dates and times.
- ❖ Take on new responsibilities and challenges.
- ❖ Seek feedback.
- ❖ Accept responsibility for the own growth and development.
- ❖ Be willing to change and learn, in pursuit of goals defined by themselves.
- ❖ Proactively seek to resolve issues arising in the mentoring relationship.

## 9. Implementation Process

### 9.1 Identification of mentors

- ❖ Staff members who continue service after 60 years of age will be invited to act as mentors.
- ❖ Staff can volunteer to become a mentor and can also be nominated to be a mentor by their line manager. After a discussion with and following agreement from their line managers, prospective mentors will be requested to submit an application to Human Resources, who will invite them to attend mentoring training.
- ❖ After completing development in mentoring, their personal details, skills, experience and relevant job knowledge will be recorded onto the mentoring database.

### 9.2 Identification of mentees

Staff will be invited and encouraged to participate in the mentoring programme:

- ❖ When they first commence employment.
- ❖ When they attend orientation/induction events-.

- ❖ At their performance review meeting, where appropriate.
- ❖ When starting a new job role within the University.
- ❖ As a new or inexperienced manager.

### **9.3 Training for mentors**

All mentors will receive training and will have access to continuous support in the form of workshops, seminars and other resources as provided by HR.

A two-day training programme will be hosted for mentors, followed by another one-day follow-up session after 3-4 months. In the 3-4 month period between the training of mentors and the follow-up session mentors will have the opportunity to practice their mentoring skills and reflect on learning and insight.

### **9.4 Orientation for mentees**

An orientation session will be held for all mentees in order to empower them to make optimal use of the mentoring options available.

### **9.5 Matching of mentors and mentees**

- ❖ To facilitate the matching process, the programme coordinator will seek information from both mentor and mentee.
- ❖ A list of names, phone, email contacts and areas of expertise of potential mentors will be made available to mentees.
- ❖ Using the mentor database, the mentee will decide upon the most appropriate mentor; taking into account the variety of skills, experience and job knowledge available and those most suitable for the mentee.
- ❖ Mentees may be matched with mentors from another faculty or department.
- ❖ A mentee will approach mentors of their choice, to explore the potential for a mentoring relationship. The mentee will then choose a mentor and initiate the mentoring programme, with the assistance of the programme coordinator. The list will be updated regularly, taking into account pairings and new potential mentors.

- ❖ When a successful match is found, a mentoring agreement will be signed by the mentee and mentor.
- ❖ The mentoring agreement requires the parties to agree on times for mentoring meetings as well as developmental goals. The agreement also ensures that the confidentiality of discussions held in mentoring meetings are respected.
- ❖ A report highlighting improvements made, skills learnt and knowledge gained while participating in the mentoring programme will be maintained by the mentee.

## **10. Duration of the mentoring relationship**

- ❖ The mentoring relationship can last for varying amounts of time with the mentee's circumstances and agenda dictating the length of the relationship.
- ❖ It is good practice to set an expected end date for the mentoring relationship at the start. However, new goals may emerge and the mentor and mentee can review the end date as the relationship progresses.
- ❖ The recommended time for participating in the programme is twelve months, with mentoring meetings being held once a month.

## **11. Ending the relationship**

- ❖ Most mentoring relationships will come to a natural end once the mentee considers that they have achieved their development objectives. Some relationships can end after the initially agreed duration and others prior to.
- ❖ If the desired development had been achieved before the agreed time period, a meeting involving the mentee, mentor and relevant mentee's line manager/supervisor should take place at which the mentoring relationship could be terminated.
- ❖ At the end of a mentoring relationship, Human Resources must be informed so that the mentoring database can be updated accordingly.
- ❖ Mentors will automatically be made available to other prospective mentees unless they specifically ask not to be.
- ❖ Mentees will be encouraged to become a mentor themselves once their own mentoring relationship has ended.

- ❖ Occasionally, a mentor and mentee may find it hard to work together and they may feel the sessions are not helpful. If this occurs, both mentor and mentee will need to advise Human Resources so that support can be made available for both parties.

## **12. Evaluation**

HR will evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring programme in various ways, including:

- ❖ Verbal feedback from all parties
- ❖ Focus groups with mentors and mentees to evaluate and adjust
- ❖ Evaluation forms completed by the mentee, mentor and their respective line managers at the end of the programme

## **13. Related documents (AVAILABLE at [www0.sun.ac.za/hr/mentoring/](http://www0.sun.ac.za/hr/mentoring/))**

- ❖ Mentee Application
- ❖ Mentor Application
- ❖ Mentoring Agreement
- ❖ Confidentiality Agreement
- ❖ Mentoring Log
- ❖ Mentee Objectives Form
- ❖ Mentee Action Plan