

Human Resources

Mentoring programme for SU staff

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

❖ **I don't know anything about mentoring. What does it mean?**

"Mentoring is a partnership in which a mentee is assisted in making significant advances in knowledge, perspective and vision in order to develop their full potential. The mentor's wisdom is utilized by the mentee to facilitate and enhance new learning and insight." - COMENSA

Mentoring is an opportunity to accelerate the rate at which a person learns and to contribute your knowledge and wisdom to assist in another person's lifelong learning.

❖ **What is the reason for a more formalized mentor development initiative?**

Stellenbosch University recognizes the value of mentoring as an instrument of organizational learning. Mentoring is a strategic development activity that supports the university's vision, goals and values and the mentee's own development needs and wishes. This program will provide an opportunity for mentors to share wise counsel, 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. By receiving training to become a mentor individuals will also be empowered with a set of generic skills that can be used in any interpersonal interaction with fellow employees/staff reporting to them.

It is envisaged that empowering mentors and matching them to mentees will have the following outcomes:

- ❖ Orientation to the institution / induction into a new job and culture / understanding the formal and informal structures of the organisation
- ❖ 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

- ❖ Encourage and support top talent
- ❖ Improve career satisfaction
- ❖ Improve the retention of staff
- ❖ Help individuals cope with transitions such as moving into a new job or role
- ❖ Contribute to knowledge transfer and knowledge continuity in the organisation

❖ **Can you tell me more about what the training will involve?**

The Mentor Skills Development Programme enables delegates to skillfully conduct mentoring conversations in various contexts, from utilizing a mentoring approach as a leader or manager, to conducting a formal mentoring programme. Skills are explored and practiced, mentoring tools and tips are shared.

Mentors will receive training during a two-day workshop, with a one-day follow-up workshop after approximately 3 months, during which there will be opportunity to reflect on your mentoring experiences, and to further develop mentoring skills, tools, and understanding of the mentoring process

Workshop Outcomes:

- ❖ Delegates are able to understand the roles they play, and to differentiate between managing, training, coaching and mentoring
- ❖ Delegates understand and apply mentoring skills, utilizing a variety of tools
- ❖ Delegates identify the process for mentoring mentees in their context
- ❖ Delegates gain an understanding of various tools to raise awareness, thus enabling more informed decisions and optimum movement towards goals.

Content:

- ❖ Clarifying and differentiating between training, mentoring, managing and coaching
- ❖ Applications and benefits of mentoring
- ❖ Contracting process, and agreeing a mentoring programme with their mentee
- ❖ Coaching models to utilise within mentoring
- ❖ Conducting a mentoring session
- ❖ Mentoring skills: questioning, listening, reflecting, providing feedback, challenging, sharing knowledge and experience.
- ❖ Mentoring theory and tools for facilitating learning and assisting others to deal with change

❖ **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.

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.).

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.

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

❖ **What are the traits and characteristics of good mentors?**

- ❖ *Commitment* - A good mentor is committed to the role of mentoring and believes in the value of mentoring. Good mentors has an interest in developing others and are committed to lifelong learning
- ❖ *Acceptance* - A good mentor accepts their mentees, is empathetic, and free of judgment or rejection
- ❖ *Teaching* - A good mentor is a reflective instructor, teacher and supporter of the learning process who provides observational feedback and shares experiences.
- ❖ *Communication* - A good mentor is effective in different interpersonal contexts, adjusting their mentoring communication to meet the needs of mentees.
- ❖ *Learning* - A good mentor values and models continuous learning, actively engaging mentees in their own learning and reflective processes.
- ❖ *Optimism* - A good mentor publicly and privately affirms the human potential of mentees.

There are skills and competencies within mentoring which can be learned, however the success of any mentoring relationship fundamentally relies on the mentor being interested in and committed to developing others.

❖ **What support will there be for mentors?**

HR will identify supervision processes and opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet to reflect, share and learn in the process as well as provide feedback.

❖ **Will the mentees also receive training?**

Yes, mentees will undergo a one-day briefing workshop to prepare them for obtaining the optimal results from mentoring.

❖ **How will mentors and mentees be matched?**

A list of mentors and a profile of their areas of expertise and areas they are willing to mentor in will be made available to potential mentees. It is suggested that mentees meet with potential mentors to explore the possibilities of mentoring. Once a mentee had decided, HR will be informed and will assist to set up the arrangement and provide support to both mentors and mentees.

❖ **What happens if my mentee and I don't get on, or we have problems during the mentoring arrangement?**

HR will assist you to address any issues that might arise in this regard.

❖ **How much of my time will be required if I am a mentor?**

It is recommended that mentors and mentees meet regularly (1-2 hours once a month). It is also recommended that a mentor does not mentor more than 3 mentees simultaneously due to the commitment required in terms of time.

❖ **Will I be rewarded for my time and efforts?**

There will be no monetary rewards. However, the greatest reward is investing your time and energy in the development of others and the knowledge that you would have made a difference and left a legacy.

By receiving the training you will also be equipped with skills and knowledge that will add to your repertoire as a manager/leader. These skills are generically applicable in any interpersonal interaction inside and outside the workplace.

❖ **I am already mentoring. Should I still undergo the training?**

You will still benefit from the training programme as it will empower you with mentoring skills such as questioning, challenging, listening, reflecting and providing feedback – in order to best assist and support mentees.

Almene Potgieter
Human Resources
ap@sun.ac.za
021 8084590