

The Internal Coaching Programme at SU – Principles, Protocol & Process

What Coaching Is

Coaching is defined as partnering with a client in a customised and individualised, thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. At the University coaching is offered to leaders and managers in an endeavour aimed at supporting and enhancing their personal and professional effectiveness and fulfilment, and thus their ability to make a powerful and engaged contribution to the life and work of the University.

Internal Coaching

The internal coaching programme provides one-on-one and team coaching free of charge to eligible individuals. The internal coaches are Margaret Orr (for senior and executive leadership levels 1-4, as well as academic Vice-Deans and Heads of Department / Department Chairs) and Almene Potgieter (for support staff managers / supervisors and other individual employees at levels 5-7). Internal coaching services may be available to staff in other roles under exceptional circumstances.

Principles

Principle 1: Internal coaching is a supportive, constructive developmental process aimed at taking clients from good to great, and assisting them to cope with the demands of a leadership role.

Principle 2: Engagement with internal coaching is always voluntary.

Principle 3: Internal coaching is not available as a mandatory / disciplinary / remedial intervention.

Principle 4: The agenda/objectives for internal coaching relationship are set by the client.

Principle 5: For internal coaching, tri-party contracting around objectives, and reporting (ie between client, coach, and the client's manager) are done only at the request and initiative of the client.

Principle 6: In all cases the internal coach may conduct a screening process to assess whether the client/case falls within the scope/mandate/principles of the internal coaching project.

Principle 7: Before an individual is referred to an internal coach, the relevant referring party should first engage with the particular coach in order to determine whether the referral is in line with above principles.

Where an intervention is required that is not in line with the above principles (eg typically mandatory interventions as the outcome of a grievance, disciplinary, or mediation process), the internal coaches are available for advice and recommendation as to other appropriate forms of support.

Conflict / Mediation / Grievance Priorities and Protocol

In cases where conflict arises between individuals or within teams, and this leads to some form of a grievance, disciplinary, or mediation process, the internal coaching programme can be expected to provide support and assistance in the following ways:

Priority 1: We support / offer coaching to the Head / Manager who is in charge of the team where the conflict or difficulty is occurring. The engagement with coaching will be voluntary and the agenda / objectives for coaching will be set by the Head / Manager. The coaching process and outcomes will be confidential to the client and the coach.

Priority 2: Where capacity allows, seniority merits it, and coaching is appropriate, we will support / offer coaching to senior individuals who are clearly “victims” of toxic behaviour or bullying. (This may be difficult to determine with absolute clarity, because so often there are grievances and counter grievances, and it is difficult to identify an unambiguous “victim”. Nevertheless, there are some cases where this is fairly clear, and then our priority in these cases will be the affected / impacted employee.) The agenda / objectives for the coaching will be set by the individual. The coaching process and outcomes will be confidential to the individual and the coach.

Priority 3: Where appropriate and capacity allows, we will support teams wanting to build constructive and healthy practices around managing conflict, valuing diversity, and creating alignment in a supportive and productive community.

In cases where a committee / mediation process has determined that one or more individuals require assistance in amending their behaviour, the internal coaching programme will, upon request, offer an initial, exploratory conversation with the individual/s concerned to determine:

1. whether coaching is the appropriate intervention,
2. whether the individual is coachable (ie willing and committed and invested in the doing work on themselves), and
3. whether we are the appropriate individuals to be offering the coaching needed.

We will report back to the relevant authority (eg the Dean or the referring individual) ONLY on the answers to these three questions, which we will have previously discussed and clarified with the individual concerned. The coach will disclose information only where explicitly agreed with the client (and, where applicable, sponsor) unless the coach believes that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the client or others if the information is withheld.

If the answer to question 1 and 2 is Yes, but an outside coach is indicated (either because of reasons of “fit”, or because we have no internal capacity, or there is a conflict of interest in that we may be coaching the HoD or other involved parties (*cf* our priorities above), then we will suggest the names of appropriate external coaches to the relevant authority / sponsor.

The costs of an external intervention will need to be carried by the Faculty / Division. The contracting with the external coach with regard to objectives for the coaching, tri-party contracting, reporting back etc will be negotiated between the coach and the relevant authority.

Contacts

Dr Margaret Orr

margareto@sun.ac.za

Ms Almene Potgieter

ap@sun.ac.za