



Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists

GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES

What is the purpose of mentoring?

Mentoring is a form of life-long learning for both the mentee and mentor. The ASCEPT mentoring programme matches a mentor with a more junior person (mentee) from within the ASCEPT membership. Mentors can provide support, information and advice, and share professional and personal skills and experiences. The match is based on needs and criteria identified by the mentee.

What will the mentor get out of it?

This will vary from person to person, but the following benefits have been identified:

- Increased networks and communication with different staff
- Satisfaction from sharing knowledge and watching someone develop
- Opportunity to review one's career progress, goals, achievements and skills
- Professional and peer recognition
- Increased job satisfaction and renewed interest in and enthusiasm for work

What will the mentee get out of it?

This will vary from person to person, but the following benefits have been identified:

- Increased skills and knowledge
- Access to formal and informal networks
- Rekindled enthusiasm for work
- Assistance with career planning, promotion and identifying other job opportunities
- Increased self-confidence
- Improved leadership skills

How does the mentor matching happen?

- Mentees are required to complete the Mentee Profile form and submit this, via email to the ASCEPT Executive Officer at ascept@ascept.org
- Mentees also have the opportunity to suggest names of ASCEPT members they would like to have as a mentor.
- The ASCEPT Mentoring Program Committee will approach suitable mentors for each participant based on the requirements they have identified.
- It is envisaged that matching will occur prior to the Annual Scientific Meeting.

Who takes the initiative?

The mentoring partnership focuses primarily on the needs of the mentee. For this reason, the mentee is encouraged to take responsibility for driving the mentoring relationship, for arranging meetings, and for negotiating what they would like to achieve and how they would like a mentor to assist them.

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However, mentors may need to provide encouragement to their mentee, particularly in the early stages of the partnership, or if they are unsure what they want to achieve or are reluctant to take up your valuable time. Just a quick email or phone call to see how they are getting on can help in this regard.

How long does the mentoring last?

- The formal mentoring partnership is expected to last for approximately nine months.
- Some mentoring partners meet for less than this time, and some continue for longer, depending on the needs of both parties.

How should we “meet”?

This mentoring program seeks to match mentees with suitable mentors from within the ASCEPT membership. As such, geography may dictate whether mentors and their mentees are able to meet face to face or via Skype, email or telephone.

How often should we meet?

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to meet regularly so that you have a chance to get to know each other and to explore ways in which you can work together. How often you meet and for how long will be up to mentors and their mentees to agree.

Experience of previous mentoring relationships has shown that regular meetings (e.g. once a month for about one hour) are an important factor in the success of the mentoring partnership.

What do we do at the first meeting?

- The first meeting is an introductory one, where mentor and mentee are encouraged to share background information and to explore ideas for the relationship to determine if it is likely to be rewarding and productive for both of you.
- It is a good idea for mentors and their mentees to exchange information about yourselves: what you do, how long you have been at your particular institution, and any other information about your professional or personal lives that you think may be relevant and are willing to share.

What are the important things to clarify?

In the first couple of meetings it is important to explore what you might like to achieve through the partnership and how you might like to operate as a pair. Things to discuss may include:

- How, when, where, how often, and for how long you will meet
- How formal/informal and how flexible you would like the relationship to be
- What goals the mentee has for the mentoring relationship
- What kinds of issues, tasks or projects the mentee might like to work on with their mentor
- Whether the mentee will prepare items for discussion beforehand or decide at the meeting
- What kind/how much contact you will have in between meetings, eg by phone or email
- What level of confidentiality you would like to work within?
- Whether you want others to know about your mentoring partnership, eg the mentee's supervisor/head of department
- How you will keep the relationship going if either party is away or if meetings have to be cancelled/rescheduled.

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What can a mentor do with his/her mentee?

There are many issues your mentee may wish to discuss with you, including:

- Goals they have identified
- Career-related issues such as career directions, applying for grant funding or promotion
- Generic skills such as time management, supervision, team building, public speaking, report writing, applying for grants, etc.
- How things are done in the mentor's or mentee's work area or institution.

What support is provided?

- Mentees and mentors will be contacted in July to obtain feedback on the mentoring relationship.
- After nine months, mentors and mentees will be asked to review and complete the formal part of the mentoring process.

How can I be a good mentor?

- Be committed - make time for your mentee and ensure you are not interrupted
- Finish each meeting by making a time for the next one
- Be a good listener and respect confidentiality
- Find out about your mentee's background and what they have to offer
- Treat your mentee as a colleague
- Tease out an issue or problem with your mentee and empower them to find their own solutions. Don't feel responsible for solving their problems for them.
- View mentoring as an opportunity to share experiences and ideas, and to see things from another person's perspective.
- Encourage your mentee to meet with you even if they don't think they have key issues or problems to discuss. Simply meeting and talking may spark off ideas for you to work on together.

How can mentees make the most of mentoring?

- View the mentoring as an opportunity to learn from someone else and to share experiences and ideas. Don't think of your mentor as someone to be approached only when you have difficulties or problems that need resolving.
- Be pro-active and make the time for mentoring to work. Don't be discouraged if you and your mentor are unable to meet as frequently as you would like, or if meetings have to be postponed, etc.
- Go into the relationship with some clear goals defined, no matter how big or how small.
- Identify your weaknesses and be prepared to get your mentor's help with developing in these areas.
- Don't worry if you don't always have specific issues to discuss with your mentor. Simply meeting and talking with them may spark off ideas for you to work on together. Your mentor will have a range of self-management and leadership skills that you can tap into and gain valuable experience from.
- Remember that your mentor has willingly agreed to support you and that they too are benefiting from the partnership in many ways.



What is the difference between mentor and supervisor?

Something that sets mentors apart from supervisors is a desire to help the mentee develop into a successful professional with no more than the personal satisfaction of helping someone grow. Outside of providing an objective perspective, mentors can help their mentees set personal and professional goals and provide support until these are met.

How do we end the mentoring relationship?

Once you have met with your mentee for approximately nine months, you will be encouraged to reassess the relationship to ensure its continuing relevance. There is no requirement to continue the relationship beyond this time unless you and your mentee wish to do so informally.

What if the relationship isn't working?

When it comes to finding a mentor, perfection is not even a relevant concept. Since nobody has the same career, experiences etc., you are not going to find a perfect match. If concerns arise, advice must be sought.

Mentees are responsible for initiating and driving the relationship. When you achieve your objective, you can decide to finalise the formal relationship or set a new objective. Don't waste your mentor's time or your own. If the relationship is no longer going forward, it might be time to move on. Don't let it stagnate or go stale.

While every attempt is made to find a good match between mentor and mentee, occasionally mentoring relationships are not successful. Please be assured that it is possible for mentor or mentee to decide not to proceed with the mentoring relationship. If for any reason you feel that the mentoring partnership is not working for you, please contact the ASCEPT Mentoring Program Committee as soon as possible.

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