



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

STAFF MENTORING SCHEME GUIDELINES

ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY, 2024 - 2026

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Purpose

The purpose of the St Mary's Mentoring Scheme is to help staff grow in their roles and to enable progression.

The scheme supports the University's mission and purpose to develop the whole person and personifies our values in action – Generosity of Spirit, Excellence, Respect and Inclusivity.

Enabling mentoring partnerships can improve performance and morale of staff at the University. It can build mentoring capacity and foster a more open culture of support and learning. Moreover, it can improve communication and working within an organisation through the promotion of dialogue and understanding.

Who is the scheme for?

Our intention is for the scheme to be accessible and inclusive. Therefore, it is open to all staff from all levels and all areas of the University. The scheme is for those seeking a mentor and those wishing to provide mentoring support.

Aims of the scheme

The aims of the scheme are:

- To provide development opportunities for staff
- To provide staff with opportunities to discuss their career ambitions and seek support to develop skills and knowledge on this journey
- To provide opportunities for staff to have conversations about ways in which they can enhance their careers
- To encourage individuals to self-direct their career development
- To develop a pool of experienced mentors
- To give individuals from all areas and levels of the university the opportunity to develop themselves through becoming a mentor
- To provide staff with additional guidance and support beyond that offered by managers and supervisors
- To improve internal communication and knowledge sharing.
- To enhance relationships throughout the university through mentoring partnerships

It is important to recognise that it is not always possible for staff to be promoted within St Mary's as a result of growth they experience through receiving mentoring. Where progression is not immediately possible, the newly learned skills can be utilised in different ways e.g., during secondments if such opportunities arise, project work or whilst leading on initiatives, which can further enrich staff's skills and experience.

About mentoring

Staff may find it useful to be mentored at different stages of their professional life – when new to the University; in transition between posts or when wanting to progress or change direction.

One useful description of mentoring is: *'the practice of supporting an individual through the process of achieving a specific personal or professional result.'*

During the mentoring process the mentor provides advice and support arising from their seniority and/or greater experience to the mentee. Mentoring may also include elements of a more facilitative process where the mentor listens, questions and challenges the individual to encourage them to find answers and determine actions for themselves.

Mentoring is effective for (this list is not exhaustive):

- A source of information, knowledge, expertise and experience
- Exploring and developing individual career potential
- Managing additional or new roles and projects
- Developing leadership skills
- Providing a safe place for reflection
- Supporting individuals through change
- Problem-solving skills development

Mentoring is a developmental approach that is suitable for learning situations that are learner driven and where the outcomes sought are around building autonomy and ownership for personal development. The table below compares mentoring with training around three learning dimensions.

	Training	Mentoring
Ownership of Goal	Externally set standard e.g., pass exam / award Meet training objectives	Goals set by person receiving the mentoring
Purpose	Imparting knowledge, skills and information	Growing capability and self-reliance
Skills	Instructing, explaining, facilitating	Listening, questioning, giving impartial advice

Mentee's role and responsibilities

Mentoring creates an opportunity for a mentee to explore new ideas in confidence. As a mentee you have the chance to look more closely at yourself, your issues, opportunities and what you want in life. Mentoring is about becoming more self-aware, taking responsibility for your life, and directing your life in the direction you decide rather than leaving it to chance.

It is important to note that the mentee is the one who drives the agenda and comes prepared for the meeting with a set of topics, challenges and questions to discuss with their mentor.

A mentor can provide guidance and support. A mentoring partnership offers time and space to think outside of normal day to day activity, in which you can reflect and plan. It is not always necessary for your mentor to be working in exactly the same field/ discipline as you in order to provide you with effective developmental support.

Mentor's role and responsibilities

"Mentoring involves primarily listening with empathy, sharing experience (usually mutually), professional friendship, developing insight through reflection, being a sounding board, encouraging."
David Clutterbuck

The partnership between a mentor and mentee should be personal and confidential and is very different from a relationship between a line manager and their team member.

As a mentor you will share knowledge and experience that is of use to the mentee to help them with their professional development, during and in-between meetings.

Mentoring provides development opportunities for mentors and can bring a great deal of personal satisfaction. Becoming a mentor can improve leadership skills; listening skills and ability to step back to help others discover their own ways of dealing with challenges. Mentors also learn from different approaches and ways of thinking that the mentees bring to the conversation.

If you have advanced in your own career and developed professionally, you will have valuable experiences you can share with others. You do not need to be in a management or leadership position to put yourself forward. We invite staff from both Professional Services (this includes our Campus Services Staff) and Academic Faculties to become mentors.

Online mentoring

Online mentoring should be no different to mentoring face to face. The following hints and tips have been prepared to ensure both mentor and mentee have a good experience:

- Make sure you switch your video on, it is important that mentor and mentee have face time wherever possible. Eye contact, nonverbal gestures etc serve as important cues for both parties.
- Prepare like you would for a face-to-face meeting, the meetings might feel more casual as they are online and therefore complacency can set in. Approach the meeting as if it's a formal meeting by making time to prepare.
- If you have commitments at home such as childcare or carer responsibilities, make sure you find a quiet place to have the meeting without distractions (as far as possible).
- Don't rush through meetings and end them early as this can be easy to do when you're meeting virtually. Leaving one meeting early makes it easy for it to happen again and this reduces the potential of a mentoring of a mentoring relationship to fully develop and thrive.

Mentor Support

Mentors will have access to Mentoring workshops to help equip them with valuable skills and strategies to effectively support their mentees. These workshops are designed for incoming mentors, and may act as a 'refresher' for current mentors.

Mentors will also have an opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other through regular mentor support group meetings.

The dates and times for both the workshops and the mentor support group meetings will be advertised on the staff webpages, and sent to you via email. You will be able to book onto these sessions on [SMILE](#).

Useful tools and resources helpful in creating an effective mentoring partnership are included in Appendix 1 to these guidelines.

Matching process

Mentors and mentees enter into a mentoring partnership voluntarily. To find a mentor, mentees should:

1. **Read this Guidance:** To make sure you fully understand the mentoring process and what's expected of you as a mentee, read this document in full.
2. **Define your mentoring goals:** Mentoring works best when you are clear on what you want to achieve from the process. Some goals might be 'gain clarity on my career plan', 'learn about the culture at St Mary's', 'develop my self-awareness and skills as a leader'.
3. **Identify a mentor:** Once you know what you want out of mentoring, look through the mentor bios on the staff website to identify a mentor who can support you in that area.
4. **Arrange an introductory meeting:** Reach out to your selected mentor to find out if they have capacity to support you (please note mentors give their time voluntarily, and we cannot guarantee mentors will be available when you are seeking mentoring). If they are open to

mentoring you, arrange an initial meeting to talk about your goals and expectations for mentoring. At this stage one or both of you might decide that you're not a good fit; and that's totally fine!

5. **Sign the Mentoring Agreement:** Once you have met to talk about your goals and expectations, and you and your mentor are both happy to move forward with the mentoring relationship, you both must sign the [Mentoring Agreement](#) (see Appendix 2).

This Agreement must be signed on [DocuSign](#).

Learning and People Development will receive a copy of this for our central record of mentoring partnerships. This is to ensure we know which mentors are already partnered and we can report (anonymously).

[Length and phases of the mentoring partnership](#)

Once mentors and mentees are matched, it is suggested that they meet, six to eight times for an hour over the course of six months. The detailed arrangements and the amount of in-between contact will be subject to the mutual agreement between the mentor and mentee.

Below is a description of the phases in a mentoring partnership.

Introduction

This is the time that the mentor and mentee establish contact, begin to build rapport and develop a mentoring partnership.

Contracting

Sometimes this is known as the 'Commitment' phase. In order for the partnership to be effective and to satisfy the needs of both the mentor and mentee there must be clear agreement in the following areas:

- When and where to meet (mentoring should be a focussed and uninterrupted activity)
- Frequency of meetings
- Agreement of arrangements for contact outside of the mentoring meetings
- Clarity about the boundaries between the mentoring partnership and other key partnerships
- Broad outcomes / areas that will be addressed through the mentoring
- Commitment to change
- Establishing a 'safe' environment for disclosure.

As part of the contracting process, mentors and mentees are required to sign the [Mentoring Agreement](#) (see Appendix 2), for both parties to formally commit to the partnership.

Initiation

In this period partnerships grow and develop in importance for both the mentor and mentee. The expectations of both parties are explored, become firmer, and are realised through a programme of interaction and activity.

Cultivation

During this period, the support provided by the mentor will increase to a maximum level. Both individuals continue to benefit from the partnership, becoming more emotionally linked as more frequent and meaningful interactions occur.

Separation

This occurs over time with changes in role, levels of need or the ability of the mentor to continue to provide appropriate levels of input.

Redefinition

This is the time when the partnership ends or shifts to a peer or friendship. The mentoring partnership is no longer needed, and the mentor and mentee agree to end the mentoring arrangement.

[Signposting to other opportunities to develop e.g., linking to career pathways, training etc.](#)

During the mentoring process, mentees may wish to seek opportunities to develop their skills through other learning scenarios e.g., training. There are currently many opportunities for staff to develop further professionally. Our [webpages](#) provides further, detailed information regarding these.

Questions

In case of any questions regarding the scheme please contact:

- Learning & People Development at learninganddevelopment@stmarys.ac.uk
- Laura Minogue, Interim Head of Academic Professional Development at laura.minogue@stmarys.ac.uk

APPENDIX 1 – TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR THE MENTORING PROCESS

1. Matching process

As part of the matching process the ‘matched’ mentors and mentees meet for an informal conversation to establish if they both are comfortable entering into a mentoring partnership. Because it is an informal discussion, there isn’t a suggested script. However, there are few points of guidance to be considered at this stage:

- Knowing if a mentoring partnership is going to work is a lot about instinct. Use this informal conversation to get to know each other by asking questions and listening to one another.
- Explore Shared Interests - Explore common interests, experiences, and areas of expertise that can serve as focal points for the mentoring discussions. Identifying shared passions and goals can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the mentoring partnership.
- Clarify Expectations - Both mentors and mentees should openly discuss their expectations, goals, and desired outcomes for the mentoring relationship.
- Identify Compatibility - Assess whether there is mutual rapport, respect, and compatibility between the mentor and mentee. Consider factors such as communication style, personality traits, and professional backgrounds to determine if the pairing is likely to be successful.

2. When the mentoring partnership commences

As part of the contracting process, mentors and mentees are required to sign a [Mentoring Agreement](#) (Appendix 2), for both parties to formally commit to the partnership.

An important first step in the process is for both parties to agree upon **expectations, objectives, and logistical aspects**. This ‘contracting’ stage is essential to the success of the mentoring process.

a) Contracting – logistics

How often and for how long to meet?

About once a month for about an hour is generally considered to be the normal arrangement, although this can be adjusted according to what is appropriate for both parties and objectives involved. Consideration should be given to the time restrictions, and a mutually convenient time agreed.

How many meetings / how long should the process last?

The usual cycle is about 6 meetings over 6 months, but this may vary depending on what suits both parties. There should be clarity at the beginning about how long the process will continue. You may also want to consider whether to set dates and times for all the meetings at the beginning of the process, or to set each one as you go along. As long as both parties are in agreement you may want to extend the mentoring partnership if it would add value to do so.

Communication between meetings

How much communication do you expect between meetings? How will you communicate? – By phone, email, Teams? Discuss and agree each party's preferences. What will happen if one party is unable to make a scheduled meeting?

Keeping records

Mentees are encouraged to be responsible for keeping a note of what is discussed and actions to be taken. Mentors may want to note down contracting details to refer to during the mentoring partnership, bearing in mind confidentiality and storing of notes securely.

b) Contracting – content

It is worth thinking about these aspects in preparation for the initial meeting so as to be clear about expectations.

Mentee

- What are your objectives for the mentoring? If these are not entirely clear that's fine, but discuss why they may not be clear with your mentor.
- What do you hope to get from the process? – Advice or direction, sharing of your mentor's knowledge, experience and expertise, skills development, personal development, specific goals – something else?
- What do you hope or expect to get from your mentor in relation to your objectives?
- How will you know / measure whether objectives have been achieved?
- Is there anything you do not wish to discuss as part of the mentoring?

Mentor

- Are you clear about what the objectives are?
- What and how much are you able / willing to provide in respect to the mentee's objectives and expectations?
- How much 'work' are you happy to do for the mentee between meetings?
- What other boundaries do you have?

Both

- Confidentiality is essential to the process being productive. What is your individual understanding of what confidentiality means, and do your ideas align with each other? How will you manage it if they don't?
- How will you manage things if either of you wishes to end the mentoring partnership before the agreed time?

c) The mentoring process

Generally, the mentor is responsible for holding the process and the mentee for working on the content. However, this is a flexible definition and it depends on how both parties have agreed to work together. It's important to establish a partnership that is based on mutual respect.

What should the mentor do?

- Hold the process i.e., maintain an awareness of the time; although the conversation may explore many related areas, you should ensure that ultimately the focus stays on the main issue or goal, and retains a constructive tone; hold any boundaries that have been agreed
- Listen actively
- Try to observe rather than interpret what is being said by the mentee
- Summarise and reflect back in your own words what you think you have heard (and seen)

3. Tools and Models for Coaching and Mentoring

You may find useful in the course of the mentoring.

Coaching tool GROW

GOAL: What do you want to achieve?

REALITY: What is the current situation? Where are you now?

OPTIONS: What are the options available to you? (be creative and explorative, but also realistic and practical)

WILL: What will you do now? How much will do you have to do it?

(John Whitmore, Coaching for Performance, 1992)

CLEAR

Contract: establish the aims for the session

Listen: listen and understand what the mentee wants to achieve, and their situation

Explore: the situation, the options

Action: define and agree what the mentee is going to do

Review: review both the current session, and revisit at the beginning of the following session.

(Peter Hawkins and Nick Smith,
Coaching, Mentoring and Organizational Consultancy, 2006)

Drawing and Mind mapping

Using drawing to explore a situation or goal can sometimes open up new possibilities by engaging creativity. Another creative technique is to mind-map an issue, goal or situation. A mind map is a pictorial representation of an idea. The central concept, situation or idea is placed in the centre of a piece of paper and associated ideas are shown as radiating out from it.

(The Mind Map Book, Tony & Barry Buzan
or <http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/make-mind-map.htm>)

Journals

Keeping a mentoring journal is a way to capture and reflect on what has been discussed during sessions. You might simply record what was said; include your thoughts, feelings and any insights about the discussion. Or if you want to be more creative, some techniques are:

- Five minute sprint: take five minutes to answer these three questions: Who am I/Why am I here? What do I want?
- List of 100: take 20 minutes to make a list under one of these headings: 'What I want' 'How I feel'; 'Why not?'; 'Things to do'; 'People to see.'
- Perspectives: take 20 minutes to see thing from an altered point of view, e.g.: a year from today; roads not taken – what if?

(Anne Brockbank and Ian McGill,
Facilitating Reflective Learning through Mentoring and Coaching, 2006)

Walking and Talking

Changing the venue for the mentoring, or walking while you are talking can energise a session and bring fresh perspective.



Mentoring Scheme

Mentoring Agreement

This agreement is drawn up between

Mentee:

and

Mentor:

We are both voluntarily entering into this partnership. We wish this to be a rewarding experience, spending most of our time discussing developmental activities.

As your mentor I will:

- be focussed on you and your best interests, not just your goals
- endeavour to support and encourage you whilst you take responsibility and ownership of actions and reap the benefits of your efforts
- be open, objective and non-judgmental in enabling you to set and work towards you own goals
- be honest and provide constructive feedback and encouragement to help you to achieve your goals
- ensure the sessions are in a safe and suitable environment where growth and learning can occur.

As your mentee I will:

- communicate openly and honestly with you about my goals, challenges, and progress
- engage in the process and actively seek advice and assistance from you when needed
- not ask you to act on your behalf in any capacity outside of the mentoring relationship
- give suitable and helpful developmental feedback to you on how the process might be improved
- be receptive to the feedback and guidance provided by you.

Confidentiality:

As your mentor, I undertake to observe confidentiality regarding the nature and content of our discussions. The only time this would not be the case is where:

- there is unacceptable risk to yourself or others
- there are issues of breach of law or breach of contract
- other specific issues are identified and agreed between mentor and mentee which are inappropriate or incapable of being managed within the accountability of the mentoring relationship
- the University's Policies and Procedures are put at risk.

Cancellation:

If either of us wishes to change the date/time of a session, we will give at least 48 hours' notice, except in the case of an emergency.

Records:

Any records will be kept securely and are confidential.

No-Fault Termination

We are committed to open and honest communication in our relationship. We will discuss and attempt to resolve any conflicts or issues as they arise. Should either the mentor or mentee decide at any time that they no longer wish to continue with the relationship, the mentoring relationship will terminate.

Agreement:

We agree that:

1. The mentoring relationship will last for months. This period will be evaluated every three to six months and will end by amicable agreement once we have achieved as much as possible.
2. We will meet at least once every weeks. Meeting times, once agreed, should not be cancelled unless this is unavoidable. At the end of each meeting we will agree a date for the next meeting.
3. Each meeting will last a minimum of minutes and a maximum of minutes.
4. In between meetings we are both happy to be contacted by telephone/ email. Both parties agree to respond to e-mails within days.
5. We agree to focus on the following objectives during our mentoring sessions. These objectives may be revised as the programme progresses:

Mentee Name:

Signature:

Date:

Mentor Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please note that this document must be signed by both parties via [DocuSign](#).