

GUIDELINES – MENTORING PROGRAM

PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

1. These guidelines outline the features of the mentoring program. Ideally, these guidelines should be read by the participants at least once before the program starts, and they can be referred back to throughout the program if necessary.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Program aim

2. The aim of the STEP Australia mentoring program is to:
 - (a) provide an opportunity to share skills and experiences; and
 - (b) encourage personal growth,
for both the mentor and the mentee.

Is this a formal mentoring program?

3. This program is formal in that it has a formal application process, has a specific start and end date, there will be opportunities to provide feedback and support will be available.
4. The program is informal in the sense that once the mentoring match has been made, it will be up to the pair to decide when and how they want to conduct their mentoring sessions.

How long does the program run for?

5. The program runs for 9 months. Applications open in February. The program starts in March and finishes in November.

MENTORS AND MENTEES

Who is a mentor?

6. A mentor is typically an experienced practitioner and may include:
 - (a) an accredited specialist; or
 - (b) TEPs with sufficient experience.

Who is a mentee?

7. A mentee can be anyone and may include:
 - (a) an early career professional, whether young or mature aged; or
 - (b) someone who has been out of the work force for an extended period, for example, someone who has recently returned to practice after an extended period in a carer role.

Why should a mentor be part of the program?

8. There are numerous benefits to being a mentor in this program, including:
 - (a) an opportunity to give back to the profession;
 - (b) to develop mentoring, leadership and communication skills;
 - (c) to gain a new perspective and to see through the mentee's eyes; and
 - (d) broaden your connections and contacts.

Why would a mentee be involved in the program?

9. The benefits to a mentee in being part of a mentoring program are significant, including:
 - (a) an opportunity to be guided by a more experienced practitioner;
 - (b) to develop communication skills; and
 - (c) broaden your connections and contacts.

What if the mentor and the mentee are in separate states?

10. We aim to match mentees and mentors from within the same state and, where relevant, the preferences of the participants will be taken into account. However, this may not always be possible and a mentor and a mentee from different states may be matched.

What is the program not designed to do?

11. The program is not intended to:
 - (a) be used as an opportunity for a mentee to seek legal advice from the mentor; or
 - (b) introduce or facilitate employment opportunities.

STARTING OUT

Induction

12. Prior to program commencement, mentors and mentees will be provided with induction materials including information sheets and training videos (duration 1 to 1 ½ hours) and it is expected that the mentor and mentee will review and familiarise themselves with the information provided prior to the first meeting.

The first meeting

13. The pair should decide on a suitable date, time and place for the first meeting, whether face-to-face or virtually. At the first meeting, the participants should discuss the following:
 - (a) goals and objectives in participating in the program;
 - (b) a suitable time, place and frequency of meetings;
 - (c) preferred communication style and method;

- (d) extended periods of leave for either party that might impact on the meetings.

Regularity and duration of mentoring sessions

- 14. It is a matter for the pair to decide how frequently they will meet and for how long. We suggest a minimum of 1 hour per month.

FEEDBACK

- 15. The pair are encouraged to provide informal feedback to each other throughout the program.
- 16. All participants will be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback throughout the program and at the end of the program to assist with the improvement of the program.

ENDING THE RELATIONSHIP

The final meeting

- 17. The final meeting should reflect on:
 - (a) the initial goals and objectives and whether they have been achieved;
 - (b) any additional outcomes (good or bad) identified;
 - (c) consideration of formal feedback to assist in the improvement of the program; and
 - (d) acknowledgement of the time and effort expended by both parties to the relationship.

MANAGING CONCERNS

- 18. Occasionally, a mismatch may occur in which case the participants should consider whether it is worth continuing or terminating.
- 19. Circumstances may mean that the amount of time or availability to work with the mentee might no longer be suitable. It is a matter for the parties to the relationship to work out whether it is worth trying to change the arrangements, wait until circumstances change again, or look to find a different mentor for the mentee.
- 20. Should you have any queries or concerns regarding the program at all, contact your program administrator.