

Mentor Advantage Program Overview

The Federation University Mentor Advantage Program aims to create transformative mentoring relationships between our alumni and students that support our students to smoothly transition into employment and a rewarding career.

By activating our alumni network and fostering professional mentor relationships, our program contributes to Federation University's strategic objectives of Transforming Lives and Enhancing Communities.

We acknowledge this takes significant input from mentors and mentees and thank you for your participation in the program.

These guidelines to provide a framework for the participation of mentors and mentees in the program.

Our mentoring program offers both structure and flexibility. Each mentor and mentee pair will communicate, interact, and achieve their mentoring program goals differently – in the way that best suits their pair. We provide boundaries and recommendations that allow for each mentoring pair to decide on the format, frequency, and formality of the mentoring relationship.

Contents

[What is mentoring?](#)

[What are the benefits?](#)

[Am I suitable for this program?](#)

[What does the program involve?](#)

[Confidentiality](#)

[Respectful and safe mentoring relationships](#)

[What to do if things go wrong?](#)

[Insurance](#)

[Duty of Care](#)

[Related Policies and Guidelines](#)

[Contact us](#)

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to identify and achieve their goals. While mentoring relationships can often be developed spontaneously, the kind of mentoring we offer is conducted through a formal program.

Our career mentoring program allows student mentees to develop employability skills including, initiative, communication, relationship building and leadership. Mentoring is also a means of the mentee developing industry awareness and first-hand knowledge of the challenges of life in the workforce.

The mentor provides support, knowledge, encouragement, guidance, constructive feedback, and acts as sounding board to the mentee by developing a genuine interest in the growth of their abilities and talents.

A mentee actively seeks support and guidance in their career and professional development from an experienced planner. A mentee always has ultimate responsibility for their career and professional development.

An effective mentoring relationship is based upon mutual trust, commitment, encouragement, constructive feedback, openness, respect, and a willingness to learn and share.

What are the benefits?

MENTORS By participating in the program, you are likely to:

- Make a meaningful contribution to help a student grow and develop.
- Pass on some of your accumulated expertise and wisdom.
- Improve your job performance, particularly leadership and communication skills.
- Expand your professional network and earn recognition.
- Increase awareness of current theories taught in University.
- Have opportunity to reflect on your role and professional history.
- Discover latent skills.
- Gain personal satisfaction from contributing to community and industry.

MENTEES By participating in the program, you are likely to:

- Develop practical skills and confidence.
- Build professional network and support.
- Increase confidence to enter your chosen field.
- Expand your industry knowledge and better understand current professional practices and trends.
- Learn what employers look for when hiring in your chosen field.
- Practice skills to improve your employability.
- Receive support and guidance to identify and pursue career goals.

Am I suitable for this program?

MENTORS

We are always keen to find mentors for our program. Our mentors bring their unique professional skills and experiences from across a vast range of industries and their contribution is highly valued.

An effective mentor is someone who:

- Has the time and interest to commit to develop a meaningful mentoring relationship across the six month program.
- Possesses good listening and communication skills.
- Enjoys helping others.
- Is willing and able to share industry knowledge and professional skills.

Our intake process will help you determine if the program is a good fit for you. At this time our mentors must be alumni of Federation University, Federation TAFE, University of Ballarat, or other such historic institutions.

MENTEES

Your interest in this program alone is a good sign that it might be a fit for you. Being a mentee requires no special skills, but there are certain attitudes you can bring to the program that will help you succeed.

Mentees must be current students of Federation University Australia (this includes Federation TAFE). Our intake process will help us determine your suitability for the program and match you with a relevant mentor.

An effective mentee is some who:

- Has the time and interest to commit to meeting monthly for six months and develop a meaningful mentoring relationship.
- Desires to develop themselves, acquire new skills, and improve competence.
- Is open to new experiences.
- Will be proactive in following through with commitments such as attending preparing for and mentoring meetings.

What does the program involve?

After contacting the Career and Employability team, mentors and mentees will move through an intake process to check your suitability for the program. Mentees will undertake compulsory online training. Mentors have the option to seek further support with program expectations and identifying mentoring skills.

Our program is student-driven, we know the best results are achieved when the students have a say in who they match with. Using our system students can filter from

a list of all available mentors to choose their match. The student, via the program staff, submits an expression of interest and the mentor decides if the match will go ahead.

Initially, the mentor and student will have a brief 'getting to know you' meeting online. After this they will decide if they wish to match. Should they decide to match, the mentor and student will negotiate the terms of the mentoring agreement.

Thereafter the participants may follow our meeting framework, or the mentor and mentee may craft their own. The suggested meeting framework can be found at [federation.edu.au/mentor-advantage](https://www.federation.edu.au/mentor-advantage).

All participants are expected to adhere to the following code of conduct:

- Read program guidelines, polices, and complete any required training.
- Sign and submit a mentoring agreement after their first meeting.
- Agree on a mentoring schedule and set goals for the mentee to work towards.
- Meet regularly, ideally monthly, for six months.
- Attend meetings and follow up with action items.
- Be professional, respectful and observe confidentiality.
- Be punctual and provide adequate warning of changes to plans.
- Respond to communications in a timely manner.
- Contact the Program Coordinator with any concerns or questions.
- Participate in program evaluations and provide feedback as required.

Confidentiality

Effective mentor relationships are built on mutual trust. So, it is important for participants to adopt a simple and clear standard regarding information shared during mentoring sessions.

You will discuss and agree what confidentiality means for you both and how you will handle confidential matters at your first meeting. If you're not sure at any time then we advise that, unless you have explicit permission from the other party, assume information shared is confidential.

When can information be shared?

1. **Evaluation:** you can share information with program staff for the purposes of evaluation.

Information about the quality of the interaction may be shared with the program staff for the purposes of evaluation of the program. For example, surveys and evaluative interviews. Information shared will be kept confidential by the mentor program staff (unless specific permission is otherwise sought from the mentor/mentee) and only anonymised data about the program will be shared in wider circles.

2. **Monitoring:** you should share information with program staff for the purposes of supporting the development of effective mentoring relationships.

Either mentor or mentee should share concerns about the mentor-mentee relationship with the mentor program staff. For example, difficulties establishing rapport, or difficulties organising meetings. In these circumstances, the staff can support the mentor or mentee. If difficulties persist, the mentor relationship may be terminated, and a new match sought without any fault on either party.

3. **Peer support:** mentors may share de-identified information about their experience in the program for the purpose of peer support and advice.

The University will provide opportunities for mentors to get together and share problems and advice about supporting student mentees. At such events, or in University administered online forums, mentors may share information without providing any identifying information about their student mentee.

4. **Misconduct or wellbeing concern:** you ***must*** share information with program staff if misconduct occurs or if you have concerns about the wellbeing of your mentor/mentee.

Where serious concerns arise, such as inappropriate conduct by either party, mentors or mentees must report to program staff. Mentor program staff may refer cases to relevant services who can confidentially support the complainant. The confidentiality and wishes of the complainant will be respected as much as possible. In extraordinary cases of misconduct by mentors or mentees, staff may be bound by legislation to report to line manager and authorities.

Respectful and safe mentoring relationships

Mentors and mentees bring preconceptions about what a mentoring relationship may look like. An essential first step in the mentor relationship is a discussion of expectations and negotiation of appropriate boundaries. This occurs at the first meeting of mentor and mentee.

These guidelines will assist by providing some pointers on effective and respectful relationships and explicitly identifying what conduct is not appropriate.

In an effective mentoring relationship, both parties:

- Meet regularly and are prepared for their meetings.
- Know when it is OK to contact one another outside of scheduled meetings and by what means (e.g. email, phone, LinkedIn message).
- Respond in a timely fashion to communication from the other.
- Feel comfortable to raise feedback about what is and isn't with the other.
- Know where to go for support when things aren't working.

A mentoring relationship is a supportive professional relationship, where there is a power imbalance between the mentor and mentee. Therefore, the kinds of behaviour standards and expectations that apply in a workplace between a manager and an employee are best adopted in a mentoring relationship.

For example, to maintain a professional mentoring relationship, meetings should be held in spaces such as an office/workplace, cafe/restaurant, on campus at the University, library, or other public locations. It is not appropriate to meet in a private residence or home office.

We've provided some examples below to help clarify what inappropriate or disrespectful conduct might look like:

Inappropriate communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalking/friending your partner on their personal social media accounts. • Contacting your partner unnecessarily frequently, such as several times a day. • Contacting your partner very late in the evening.
Inappropriate relationship style.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing overly personal details or seeking overly personal details about your partner. • Giving your partner personal compliments (such as about their appearance), or gifts. • Seeking a romantic connection with your partner. • Seeking to meet in settings such as a private residence or bar.
Inappropriate expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expecting your mentor to secure you a job. • Expecting your mentee to owe you for your mentoring.

What to do if things go wrong?

A helpful first step, if you feel comfortable to do so, can be to discuss any concerns you are having with your partner and try to resolve things and reach an agreement together. Avoid trying to work out who is to blame and focusing on trying to find a solution together.

If this doesn't work, or you don't feel comfortable to discuss the problem with your mentor, please contact program staff at alumnimentoring@federation.edu.au.

Any time you would like advice and support with your mentoring connection, to report a concern, or to seek a new match - you are welcome to contact mentor program staff.

Either mentor or mentee may at any time choose to end the relationship. You can do this by notifying your partner directly. You may also ask program staff to speak to your partner on your behalf. Either way, please inform the program staff.

The mentoring program has a 'no blame, no fault' attitude to matches not working out. If it is OK if your match doesn't work out, sometimes people have personalities that don't click. If you wish to, you will be supported to find another match.

Insurance

Students participating in Mentor Advantage Program are covered under University Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance policy. Should an injury or incident occur whilst attending a meeting on campus, an incident report will need to be completed and forwarded to the Program Coordinator. Contact the Program Coordinator for support at alumnimentoring@federation.edu.au.

Whilst attending a mentor meeting at a public place any incidents or injury will fall under the associated Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance policy.

Duty of Care

Duty of care requires that mentors undertake all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of mentees. A full induction of mentees into safe working procedures during office or site visits must be conducted to ensure Occupational Health and Safety standards are known and adhered to.

To maintain a professional mentoring relationship, meetings should be held in spaces such as an office/workplace, cafe/restaurant, on campus at the University, library, or other public locations. It is not appropriate to meet in a private residence or home office.

Mentees and mentors must always agree to behave in an ethical and responsible manner. If you feel any uncertainty or discomfort within the mentoring relationship, please contact the program coordinator immediately.

All participants must sign a Mentoring Agreement form for compliance purposes.

Related Policies and Guidelines

[Higher Education Graduate Policy](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

Contact us

Should you have any queries, concerns, or feedback contact alumnimentoring@federation.edu.au