**The Faculty of Brain Sciences**

**Professional & Technical Services**

**Mentoring Scheme Handbook**

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# About the Scheme

## What is it?

A mentoring scheme intended to support the career development for all staff with Professional & Technical Services (P&TS) roles from across all parts of the Faculty of Brain Sciences (FBS).

## Why has it been developed?

* Previous schemes have been more geared towards providing support to academics and researchers and sometimes only to women in those categories.
* There has not been anything (Faculty wide) that acknowledges the specific challenges PS&T staff face, related to: a) flat role hierarchies or b) career pathways.
* A need was identified for more dedicated career support for P&TS staff who previously may have felt overlooked by the mentoring schemes available.

## How has it been developed?

Athena SWAN leads from across FBS came together, pooling knowledge and resources to define a scheme that would work best for staff from across the Faculty. All six Divisions/Institutes in FBS have a dedicated mentoring lead who has co-designed the scheme and whom you can contact if you have any queries. In addition, the co-chairs have oversight over the whole scheme.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Division/Institute** | **P&TS Mentoring Leads** |
| Faculty of Brain Sciences | Christine Gaston (co-chair); Kate Faxen (Comms lead) |
| Division of Psychology and Language Sciences (PALS), including Institute of Cognitive Science | Cristina Gardini |
| Institute of Neurology (IoN), including Dementia Research Institute | Elizabeth Halton (co-chair) |
| Division of Psychiatry | Sarah Dowling |
| Institute of Ophthalmology | Susan Sandford Smith |
| Ear Institute | Neil Roberts |
| Institute of Prion Diseases | Mark Batchelor |

Alice Chilver, Head of Communities of Practice, has been working with us to ensure synergy with UCL wide provision and plans related to mentoring, together with the central Organisational Development team.

## Why should I get involved?

The importance of mentoring is increasingly being recognised across the Faculty and UCL as an impactful way to further personal and professional development.

As such, the Faculty appraisal ‘checklist’ now includes a question asking if you are involved in a mentoring scheme (as a mentor, mentee, or both). Your involvement will be recognised as an important part of your career development.

In addition, the training sessions provided to join the FBS scheme will give you useful information to widen your understanding of UCL: the way it works and the career pathways available. They will also provide a networking session where you can meet a variety of staff from all levels across FBS.

Being a mentor may help to:

* Enhance professional reputation
* Develop professional relationships
* Enhance peer recognition
* Increase people skills
* See your own advice put into action, with positive results

Being a mentee may help to:

* Obtain impartial advice outside of your line management structure
* Develop a supportive relationship that facilitates the sharing of ideas
* Acquire assistance with problem solving
* Work toward defined career objectives

## Who is eligible?

Any Professional & Technical Services staff member. The principles of the scheme are grounded in inclusivity and not limited by gender, grade, location, Division/Institute or roles.

Mentors from SLMS (School level) and UCL will also be sought to broaden opportunities for pairing, especially at higher grades.

We are happy to trust your ability to self-identify as being eligible. In other words, if you think you are part of this group, then please sign up. It is not necessary to verify your eligibility at any stage, although your mentoring lead may recommend an alternative scheme to you if they feel it may be more helpful. Most Divisions/Institutes also have mentoring schemes for Early Career Researchers and Academic staff.

You can be a mentor AND a mentee. This is highly recommended, especially for those in middle seniority level positions (e.g. grades 7-8).

# Definitions of mentoring

## What is mentoring?

The term mentoring broadly means a relationship in which one person supports another with regular guidance and feedback so that the mentee can develop their potential. This has different interpretations and as a result there are many types of mentors one can have—all valid.

However, for the purposes of this scheme, we would like to restrict our interpretation to the definition below for clarity and structure:

*Mentoring is a relationship between two parties who are not connected within a line management structure. The mentor should be more experienced than the mentee and should guide the mentee towards an agreed objective. It involves an ongoing relationship which is usually time limited.*

Mentoring is **not** a counselling session, nor is it a chance for the mentor to tell the mentee what they should do in a directive manner.

## Role of mentor

* When matched, you should be more experienced than and not a line manager of your mentee
* Be an active listener, maintaining interest and focus on mentee’s agenda; it is not a time for you to tell the mentee about all the things and choices you’ve made in your life
* Provide a framework while encouraging mentee to take responsibility for content (structure may depend on mentee e.g. some may benefit from a more exploratory style conversation/relationship).Constructively challenge the mentee or provide sympathy, as appropriate
* Take an interest in the mentee’s progress
* Be professional: be punctual; respect agreed ground rules

## Role of mentee

* When matched, you should be less experienced than and not line managed by your mentor; if you feel uncomfortable divulging information to your mentor for any reason, you should discuss this with your respective Mentoring Lead (see above table)
* Be in control of the agenda and take responsibility for your own development. Your mentor can help you with your direction; however, it’s up to you to make it happen
* Commit to attending planned sessions and completing agreed action points
* Be open to being challenged by the mentor
* Be professional: be punctual; respect agreed ground rules

# Structure of the scheme

## How do I join the scheme?

You can attend a training session, which we plan to run at least twice a year. If you would like to join in between sessions, get in touch with your Division/Institute Mentoring Lead and you will be given information on how to complete a sign up form so we can pair you, as well as information on any upcoming training opportunities.

## Will I get training?

Yes, we plan to run training and development days at least twice a year. You will receive training on how to be a good mentor and mentee from experts in mentoring from UCL Organisational Development. You will also have an opportunity to network and develop skills and knowledge around Professional Services at UCL.

This handbook should also help guide you in between training sessions.

## How is pairing done?

You will be asked to complete a sign up form, asking basic questions about your mentoring needs. The Mentoring Leads across the Faculty will then confer and use this information to find you a suitable match. Your first session will be a ‘chemistry’ meeting, after which you (as either the mentor or mentee) have the opportunity to let us know if you think the matching isn’t ideal and we can re-pair you.

## When does the mentorship end?

Although a mentoring relationship can be ongoing, we recommend that a year is usually a good amount of time for the mentee to get what they need out of the relationship and hopefully will have moved to the next challenge.

As a result, we contact mentors and mentees after a year to get feedback and ask if they would like to be re-paired or not.

In addition, it is important to note that it can be beneficial to have numerous different mentors who can comment on your career and life in different ways and offer varying perspectives.

# Meetings

## First meeting

The first meeting should be treated as a ‘chemistry’ meeting to identify if the mentor and mentee are compatible. Either the mentor or the mentee can decide not to pursue the relationship further after the first meeting.

Most chemistry meetings will go well. However, a small number may not and this could be for a number of reasons, such as personal style, individuals’ availability and differing expectations. Should this happen then either party can contact their Mentoring Lead who will help you find an alternative mentor.

## Drawing up an agreement

If the mentor and mentee agree to continue the relationship, an agreement should be made and recorded, if helpful (see template at end of Handbook).

* **Frequency of meetings**: Recommend 3-4 meetings over 12 months but will depend on objectives involved
* **Duration of meetings**: Recommend 1 hour; however, time restrictions, should be considered
* **Location**: This should be somewhere private where both parties feel they can speak openly; over the phone or Skype meetings are also possible where meeting to face to face is difficult.

Take care not to arrange meetings in locations where personal and professional lines are easily blurred, e.g. a pub.

* **Preferred method of contact**: e.g. email, telephone
* **Objectives**: Specific short and long term goals
* **Method of record keeping / tracking goals**
* **Expectations of mentor / mentee**: e.g. the extent of a mentee’s tolerance for constructive challenging
* **Confidentiality and ground rules**: e.g. what will and won’t be discussed. Please see below for more on confidentiality.
* **Decide how to determine when the mentoring relationship has served its purpose** and can come to an end: Recommend that relationships generally last 1 year and the Leads will contact you after 1 year to see how things are going. But the relationship can continue after this date if both parties agree.

Subject to mentor availability, mentees will have an opportunity to be paired again at this time and mentors will be able to take on a new mentee.

## Subsequent meetings

At each meeting, the actions and goals should be reviewed along with progress in relation to the mentoring sessions. It is also important to evaluate the mentoring process, especially at midpoint, to identify if any changes need to be made. This may include whether the practical arrangements are working well, whether the mentor’s style and approach is appropriate for the mentee, and whether the mentoring sessions should continue.

Topics for discussion will be agreed between mentor and mentee. These are likely to include (but not necessarily be limited to):

* Career development
* Training opportunities
* Developing professional networks
* Management and leadership experience
* Promotion
* Work/life balance
* Role transition

## Confidentiality

For the mentoring relationship to succeed, it must be confidential. Any information that the mentor receives about the organisation or other individuals will be kept confidential and not relayed to co-workers or exploited for personal gain.

The exception to this will be in the case of information which the mentor believes shows the organisation, the mentee or another individual to be at risk. In these cases, the mentor will discuss the course of action with the mentee before talking to the appropriate contact as detailed in the section below. In addition, the mentor may, in general terms, relay concerns expressed by more than one mentee, e.g. where there is a concern about a procedure or policy.

## What happens if things go wrong?

Taking early action is always best.

Typical issues may be:

• Mentor/mentee constantly cancelling appointments

• Not getting on

• Breaking confidence

Please contact your Divisional Mentoring Lead in case of any issues such as these.

If you feel the life or livelihood of your mentee or another member of staff is at serious risk, the below contacts may be more appropriate.

For serious mental health / non-work related issues

* **UCL’s Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year for staff. Students can access the service between 5pm to 9am weekdays and 24/7 at weekends and during UCL Closure periods.
* **Care first** is an independent and confidential counselling, advice and support service, covering consumer, debt and legal information services, wellbeing web pages and short-term counselling. Contact them in confidence: T: **0800 197 4510**  Log in information on the OHS EAP page: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/occ_health/eap.php>.

For serious situations between members of UCL staff or similar

* Your Divisional HR Lead or Divisional/Institute Manager
* Faculty HR Business Partners: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/people> Scroll down to Faculty Business Partners and find Lead or Principal HR Business Partners.

# Tips on being a good mentor

## GROW model

The **GROW** model (or process) is a simple method for goal setting and problem solving.

**Goal:** Defining what you want to achieve

**Reality:** Exploring the current situation, relevant history and future trends

**Options:** Coming up with new ideas for reaching the goal

**What/who/when:** Deciding on a plan of action

## Examples of questions mentors could ask

These questions may help a mentee increase their self-awareness of the situation. These questions can help you improve your communication and understanding of the individual.

**Identification of issue:**

What do you make of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

How do you feel about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

What concerns you the most about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

What seems to be your main obstacle?

What is holding you back from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

**Further information:**

What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

Tell me more about it.

What else?

What have you tried so far?

What will you have to do to get the job done?

What support do you need to accomplish \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

**Hypothetical:**

If you could do it over again what would you do differently?

If you could do this any way you wanted, what would you do?

**Outcomes:**

How do you want \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to turn out?

What do you want?

What is your desired outcome?

**Planning:**

What do you plan to do about it?

What kind of plan do you need to create to accomplish \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

How do you suppose you could improve the situation?

**In relation to:**

If you do this, how will it affect \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ?

How does this affect \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

What else do you need to consider?

**Taking Action:**

What will you do? When will you do it?

How will I know you did it?

What are your next steps?

# Tips on being a good mentee

1. Remember that your mentor is a volunteer

It’s important to remember that your mentor is a volunteer; they are offering you help with a skill set that they have more experience in, so there also must be a healthy boundary.

2. Take responsibility for your own learning

Remember that you are being led to water, your mentor can’t force you to drink. She or he has the potential to equip you with a knowledge they possess, but only if you are willing to take responsibility and absorb all the knowledge you can.

3. Develop trust

A mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor; a guide used as a tool for one’s own self-improvement.

4. Be respectful of your mentor’s time

A mentor has a lot of potential for helping; but keep in mind they are most likely a very busy person. If you need to reschedule something, make sure to give at least 24 hours’ notice.

5. Set realistic expectations with your mentor

The mentor is a guide, not a miracle worker. They are not a life coach, they are professionals who are invested to help you cultivate your skill and proficiency.

6. Come to each meeting with a prepared agenda

This tip ties in with respecting your mentor’s time and setting realistic expectations. If you have a prepared task list or set of intentions to achieve with your mentor, you are much more likely to stay on task and optimise the time you have together.

7. Be open about your needs and provide feedback to your mentor

Make sure you are being open about the things being implemented, and your comfort level with the insight you are receiving. If your mentor is doing an exceptional job, do not hesitate to let them know, and show your gratitude. If you need a little more help with one topic, let them know; they are there for your benefit.

8. Recognize your mentor’s limitations and appreciate their support

There are levels of limitations in your mentor’s skill area where they might not be as proficient as you might hope; this is okay, and in fact just human nature. Capitalise on the skills they do excel in, and appreciate the support given.

9. Take appropriate risks

The mentoring relationship offers you the rare opportunity of having someone committed to your progress toward goals. The mentor will help you think about ways to remove barriers and actions you can take. However, without trying some new actions, there may be little substance to the mentoring. Try new actions, assess what you learned, and use this to guide the mentoring conversations.

10. Be flexible, keep an open mind, and have fun

Be prepared to step outside your comfort zone. The mentoring experience will hopefully be one you look back on throughout your career. And, while there is serious work involved, don't forget to have fun; laugh with your mentor, be adventurous and don't take things so seriously as to get in your own way!

# Mentoring agreement template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meeting logistics**Where, when, how often, length of meetings, etc |  |
| **Contact between meetings** |  |
| **Learning goals / objectives**  |  |
| **Record keeping / goal tracking** How to measure progress |  |
| **Expectations / style of mentoring** How you like to be challenged |  |
| **Rules** What will and won’t be discussed  |  |
| **Reviewing the relationship**How and how often; how will you know when the mentoring has served its purpose and should come to an end |  |
|  |  |
| **Mentee**  |   **Date:** |
| **Mentor** |   **Date:** |