# **Mentoring Appointing the Mentor**

All Proleptic Fellows and Lecturers new to teaching will be given a mentor appointed by the Head of Department. Teaching Fellows should also be appointed a mentor at their request. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff may request a mentor through B-MEntor (see section 22 below). The following Appendix primarily summarises the academic mentoring scheme. Mentors need to be appointed before, or soon after the new employee starts, so that introductions can be made during the induction process and the mentor/mentee relationship can quickly become established.

**Who can be a Mentor?**

The role of a mentor is that of confidant and critical friend, someone who can provide encouragement and assist in the development of the probationer’s professional expertise. The mentor should be someone from outside the individual’s immediate work team, with whom they can share dilemmas, concerns and issues.

A mentor/mentee partnership is more likely to be successful if the partners have similar academic values and research/teaching interests. For this reason it is usually helpful if Heads of Department consult both the individual and any prospective mentor before reaching a decision on any pairing.

Experience has shown that the key factor for successful mentoring is the commitment of the mentor to enhance the professional development of the Research Fellow/Lecturer.

Anyone can be a mentor if they:

* work at UCL;
* are willing to engage and fulfil the responsibility of a mentor and maintain their own continuous professional development (CPD);
* strive for excellence in teaching and are aware of recent developments in learning and teaching;
* are prepared to spend some time observing teaching sessions given by the Research Fellow/Lecturer and to give formative feedback.

However the most successful mentors are often:

* a member of staff relatively close in experience to the new employee, who will recall ‘what it’s like to be new at UCL’

Or

* a more senior and experienced member of staff with whom the Probationary Lecturer or Research Fellow shares academic interests and who can become a good role model.

The Head of Department will make the final decision over the choice of mentor and will want to be sure that those who agree to become mentors understand and value the role and are prepared to undertake it.

## **The Mentor/Mentee relationship**

Mentoring is an informal, confidential and supportive process: the mentor does not have a management role in relation to the probationer and should not therefore be a Head of Department or appraiser.

The mentor/probationer relationship is intended to be a partnership that informs and strengthens the probationer’s academic activities through joint evaluation and discussion. The success of the relationship depends upon the commitment brought to it by both partners. The ideal partnership establishes a trust and mutual respect that encourages a free exchange of views and experiences, to the benefit of both parties.

The ways in which the mentor/mentee relationship will function will vary according to the individuals concerned and the kind of working relationship they build together. At the beginning of the process the mentor and mentee should discuss how and when discussions/meetings will be arranged, as a pattern of regular meetings may be useful. However both parties may agree to an ad hoc arrangement, to allow the mentee to initiate meetings whenever necessary, so any queries or concerns they have in connection with their work or departmental routines and procedures can be discussed as soon as they arise.

Mentors are not expected to know all the answers. They should aim to be a source of support to the mentee, an access point for information about the department and UCL and a channel for contact with others. In this way they can provide a means of entry to a useful network of contacts and support for a new member of staff.

## **Support for the Teaching Role**

Mentors have a responsibility for helping probationers to develop their teaching expertise in the discipline. This is an ongoing role throughout the probationary period and one that can significantly influence the teaching aspirations and standards of a newly appointed colleague.

One of the mentor’s key responsibilities is to observe probationers teach in various student learning situations and give constructive and confidential feedback. The probationer will need to advise the mentor of appropriate opportunities for this purpose and to discuss how such observation can be managed as naturally and unobtrusively as possible.

## **Support for the Research Role**

Where staff are engaged in their own individual research, the ideal situation is for the mentor to be sufficiently conversant with the field of study to advise on research as well as teaching. However, in some situations the Head of Department may need to appoint another member of the department specifically to take responsibility for advising a probationer on research.

The most frequently voiced requests for advice and support for the research role concern setting up a research project and help with grant applications. Less experienced researchers may need help with writing papers, making presentations, setting and achieving research targets and getting their work published. It should also be noted that the Organisational Development team normally provides courses dealing with most of these matters.

## **Support for Managing workload**

Prioritising and planning work within the time available can be challenging for those whose experience of managing the conflicting demands of teaching, research and administration may be limited. In addition, some new employees will be keen to become fully involved in the department and may accrue departmental responsibilities very quickly. However the mentor can usually provide some helpful advice on managing workload, where necessary.

## **Expected outcomes**

The expected outcomes of a successful mentoring relationship for both parties are:

The new Lecturer or Research Fellow (Mentee)

is clear about her/his role in the team in the Department and at UCL especially knowing how to manage time and activities for which they are responsible (research and teaching including curriculum and assessment design and review, delivery of courses and marking as appropriate)

* has been stimulated and challenged in her/his own thinking and approaches to their teaching, research and personal contribution to the Department
* has understood how to make the most of opportunities to develop their research within the context of the discipline / Department at UCL
* has benefited from several Peer Observation of Teaching sessions and received constructive feedback on her/his approach to their teaching
* has received support with their work towards the completion of the Arena if appropriate.

The Mentor

* has clear evidence of an enabling responsibility within the Department, showing the ability to develop and motivate colleagues 31
* has developed new staff development skills (through facilitating research in a less experienced member of staff, coaching them towards a greater understanding of learning and teaching and helping them to identify opportunities for knowledge transfer to the wider community)
* had contributed to the leadership of the Department through the integration of new staff within a successful research and teaching team
* has added to the evidence of their own professional development, thus contributing to their own career planning

## **Other routes to mentoring**

There are some places available each year for B-MEntor, the cross-institutional mentoring scheme for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) academics and researchers. For further details and how to apply, go to <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/equalities/race/BMEntor.php>.