

GRADUATE CENTRE IN GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Governance and Public Policy International Relations Peace and Conflict Studies

Welcome to the Career Mentor Program!

The Career Mentor Program allows you to connect with a motivated student, and nurture a future member of your profession by supporting their transition from university to the workplace.



Support, advice,
Guidance & assistance



Provide industry networking
opportunities



Help them stand out
from the crowd

The Mentor's Role

The mentor provides valuable knowledge, skills and information gained from years of professional experience and are dedicated to nurturing the new generation of industry professionals.

The Mentee's Role

A mentee is a student looking to benefit from their mentor's knowledge and guidance to assist with the transition between university and the workplace. They are responsible for their own learning and as such, often drive the process.

Mentor Responsibilities	Mentee Responsibilities
Provide industry information, insight & knowledge	Contact mentor, schedule meetings and provide feedback on sessions
Listen with an open mind, challenge and encourage the exploration of ideas	Work to develop trust and foster the mentor relationship
Facilitate mentee learning	Communicate expectations, needs and feelings
Provide career development strategies for achieving development goals	Deeply consider career goals and aspirations, and discuss these openly with mentor
Teach specific skills including career planning, goal setting, job seeking and resume writing	Take responsibility for learning, embracing it with enthusiasm and commitment
Coach a healthy work lifestyle and attitude	Listen and take appropriate action
Provide feedback on observed performance	Learn to accept feedback and use it positively

Goals and Expectations

Before meeting with your mentee and entering into the mentoring relationship, it is important for both parties to formulate a plan of what they wish to achieve from the experience.

Before being matched with their mentor, students must attend a compulsory briefing session and are asked to identify some specific and achievable goals before meeting with their mentor. To reach these goals, they should have some objectives listed also.

Sample student objectives

- Expand my network within my industry to include on average two new contacts a month.
- Improve both my written applications and resume
- Increase my awareness of a real organisational setting by familiarising myself with my mentor's workplace both through questioning my mentor and a site visit in the mid-year break (as appropriate).

A good place to start in your first meeting is to ask your mentee to outline what their goals and expectations are, and to ensure that they are congruent with what you wish to achieve. It is also advised to ensure that you a) can, and b) are willing to, work towards their expectations.

What do Students Expect from Their Mentor?

Students want their mentor:

- To be approachable, positive, accessible, available, supportive, encouraging, open and honest
- To have a genuine interest in assisting students
- To listen and offer constructive criticism and advice
- To be available, contact often, dedicate time to mentoring, respond to emails and telephone calls
- To discuss everything – with real life explanations and advice
- To talk about career paths, career guidance, networking advice and job applications
- To offer workplace visits, work experience or a reference (as appropriate)

Post Graduate Students

You may find post graduate students already have a vast background of experience, and are looking for advice and/or networking from their mentor rather than work experience or exposure to a workplace. You might also find mature age students have more focus and clarity on what they want to do when they graduate.

Mature age students usually express a wish for older and more experienced mentors, and we do try to accommodate this, although our matching is based on common professional interests.

What Mentors SHOULD NOT do for Students

All students

- Be the driver of the relationship and continually chase up contact with their student – motivation and follow through are needed by the student
- Be a professional referee before getting to know their student
- Be expected to provide students with work experience if this is not appropriate – however work experience is a very welcome addition to the mentoring experience if available and appropriate

International Students

- Assist students gain permanent residency or work visas.
- Sponsor students to stay in Australia.
- Be an English tutor, or correct grammar and English language in assignments.

If you have any concerns about the Program, your mentee or your mentoring relationship at any time, please contact the Graduate Centre Manager on 07 3443 3125 or email polsis.gradcentre@uq.edu.au.

Time limits

There is no right or wrong answer to the question of how much time you should allow for mentoring activities. Each mentoring pair should determine their own schedule based on their availability. It is important to set limits at your first meeting (record these on your agreement form), for how much time you are willing to provide. This will set the framework for your mentoring relationship. On average mentors and mentees report spending **one hour per fortnight** on mentor related activities, some relationships are more active, and others not as much. Mentoring activities can include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Emails
- Telephone calls
- Networking events
- Workplace visits
- Instant messaging

Contacting your Mentee

Students often do not check their email every day. It is important to discuss from the outset some rules put in place, e.g. Turnaround time of one week on emails perhaps. You also need to manage the student's expectations– if they are expecting a daily email relationship with you and you are overwhelmed by emails every day, then you will struggle to give a timely response.

Insurance

Insurance for the Graduate Centre in Governance and International Affairs Career Mentor Program covers students undertaking site/office visits and unpaid work experience at their mentor's place of work, or in a work setting organized through their mentor. Work experience and/or site/office visits must be related to the student's field of study and supervised either by their mentor or by someone appointed by their mentor.

UQ carries four insurance policies within the Career Mentor Program: *Public Liability, Professional Liability, Malpractice Personal Accident and Work Cover Work experience*.

For more information on the policies, please use the insurance link on the UQ website

<https://my.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/manage-my-program/fees-payments-and-refunds/university-insurance>

Mentoring Agreement

A mentoring contract or written agreement is a tool that mentees and mentors may use to formalise the arrangement and pre-plan activities. Whilst not binding, a contract allows both parties clarity on what they wish to achieve out of the process and begins thought as to how to achieve both sets of objectives. Please note this contract is not a static document and should be amendable by both parties at any time.

Whilst this is not a requirement of the Career Mentor Program, developing a contract allows some parties to feel more committed to the process and can be a useful starting point for discussions. If you choose not to use a contract in a written format, it is recommended you specify how you will ensure your mentoring relationship will meet expectations and achieve set objectives. Whether you choose a formal or informal contract, a written set of goals and operating procedures, or a verbal discussion on what you wish to achieve, it is often useful to have *something* specified in writing. Below is an example mentoring agreement.

Example Mentoring Agreement

Date of commencement:

Name of mentor: _____ Name of mentee: _____

We agree to the following:

We have agreed on the following goals and objectives as the focus of this mentoring relationship:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Communication methods and frequency

Here you can outline the frequency and nature of the meetings and the contact you anticipate. Think about any restrictions regarding contact. E.g. Not during working hours, preferably by email, mobile phone contact is allowed etc.

As the mentor I undertake to.....

Summarise the responsibilities agreed to achieve objectives. E.g. Introduce the mentee to relevant networks and colleagues; Provide feedback on the mentee's progress towards learning objectives; Advise on relevant professional reading etc.

As the mentee I undertake to.....

Summarise the responsibilities agreed to by the mentee to achieve the objectives. E.g. Keep a reflective journal; Attend two networking functions during the year; Seek additional avenues of learning etc.

Activities

Bullet point some concrete activities or topics of discussion that will help the mentor and mentee achieve their goals. This section may need a page of its own!!

Problems/Help:

Specify ways in which you will seek help or overcome difficulties as they arise. E.g. Keep open lines of communication and be honest and tactful when broaching difficulties, Request assistance from the Graduate Centre Manager Career if needed, keep regular contact by phone if meeting face-to-face

Other:

You may wish to include any other items of importance to the mentoring partnership. E.g. Confidentiality; Time periods where one party will be away etc.

Review of the mentoring partnership

You may wish to agree to come back to your objectives and action plan periodically to reflect on the achievements made and to consider whether there should be any adjustments or new objectives.

Suggested Discussion Topics and Activities

Mentees should be the drivers of the relationship, but it is also helpful if mentors have suggestions on what both parties can do within the mentoring relationship.

Below is a list of suggested discussions and activities. This list is not exhaustive, and some ideas may not be applicable or appropriate for your industry. You may also have your own ideas about how you would like to structure the mentoring relationship with your mentee. If you should like to contribute suggestions to the list below, please email the Graduate Centre manager at polsis.gradcentre@uq.edu.au.

Discussions to be had:

Practical ideas to implement:

<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss your background and career path to date	<input type="checkbox"/> Resume critique from an employer's point of view
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss key tasks and duties of your current position	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback on letters of application for positions
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore your mentee's current career goals and career path expectations within the field	<input type="checkbox"/> Interview preparation and practice
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss areas of specialisation and job opportunities within the field and specifically for graduates	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow your mentee to shadow you or another staff member, giving exposure to daily activities for a greater appreciation of what the job involves
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange access to a recent graduate to give insight on what your mentee can expect as a new graduate in their organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow your mentee to attend meetings and hold follow up discussions
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore strategies aimed at improving your mentee's ability to gain employment in the field	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow your mentee to accompany you to association events, seminars, or training and development activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Assist your mentee in choosing subjects	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide networking opportunity with others in the department/industry
<input type="checkbox"/> Assist your mentee with understanding registration pathways and requirements, e.g. psychology, CPA	<input type="checkbox"/> Show your mentee around your workplace and explain how different roles rely upon each other
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss current trends, issues, and areas of interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Involve your mentee in a project, with achievable outcomes for both parties
<input type="checkbox"/> Examine the relationship between theory and practice, i.e. discussing a university assignment from a practical viewpoint	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the opportunity to gain practical work experience (if appropriate)
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss ethical considerations of your industry's practice and conduct	<input type="checkbox"/> Show your mentee past examples of work completed and assess why it was, or was not, successful or effective

Distance Relationship Advice

A distance mentoring relationship is one where mentor and student are physically separated as one or both parties are not located in South East Queensland, and have limited opportunities to meet in person. The aim of students joining the Career Mentor Program often includes being able to gain industry experience, networking opportunities and/or exposure to a real profession. These objectives can be difficult to meet in a distance relationship and creative solutions need to be found and/or objectives of the student moderated.

Points of Difference/Problems within Distance Relationships

The main difficulties that participants report focus around the issues of contact and building rapport. It is easier to lose contact via an email relationship. If you forget to reply and one party is left waiting on the other, the relationship can often falter. It is surprising how many times a relationship fails because both parties were waiting for the other to contact them! Regular meetings and/or points of contact can also be tougher to organise as they have to be at a certain time each week/month. You need to be reliable and organised!

Distance relationships can also become quite impersonal as you do not have the chance to meet face-to-face and build rapport. Don't be afraid to add some personality to your communications and talk on the phone occasionally, it will help you both to get to know each other on a deeper level. The final point to watch, is the lack of feedback that can often occur when there is no face to face or verbal interaction, which can reduce understanding. Be clear in your communications and talk about your objectives for the relationship upfront.

Example of the beginning of an email relationship

- First point of contact—student emails mentor, introduces themselves and attaches their resume
- First reply email – the mentor outlines their career history
- The student picks out some parts of the mentor's experience, asks questions and looks for expansion on areas of interest
- The student gives ideas as to what their career goals may be
- The mentor comments, probes, clarifies and questions
- Relationship continues from there

Tips for success

- Check email regularly and don't leave an email for longer than a few days
- Build rapport from day one, including non-career related interests can help with this
- Use more than just email as a contact method
- Be organised – think about what you wish to achieve throughout the year and discuss expectations with the other party
- Try to show commitment from the start and establish a regular contact routine
- Utilise other sources beyond the mentor for the student's information and progression. Set students tasks to complete, encourage students to search for networking events themselves. Email the student any event information or interesting articles that you think they might be interested in
- Mentors may have colleagues or contacts in the Brisbane area that they can set students up with for a face-to-face meeting or workplace visit

Contact methods

Email is not the only way you can communicate with your student in distance relationships. Phone calls are a great way of building rapport and achieving on-going interaction.

- Phone at a regular time – e.g. every month
- Communicate on-line together via instant messaging

- Teleconferencing/net meeting - useful if both parties own the same software, and allows for information to be shared collaboratively over the net
- If you sometimes travel to Brisbane, it is worthwhile discussing when any trips will be planned and taking this opportunity to meet face-to-face

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the time commitments?

The Career Mentor Program officially commences semester 2 each year and, as a general guide, mentors and students make contact for approximately one hour each fortnight. This may vary during busy times and each pair will determine their own mentoring schedule based on their individual availability.

In what form does contact usually take place?

Contact can include face-to-face meetings (including work visits or coffee catch-ups), emails, telephone calls, Skype or facilitating work exposure within the industry. Each pair will negotiate the type of contact that will work most effectively for their mentoring relationship and individual schedules.

What if I can't give the student work experience?

Work experience is not an automatic part of the Career Mentor Program and no promise of employment is made or sought in a mentoring relationship. However, mentors are welcome to offer work experience to their mentee and UQ insurance covers students for unpaid work experience if this eventuates.

What level of involvement does UQ have?

UQ offers support by the Graduate Centre Manager who manages the Career Mentor Program throughout the year and is available to advise and assist mentors.

Please contact the Graduate Centre Manager at any time throughout the year to discuss any concerns or questions you may have, or to let us know how you are going with your mentoring relationship.

Diana McCluskey

Graduate Centre Manager

Graduate Centre in Governance and International Affairs

Ph: 07 3443 3125

Email: polsis.gradcentre@uq.edu.au

Potential Difficulties and Strategies to Overcome Them

The table below outlines a list of problems that mentors have encountered and some suggested strategies for overcoming these problems. If you have any concerns about the Scheme, your mentee or your mentoring relationship at any time, please contact the Graduate Centre Manager on 07 3443 3125 or email polsis.gradcentre@uq.edu.au.

Difference in expectations

Ensure that there is open communication at all times and both parties know what the other wants to gain from the relationship. These issues are best addressed during the initial meeting, using the agreement.

Personality clashes

Please contact the Graduate Centre Manager ASAP so that the situation does not get out of hand. Rematching is possible in extreme cases.

Activities with your mentee

Refer to the activities and discussions section or contact the Graduate Centre Manager for suggestions.

Unable to contact your mentee

Students are to make the first point of contact and drive the ongoing relationship. If they are not making contact or if their phone number or email is incorrect, please contact the Graduate Centre Manager to rectify the problem.

You can't allow the mentee into your workplace or give work experience or employment

Work experience is not a requirement of the Career Mentor Program and in some cases will not be possible. If you can't facilitate work experience in your workplace and the student is keen, you may use your network to set the student up with some experience. Employment is not an expected outcome of the scheme.

Thank you for your participation in the Graduate Centre in Governance and International Affairs Career Mentor Program!