

Student Career Mentoring Program

2009



Student Mentee Information

An initiative of Careers and Employment
Supported by Alumni Relations

Aims and objectives of the Student Career Mentoring Program:

- To expand the student's understanding of the world of work
- To aid the student's career development process
- To enable the student to network with and learn from an interested professional

Why get a career mentor?

One of the most useful career tools you can use when starting out in your professional life is to find someone who is already ahead of you in their career and from whom you can learn and be guided. A good career mentor is a valuable source of support and encouragement. While you have chosen on this occasion to be part of an official career mentoring program, you are encouraged to continue to seek out the help of others throughout your working life as part of your own career development plan. You do not need to be part of an official program for this. One day you may find that you are approached by a less experienced person to be *their* mentor!

What you do need to remember is that once you have entered into a mentoring relationship with another as either a mentor or mentee, there are some rules and obligations for the relationship to remain professional and business-like. The main points to remember are to always be polite and respectful, to keep appointments, to be aware that each partner has a right to positive outcomes. In other words, although the main topic of discussion at meetings will be about the mentee's career development, the relationship IS NOT ALL ABOUT THE MENTEE!

Eligibility Criteria

The La Trobe University Student Career Mentoring Program welcomes students who are in their final year of study in 2009 and will be completing their course at the end of Semester 2.

Stages in the program:

- March 27th Mentee applications close; matching with mentors
- April Initial meeting and orientation : Bundoora and Shepparton campuses (April 23rd),
Albury-Wodonga campus (April 28th), Bendigo and Mildura campuses (April 30th)
- July Mid-program functions (dates TBA)
- April - October Mentor / Mentee meetings take place
- October Final Celebration (dates TBA)
Evaluation and feedback

Guidelines & Expectations

In order to make the mentoring program a success for all, we ask you to agree to:

- **participate in an initial meeting and orientation event** at the beginning of the program
- attempt, wherever possible, to meet face-to-face or **have contact with your mentor at least five times during the program**
- arrange, as an alternative to a face-to-face meeting, a **scheduled exchange of emails or a scheduled phone conversation**
- **keep appointments** with your mentor wherever possible, rescheduling at least two working days beforehand if a meeting/email/phone conversation can't be kept
- attend the **final celebration event** at the conclusion of the program, and participate in evaluation activities
- **advise Careers & Employment should any significant problems arise** in your mentoring relationship
- **respect the range of views, experiences and backgrounds of the various participants** in the program and share your own with others wherever possible

Agreements:

Agreements for each mentoring partnership will need to be signed by both mentees and mentors and submitted to the Careers and Employment office before the arranged first meeting. Confidentiality clauses will be included to protect the works and intellectual property of both parties.

What career mentoring is:

A one-to-one, non judgemental relationship in which an experienced individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. The relationship focuses mainly on the mentee's development. A good career mentoring relationship is professional and equal, recognising that both mentor and mentee can grow from the experience.

What career mentoring is NOT:

- Counselling
- Teaching, tutoring or assisting with course work
- A social relationship
- A superior-subordinate relationship

The rights of a mentee:

- To be treated with respect and in a professional manner
- To be informed at least two days before a planned meeting if the mentor is unable to attend
- To be listened to
- To have your privacy respected

Potential challenges in the mentoring relationship:

- Mentee becomes dependant on mentor
- Mentor and mentee don't get on
- The mentee seeks personal advice relating to issues at home, or assistance with academic work*
- Mentee or mentor is too busy to give it the time required
- Mentee or mentor doesn't turn up at the scheduled time

*La Trobe University provides a range of support services to students such as Personal Counselling, Language and Academic Skills Units, Chaplaincy, Equality and Diversity and Careers Counselling. If you feel that you require more in-depth assistance for any personal or academic issues please refer to the appropriate service (for contact details go to <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/life/support>)

For further information on how to address these potential challenges or any concerns that you may have about your mentor not working within the Guidelines and Expectations of the program, please contact Careers and Employment.

Getting Started:

The success of the mentoring program relies on your level of interest, commitment and communication. It is important to be realistic about what you can gain from this relationship. You need to recognise that your mentor is not there to be a friend or get you a job, but to give you guidance, assist you in decision making and help you to set goals towards success.

Our mentors have come from a wide range of backgrounds and have achieved their current position through a variety of different pathways. Your mentor may even have followed a career path that seems very different to the one on which you think you will embark. This is not as important as you may think. Your mentor will be able to share with you the things that have worked for them, the pitfalls and “happy accidents” that lead to a successful career and the knowledge and understanding that comes with experience.

The agreement set between yourself and your mentor is a guide to help you both find a common starting point. At your first meeting, begin by telling your mentor some information about yourself, your current course and the type of career you are interested in pursuing. You may also want to ask your mentor some questions about themselves, such as:

- “what are you most proud of achieving in your career?”
- “who gave you the advice you best remember and most value?”
- “are you working in the same career you wanted to when you left high school / university?”
- “what motivates you to do your job?”

A journal at the back of this guide has been designed to help you reflect on your discussions with your mentor, and to prompt you to consider what topics or questions you might like to bring up next time.

Maintaining the relationship:

Don't be afraid to ask for feedback from your mentor after the first couple of meetings about how they feel the relationship is developing. It is important that you both contribute and achieve what you have set out to do. If you have agreed to do certain things after you meet with your mentor, make sure that you have completed your task before your next meeting. Your mentor is expected to maintain the same level of responsibility to you.

Further Reading:

If you would like to conduct further research into mentoring practices, skills and techniques, we recommend the following online resources:

- www.mentoringgroup.com
- www.csi.mmu.ac.uk

Key Contacts:

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www.latrobe.edu.au/careers

Date.....

Most of the time today was spent discussing:

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Things I learned:

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Ideas I plan to use:

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The best advice I received today was:

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My mentor has suggested that before our next meeting, I:

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Items I would like to discuss next time:

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