



Guide for Mentors – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees

What is mentoring?

There are many types and styles of mentoring, but for our purposes at College, we have defined it as

A one-to-one collegial relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced professional. Based on mutual trust and respect, this relationship combines openness and confidentiality with active listening and constructive feedback to work toward clear and defined goals regarding personal and professional growth.

Why mentoring?

Mentoring is a powerful tool for learning and both personal and professional growth. It has been widely and successfully used in academic and medical contexts, and has been shown to be particularly valuable in times of transition and change. By taking on a role as a mentor, you are an important part of the College's support structure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees who may be a long way from their family and community support network.

The research shows that just some of the benefits for both mentors and mentees include:

- Personal growth and professional development
- Increase in critical reflection
- Networking and sense of professional community
- Increased professional satisfaction
- Change facilitation
- Development of knowledge and skills

(Ehrich et al, 2003)

What are my roles and responsibilities in the mentoring relationship?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees benefit from collegiate and culturally safe support. You may be taking on the role of an academic or a personal mentor.

An academic mentor provides support in terms of the trainee's knowledge, skills and professional qualities in line with the learning outcomes of the ACD Training Program Curriculum. A personal mentor assists the trainee in drawing on his/her cultural strength and provides a culturally safe place for the trainee to express needs, concerns and goals.

The most crucial roles played by all mentors can be summed up in three words: support, vision and challenge.

- 1) **Support:** a trustworthy listening ear, a confidential "sounding board"
- 2) **Vision:** help as your mentee clarifies his/her goals and take steps to achieve them
- 3) **Challenge:** open, honest and evidence-based feedback.

As part of the College's duty of care and for the purposes of accountability, we do require the following commitment from mentors:

- 1) Be prompt in responding to communication from your mentee, and attend agreed meetings (at least once a month for an hour at a time).
- 2) Read the Mentoring Handbook.

- 3) Complete the following brief documentation at key points in the mentoring relationship and return these to College:
- **Early stage mentoring:** Mentoring Agreement, Professional Inventory, Workplace Inventory, First Meeting
 - **Intermediate stage mentoring:** Intermediate Meeting, Mentee Feedback
 - **Final stage mentoring:** Final Meeting, Evaluation Meeting, Mentee Feedback

Some key principles to keep in mind:

- Communicate directly, honestly and respectfully with your mentee
- Ensure that responsibility for decisions and actions rests ultimately with the mentee
- Be clear about your goals and what you hope to gain from the mentoring relationship
- When giving feedback to the mentee, try and give specific examples to support your viewpoint
- Take the initiative to raise topics that you perceive as important for your mentee's professional and personal development
- View mentoring as an opportunity to reflect on your own learning
- Maintain confidentiality.

What should I expect from my mentee?

Your mentee should meet with you individually on a regular basis (at least once a month for about an hour at a time). Your mentee should respond to phone calls and emails promptly, and attend meetings you have arranged together.

How do we get started?

Your mentee should take the initiative to contact you. If this does not happen within a month of the mentee commencing training, please inform your Director of Training (DoT).

In your first meeting, you and your mentee should complete the Mentoring Agreement together and the Professional and Workplace Inventories to help you clarify your mutual goals and expectations. (See other attachments.)

How long is the program?

The program continues for the duration of the trainee's time in the Training Program.

What College resources are available to me in my mentoring?

As a mentor in the College's formal mentoring program, you will be able to access the TAED404A Mentor in the Workplace module on the e-Learning portal. You can also claim CPD points for your time spent in mentoring activities: Category 1 → Level 2 → STA → SUPM.

If you would like to be formally accredited for your time as a mentor, please contact the College's Mentoring Co-ordinator, Judy Hext (phone 02 8741 4110 or email judy@dermcoll.edu.au). You may be eligible for the unit TAED404A Mentor in the Workplace, which is part of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualification.

What if the mentoring doesn't work out?

For whatever reason, despite the best of intentions, not all mentoring relationships work out. Always raise issues with your mentee first, and if these cannot be resolved, please see your Director of Training (DoT). If the mentoring relationship is still not working, then it can be dissolved at the DoT's discretion.