



MENTORING CIRCLES

Supporting Staff in the
Medical Sciences



Mentoring Circles support staff across the Division by encouraging self-reflection, increasing networking opportunities, and providing access to senior colleagues outside of mentees' home departments.

With one mentor and three or four mentees, Mentoring Circles are a great way of allowing staff members to meet others from outside their department and giving them the space to discuss issues outside of their immediate team.



“Meeting people from other departments and hearing both new perspectives on my situation and similar concerns to mine makes me feel less alone.”

“Great to have ‘neutral’ feedback from people in a similar situation. Often it is surprisingly useful to simply describe a problem and (with advice) arrive at a series of possible actions.”

Who can be a mentee?



Any academic related, support or technical staff member from a participating department. We will try to match you as best we can with people who have similar goals to you.

Your mentoring circle will provide a non-judgemental, friendly space to explore your aims and ambitions. Your peers will support you to develop actions to progress your goals.

Your mentor will facilitate your group discussions and offer guidance on how you might achieve your goals.

Research staff are supported by a similar programme
www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/mentoring-circles

Student support is available from:
www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare
ousu.org
ox-fest.org/mentoring

Who can be a mentor?



Any experienced staff member can be a mentor. You should be happy to pass on experiences you have had and be interested in developing yourself and others.

Mentors are facilitators who allow their mentees to discover their own direction by offering guidance. Some mentoring relationships rely on the mentor offering advice from their own experience and perspective; while this will be a part of your role, this scheme is more about you listening and creating the space for your mentees to reflect on whatever issues are important to them, to allow their peers' perspectives as well as your own to inform their thinking, and to encourage them to take action.

"I've really enjoyed supporting my mentees in discussing their career aims and how to get there. It's also helped me develop more skills to support PDR for my own team."

How much time will I have to commit?



Mentoring Circles should run initially for a 12 month period (or for at least four meetings) but the relationship may continue by mutual consent. Face to face meetings should be agreed upon and scheduled at the first meeting.

Sessions should be held at a mutually convenient location, which can be the mentor's office and should generally last for at least an hour. Individual meetings will be available at the discretion of the mentor; however, please note that the mentor is not obliged to offer this to their mentees.

Mentees in a circle are encouraged to meet more regularly and peer to peer mentoring can also take place between meetings via email to sustain the momentum of the meetings and support each other through any specific concerns.



“It was useful to have time away from work, and in a supportive environment, to reflect on personal and career goals.”

What other support is available?



At the end of this booklet you can find links to the wide range of support for staff available at the University. The aim of the scheme is that you will come away with actions to follow up, so there may well be training that you have identified, people you want to talk to, or further self-reflection, that the University can help you with.

Before you start your mentoring, both mentees and mentors will attend a morning's introductory session, to ask questions and to set the scene for the mentoring programme. We will also be in touch with participants part way through the year to see if there are any workshops, resources, or information that we can provide to complement the conversations you're having within your circles.

If you have any issues or queries at any time in the programme, you can always feel free to contact Dr Brid Cronin or Dr Laura Hodsdon, Researcher Development Officer. (Between May 2016 and April 2017 please contact Charlotte Smith at charlotte.smith@medsci.ox.ac.uk)

brid.cronin@medsci.ox.ac.uk

laura.hodsdon@learning.ox.ac.uk

Resources



The following pages provide some prompts and tools to help guide your thinking or for you to use in the sessions.

Other resources and links can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/staff

SMART Objectives



The best way to make the most of mentoring is to make sure that you set yourself concrete goals, ideally at the end of each meeting. Ask yourself whether your actions are:

Specific – rather than ‘I want to improve my relationships with colleagues’, say ‘I want to improve my relationship with my line manager by leaving our monthly meetings with a set of actions with which we are both happy’.

Measurable – rather than ‘I’ll achieve more’, ‘I’ll finish project X’

Achievable – is it possible? You might want to deliver five lectures to improve your teaching experience, but do there exist the opportunities to do so?

Realistic – it’s good to have aspirations, but if you’ve delayed for this long taking on extra management responsibilities are you sure you’ll be able to do so now? Perhaps there is something else stopping you.

Time-bound – Perhaps the most important one: give yourself a deadline, and ask your mentoring circle to keep you accountable!

SWOT Analysis



A SWOT analysis is a way to think about your strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats associated with them. It can provide a good starting point for discussion and tease out some actions you might consider taking. Text adapted from www.mindtools.com

Strengths

Consider your strengths individually and in relation to the people around you. If having a particular skill is a job requirement then it may be more of a necessity than a strength. Don't be modest – be as objective as you can.

- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What do other people (and your boss, in particular) see as your strengths? (If you don't know, perhaps you could ask them?)
- Which of your achievements are you most proud of?

Weaknesses

- What tasks do you usually avoid?
- What are your negative work habits (for example, are you disorganized, or are you poor at handling stress)?
- What skills do you need to develop?

SWOT Analysis



Opportunities

- Do you have any contacts who can help you, or offer good advice? How could you add to that?
- Are there any networking events, classes, or conferences that you could attend?
- Could you take on some any extra projects or responsibilities in your current role?

Threats

- What obstacles do you currently face at work?
- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
- Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

Record of Discussion: Meeting 1



Area Identified:

Actions:

Support Needed:

Record of Discussion: Meeting 2



Progress since last meeting:

Area Identified:

Actions:

Support Needed:

Record of Discussion: Meeting 3



Progress since last meeting:

Area Identified:

Actions:

Support Needed:

Record of Discussion: Meeting 4



Progress since last meeting:

Area Identified:

Actions:

Support Needed:

Further Information: Support Services and Advice



Staff Gateway

www.ox.ac.uk/staff

Parents and carers information

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/parentsandcarersinformation

Childcare Services www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare

Occupational Health www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs

Harassment advice

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice

Equality and Diversity Unit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop

IT Services www.it.ox.ac.uk

University and College Union (UCU)

www.oxforducu.org.uk



Further Information:

Societies and networks

BME Staff Network
Communication Officers Network
Disabled Staff Network
ICT Forum
Newcomers' Club
Oxford Research Staff Society (OxRSS)
Oxford University staff LGBT group
Oxford Women's Network (OWN)
Race Equality Newsletter (REN)

Career and Professional Development

[www.ox.ac.uk/staff/working_at_oxford/
training_development](http://www.ox.ac.uk/staff/working_at_oxford/training_development)

