
CAREER MENTORING PROGRAM

Mentor Handbook

Employability and Success

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Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, and the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY CAREER MENTORING PROGRAM - MENTOR HANDBOOK



Welcome to Victoria University's Career Mentoring Program

Thank you to all the mentors for offering their time and experience to this Program. We acknowledge this takes significant input from mentors and mentees and thank you for your participation in the Program. Without mentors such as you, we would not be able to provide such a worthwhile opportunity to students of Victoria University.

We encourage you to read this handbook thoroughly to understand the Victoria University (VU) Career Mentoring Program. It will support you in creating both a successful and enjoyable mentoring relationship.

We wish you well and hope that the time you spend in your mentoring relationship is rewarding. Please do not hesitate to contact the Program Co-ordinator to discuss any concerns you may have.

Purpose of the Career Mentoring Program

Victoria University's (VU) Career Mentoring Program is all about providing additional support and skills development opportunities to students to help them successfully gain employability skills required once they transition from University to employment in their chosen field.

Mentoring offered through this Program is intended to provide less experienced students with access to a more experienced alum or industry contact. This contact can assist them by sharing their personal career and transitioning from University to the workplace experience.

The Career Mentoring Program allows students to choose their Mentor, thus, this Program is 'mentee driven'. Whilst common interests, industry base and work projects are of usual consideration to the Mentee; participants are also encouraged to embrace areas of diversity. Diversity of ideas and approaches, though sometimes challenging, can provide the most significant areas of personal growth and development.

The Career Mentoring Program offers both structure and flexibility. Each mentor and mentee pair will communicate, interact, and achieve their mentoring goals differently. We provide boundaries and recommendations that allow each mentorship to decide on the format, frequency, and formality of the mentoring relationship.

Before we get started

What is mentoring?

*Mentoring is a **relationship** which provides participants with the opportunity to share their professional skills and experiences, and to grow and develop through the process.*

Typically, it is a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced and less experienced person. It is based upon encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

The Mentor has the primary roles of guide and coach.

Guide

The guide role has many aspects. First, a guide is someone who has already crossed the terrain – someone with real-world experience. They are an experienced professional who knows the highs and lows encountered by those entering the workforce.

Coach

The coaching relationship is based on the Mentee's expressed goals or objectives. Coaches have two major sub-roles: teacher and trainer. The teacher sub-role involves the Mentor showing the active learner (Mentee) how to do something, sharing knowledge and information relevant to the career or industry.

The training role is one where the coach demonstrates skills or behaviours and provides opportunities for the Mentee to reproduce or practice these skills or behaviours in the real world. This way, the coach sees what has been learnt.

Mentor benefits

Research has shown Mentors obtain various benefits from participating in a mentoring program. These may include:

- Satisfaction of being able to contribute to the development of emerging professionals
- Make a meaningful contribution to help a student grow and develop
- Share your knowledge and expertise
- Improve your job performance, particularly leadership and communication skills
- Expand your professional network and earn recognition

- Increase your awareness of current University practice
- Gain personal satisfaction from contributing to your community and industry
- Have an opportunity to reflect on your own role and career progression

Suitability

We are always searching to expand our pool of mentors for the Career Mentoring Program. Our mentors bring their unique professional skills and experiences from across a vast range of industries, and their contribution is highly valued.

An effective mentor is someone who:

- You must have the time and commitment to develop a meaningful mentoring relationship, meeting at least 4 – 6 times for at least six months
- Have at least two or more years of professional industry experience.
- Be patient and possess good listening and communication skills.
- Most importantly, it would be best if you were willing to share your expertise and knowledge and career journey.

What's involved?

The VU Career Mentoring Program runs over one semester, and the expectation is that you will engage with your Mentee approximately 4-6 times during that period.

Meetings with your Mentee will generally be for an hour or so and can be face to face, online or a mixture of both. The frequency, format, location and duration of meetings will be discussed with your Mentee at your first meeting.

The Career Mentoring Program platform sits within the VU Employ Careers Toolkit. After registering and upon receipt of your confirmation email, you will be asked to complete the online Mentor Module before being matched with a mentee. The time commitment for the Mentor Module is not demanding (approximately 1 hour). The Mentor Module aims to provide insight into the Career Mentoring Program regardless of whether you are new to mentoring or have years of experience. You will also have access to a range of mentoring resources that you can utilise with your Mentee.

Program staff will check in with you throughout the Program, and you will also be asked to complete a mid and end of the program evaluation survey.

Once you have completed your mentorship with your Mentee, you will receive a Certificate of Recognition.

All participants are expected to adhere to the Career Mentoring Program's Code of Conduct. Participants are expected:

- Read program guidelines, and policies and complete the required Mentor Module

- Read and acknowledge the formal code of conduct (completed as part of the Mentor Module)
- Contact the Co-ordinator with any questions or concerns

Participants are expected to act ethically and safely. The code outlines VU's expectations of participants in maintaining professional standards of behaviour consistent with VU policies.

Please read the formal **Code of Conduct** carefully. This code covers:

- Equity and diversity – including discrimination and harassment
- Confidentiality and personal information
- Conflicts of interest
- Collection, use and disclosure of personal information

If you have any questions about the code, don't hesitate to get in touch with the Career Mentoring Program Co-ordinator.

What to do if things go wrong?

If you need assistance or want to 'bounce' an idea off someone, please get in touch with the Career Mentoring Program Team at vumentoring@vu.edu.au. Any time you would like advice and support with your mentoring relationship, to report a concern - you are welcome to contact the team.

Either Mentor or Mentee may at any time choose to end the relationship. If at any time you have concerns about your mentorship, please contact the Career Mentoring Program Co-ordinator immediately (Vicky Schilling via email at vumentoring@vu.edu.au). Or if you wish you can do this by notifying your Mentee directly if you feel comfortable or ask the Career Mentoring Program Team to speak to your Mentee on your behalf. Either way, please inform the Career Mentoring Program Team. The Career Mentoring Program has a 'no blame, no fault' attitude to matches not working out.

Building a positive, safe and respectful mentoring relationship

Whether you are an experienced mentor or this is a new experience for you, you will be engaging in a professional working mentoring relationship. A mentoring relationship should be one where both parties act professionally, respect the boundaries of a professional relationship and feel respected and supported. These expectations mirror the standards expected in most professional workplaces.

An essential first step in the mentoring relationship is a discussion about expectations and negotiation of appropriate boundaries. Information on how to set up an effective working relationship with your Mentee is outlined in the online Mentor Module. Examples of behaviours that promote a good mentoring relationship can include:

- Meet regularly and are prepared for their meetings.
- Discuss how and when it is appropriate to communicate between meetings
- Clarify expectations and arrangements around contacts, meetings, confidentiality and topics for discussion
- Respond in a timely fashion to communication from the other.
- Feel comfortable raising feedback about what is and isn't with the other.

To maintain a professional mentoring relationship, meetings:

- Should be held in spaces such as an office or workplace, public space (eg café, library)
- At a VU campus (eg library or other public space);
- Use a range of online meetings:
- Web conferencing software such as Skype or Zoom, or held over the phone.
- No arrangements should be conducted at a private home or home office.
- Mentoring meetings as per usual business meeting are usually one hour in duration, meeting at least 4 – 6 times throughout the program.

COVID and health regulations

In light of the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, VU is clear about its responsibility to do everything it can to reduce infection rates in the community. In addition, the health and well-being of our Mentors and Mentees is of paramount importance to the University. We, therefore, ask all volunteers undertaking the Career Mentoring Program to exercise appropriate precautions when scheduling meetings with mentees.

It is expected that all participants adhere to the relevant Government (Australian Government, **Department of Health** and Victoria State Government, **Department of Health**) workplace or **Victoria University's Response to COVID-10**, depending on where the mentoring meetings are being held.

Reflecting upon your mentoring experiences

Our experience has been that participants in these programs often miss out on recognising the changes during the mentoring process. Therefore, we recommend that you take time to record – or at least reflect. A reflective practice may offer you benefits in increasing your own self-awareness, which is a key component of emotional intelligence, and in developing a better understanding of others. Additionally, it can help you in the development of or the enhancement of critical thinking skills and encourages active engagement in work processes. It is helpful for your own personal and professional development and gives you a good starting point if you participate in another mentoring program.

Thank you to all our participants

This Program would not be possible without mentors like you; your commitment and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated!

Please note that this handbook will evolve with the Program and we welcome your feedback on how to improve our materials and the overall Program.

Contact us

For all enquiries about this Program, please contact:

Vicky Schilling

Career Mentoring Co-ordinator

vumentoring@vu.edu.au

Ph: +61 3 99194830