FUTURES MENTORING PROGRAMME

Bringing leadership and governance into focus.

HANDBOOK FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES

2016
About this handbook

This handbook has been prepared for mentors and mentees on the Futures Mentoring Programme to help explain what the programme aims to achieve, how it runs and to offer some advice on running a successful mentoring relationship. The content is illustrated throughout by quotes provided by Futures mentees and mentors. It can be downloaded from the Futures web page.
What is Futures?

Futures is a 12-month mentoring programme for senior academic women who are mentored by Pro-Vice-Chancellors or other senior staff members.

This innovative programme offers an exciting opportunity to be mentored by a senior member of staff, supporting you to understand what is involved in leadership and governance positions, and make connections to help you to achieve your career ambitions.

In line with our ambition to develop a fully inclusive University community which encourages everyone to flourish and reach their potential with a positive and supportive culture, the aim of the Futures Programme is to increase the pool of female academics who are contributing to the governance and leadership of the University, to contribute to the University's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to increase the proportion of women in professorial posts to 23% by 2015/16, and our aim to create a remarkable place to work.

To date 60 women have participated in the programme, which was shortlisted for an Opportunity Now award in 2011.

The programme is open to female Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors across all faculties. Following review and enhancement of the programme, the 2016 programme will include:

- an initial coaching session to help mentees to consider what they want to achieve from the programme
- one-on-one mentoring meetings and potentially work-shadowing opportunities with a senior colleague over a 12-month period.

Evaluation is key to enable the review and ongoing improvement of the programme, and all participants will be asked to take part in an evaluation exercise at the end of the programme.
What is mentoring?

There are numerous definitions and descriptions of mentoring. Most of them involve concepts such as guiding, supporting, advising and career planning. For example:

"Mentoring involves listening with empathy, sharing experience (usually mutually), professional friendship, developing insight through reflection, being a sounding board, and encouraging."

David Clutterbuck

"Mentoring is a long term relationship that meets a developmental need, helps develop full potential, and benefits all partners, mentor, mentee and the organisation."

Suzanne Faure

"The purpose of mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be"

Eric Parsloe

One to one mentoring is a positive, developmental relationship, which is driven primarily by the mentee, and through which the mentee can take responsibility for her own development. The mentor acts as a guide, supporter, sounding board and, sometimes, as a role model. This form of mentoring creates a confidential partnership between two people, one normally more senior and experienced than the other, based on understanding and trust. Its main aim is to build knowledge, capability and self-reliance in the mentee, although it is often described as a two-way learning relationship which provides useful feedback and reflection opportunities for both mentee and mentor.

In fact, there are many different ways of running mentoring relationships. They can be wholly face to face or online (e-mentoring), they can involve peer relationships or small groups, they can be structured or informal. Organisations need to design their programme to fit their structure and culture and to meet the needs of the mentee.

The Futures Mentoring Programme at the University of Sheffield can be described as a semi-structured mentoring programme with a focus on leadership and governance development. It has evolved over a number of years, responding to feedback from participants. It is a positive action\(^1\) programme which aims to help support women into senior leadership and governance positions at the University, where they are currently under-represented.

\(^1\) Positive action is an equal opportunities approach which aims to help remove the barriers affecting an under-represented group of people
What are the benefits of mentoring?

There are multiple benefits of mentoring, but here are some of the most quoted.

For the mentee:

- help with career planning
- an opportunity to learn about the workings of the organisation, including its history, politics, finances, and informal networks
- access to a knowledgeable but empathetic sounding board for testing plans, new ideas and strategies
- greater visibility amongst senior colleagues
- opportunities to reflect on and more clearly define own career goals
- new professional contacts
- support with professional challenges, such as resolving conflict, preparing for promotion, making career decisions
- an opportunity to observe and interact with a role model
- increased self-awareness and self-confidence
- dedicated ‘me time’- that is a window of opportunity to focus on her own career, professional development, ambitions and challenges

“I felt that this was particularly useful to me at my stage of development - as a Senior Lecturer considering what shape I would like my future career to take. It gave me a big boost in terms of confidence, and opened up my eyes to a much broader perspective on the University.”

For the mentor:

- skills development through participating in the mentoring process (e.g. active listening, appropriate challenging, coaching, giving motivational feedback)
- new professional contacts
- an opportunity to reflect on own life experiences and career choices
- learning about a different part of the organisation/career path
- enjoyment, satisfaction and a new challenge

“It was quite a big time commitment for me, but felt that it was something that I learnt from as well as my mentees. I learnt a lot from someone being a critical friend about my performance. Not just my performance as a mentor, but my performance in the tasks that I undertook during the shadowing days or the things they observed about my style. They led me to be reflective about my own practice.”

For the organisation:

- improved relationships
- increased staff morale and motivation
- improved succession planning
- effective leadership development
- a tool to promote culture change
• reduced staff turnover
• a mechanism for supporting under-represented groups and demonstrating the organisation’s commitment to diversity
• capturing and transferring skills from one generation to another.
The role of mentor

What do mentors do?

Skilled mentors will play a range of different roles within a mentoring relationship, adjusting their approach to maximise their usefulness to the mentee. David Clutterbuck suggests that mentors should assess the needs of their mentee on these continua:

Challenging/Stretching  Nurturing
(Intellectual need)  (Emotional need)

Directive  Non-Directive
(Mentor leads)  (Mentee leads)

Clutterbuck combines these two dynamics to create a behavioural matrix.

Roles of the Mentor

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<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
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Clutterbuck, Learning Alliances

**Coach**

Coaching is primarily about job performance and developing specific work-related skills and abilities. It tends to address short-term needs.

A good coach will break the task down into bite-sized chunks that are more easily managed by the learner.

**Guardian**

The guardian can be described as a “sponsor” or “godfather”. It can mean being a role model, an advisor and sometimes an advocate. A guardian helps to develop the mentee’s career by opening doors, ensuring that the mentee knows about new opportunities.
opportunities, and modelling leadership behaviours. The guardian will share experiences, and when asked, offer advice and make suggestions.

**Counsellor**

A counsellor will listen empathetically and, using open questions, will help the mentee to work out her own solutions and make her own decisions.

**Networker/Facilitator**

A networker can help the mentee develop the connections they need to gain experience and find things out. They can model good networking skills, signpost the mentee to useful contacts, and connect her to resources and networks to help her raise her profile.

A mentor is usually a more senior and experienced person who is willing to share his or her own experiences of successes and failures at work and knowledge of how the organisation functions with a less experienced colleague. When asked, a mentor may offer advice, giving guidance based on personal knowledge and experience. The sorts of behaviours mentors use include:

- assisting with the clarification and setting of realistic career goals
- suggesting and helping the mentee to explore different career paths
- observing the mentee ‘in action’ and giving constructive feedback
- focussing on particular skills and helping to find opportunities to practice
- sharing experience and examples from the mentor’s own career/life
- listening – with an open mind
- signposting to useful contacts, resources, networks

“What I got from my mentor that was powerful was complete honesty about why how and why he does things, and help in constructing and articulating my own goals. Sometimes you have an idea about what you want to do and where you want to go, but the mentor has been there and has done it. They have the benefit of experience so they can help you convert ambitions into specific goals.”

One important attribute of the mentor is the ability to identify the most appropriate source of support required by the mentee and, where appropriate, to be able to refer the mentee on to additional or alternative help if this cannot be provided through a mentoring relationship.

Effective mentors are normally:

- empathetic
- open minded
- flexible about the best way of approaching things
- willing to challenge and be challenged
- willing to talk opening and honestly with their mentee
- interested in people
- approachable
The role of mentee

What do mentees do?

Just like mentors, mentees can adopt different roles to maximise their learning and to make the most of the support provided by the mentor. A skilled mentee will get to know their mentor well, identifying the mentor’s particular strengths, expert knowledge and high level skills. If these areas overlap with the mentee’s own development needs, she can seek opportunities to discuss these areas with her mentor, observing him/her in action, proactively seeking advice and coaching.

David Clutterbuck model extends to describe the roles a mentee can take, as follows:

### Roles of the Mentee

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<td>Coachee</td>
<td>Truth-seeker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follower</td>
<td>Self-managed learner</td>
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**Coachee**

A coachee sees the mentor as a source of knowledge and skills. She will seek to set and achieve goals, have a positive attitude to difficult feedback and be open to new ideas.

**Follower**

A follower (or acolyte) will seek approval and advice from their mentor and are loyal to them. Followers often use their mentor as a role model, observing their behaviours and attitudes.

Followers beware! Don’t let your mentor dominate the relationship. Remember that whilst it is fine to ask for advice, you **don’t** have to accept it.
**Truth-seeker**

Truth-seekers will have a willingness to explore their own feelings through the mentoring process and will demonstrate trust in the mentor by opening up issues for discussion.

Truth-seekers beware! It is good to talk, but make sure that your discussions lead to decisions that help you make progress.

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<th>Self-managed learner</th>
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<td>A self-managed learner will often bring her own first thinking to mentoring meetings as well as pro-actively setting the agenda. She may seek help in developing contacts and building visibility, and she may well have more than one mentor.</td>
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“Observing my mentor has influenced very strongly some of my approaches to the job. I am very inspired by him.”

Mentees can demonstrate their commitment to the relationship, their respect for the mentor and appreciation of the support being offered by:

- being proactive in the relationship, setting the agenda for meetings, actively following up afterwards
- keeping any commitments they make, such as to attend meetings or to respond to emails
- preparing for mentoring meetings beforehand to make the most of the time available
- seeking (but not blindly following) the mentors advice
- listening carefully
- responding to feedback
- demonstrating loyalty
- remaining open to new ideas and being receptive to the mentor's opinions.
What can mentees and mentors do together?

Futures is intended to be sufficiently flexible to allow mentors and mentees to design their own programme of work, that is to decide how they want to spend their time together. The way they run their mentoring relationship will depend on the mentee’s developmental needs, the mentor’s job responsibilities and connections and their mutual interests.

“I wanted to become involved in the scheme to develop a better understanding of University governance. I also wanted to know what it was like to be a PVC”

It is recommended that the pair starts with a getting-to-know-you session where they share information about their backgrounds, their careers, their ambitions, their interests in mentoring and their hopes and expectations of Futures. They also need, at this early stage to discuss any ground rules for their relationship, in particular confidentiality, and to complete and sign their Mentoring Agreement Form, page 22-24, if they both agree to.

It is useful to set some goals or objectives for the 12 months that the mentee and mentor will be working together. Objective setting is useful for various reasons:

- the process of setting objective encourages the mentee to reflect about what kind of support she wants from her mentor. This helps the mentor to understand what kind of roles and topics will be most useful
- objectives provide focus for meetings
- achieving objectives gives a sense of progress and satisfaction
- objectives are a useful tool in evaluating the success of the relationship and identifying outcomes
- mentor and mentee are more likely to build rapport and trust when both parties are clear what they aiming for

Objectives need not be set in stone. They can be revisited and revised over time.

Here is a list of activities that have been, or could be, undertaken by mentor and mentee.

1. One to one meetings

Most pairs plan a series of one-to-one meetings at intervals to suit their diaries. All kinds of topic can be discussed but some of the fruitful areas reported by former mentees include:

- career aspirations
- planning the next career moves
- different career directions – the options available
- preparing for promotion
- how the university operates
- leadership behaviours, strategies and techniques
- the strategic challenges for the university

“It was useful to be asked at the outset (and again in the final meeting) what my career ambitions were, as it made me focus on something that I hadn’t necessarily thought about in precisely those terms previously....My mentor and I also planned our sessions thematically, so that there was a topic - chosen by me - for each meeting (e.g. governance, finance, lobbying).”
2. Work shadowing

Some mentees have followed and observed their mentor as he/she completes various tasks, and have found this shadowing exercise to be extremely useful. This type of activity allows the mentee to closely observe a senior leader in action and then afterwards to discuss the approach used, the challenges of the situation, the decisions made, and so forth. Some mentors set up shadowing for a whole day, others for specific tasks.

“My mentor suggested I follow him for a whole day, from 8.30 to about 6pm. What was really powerful for me was the walking time between the meetings, because we had the chance to discuss the most important aspects of the meetings and his approach to each one. It was so exciting to see how he was thinking and the way he did things.”

3. Internal and External Networking

Some mentors invite their mentees to accompany them to conferences, dinners, networking events, external board meetings, etc. This can help the mentee to make new contacts, hear discussions of strategic importance, and observe their mentor in action in a number of different networking environments. The process of seeing an external board in process can ‘demystify’ board roles and help the mentee to believe that she too could operate at this level, given the opportunity.

“I had the privilege of accompanying my mentor to a HEA network meeting of Pro Vice Chancellors for Learning and Teaching. Initially I felt a little daunted at the prospect of meeting very senior academics from universities across the UK. My mentor used the train journey to explain the programme and showed me the brief from HEA. I was surprised at the network meeting how many female PVC’s there were, and meeting them wasn’t as difficult as I had imagined”

4. Joint Projects

The Futures pairings are cross-faculty, which provides a useful distance between mentee and mentor and enables the mentor to take an objective, unbiased perspective. The inter-faculty pairings bring opportunities for both sides to learn about the challenges and opportunities in a new area and can sometimes lead to new collaborations. Joint projects between mentee and mentor, or between mentee and staff in the mentor’s Faculty can help build skills, knowledge and new contacts.

“I got to work closely with a lot of the academics in his Faculty. By providing complete access to his colleagues, he gave me a valuable understanding of the research that is being carried on there. I am so genuinely interested, and the contacts I made have proved invaluable for my later work’

5. Focus on Promotion

Athena Swan data shows that women are slower than their male peers to put themselves forward for promotion. Mentors can help mentees to assess the best time to make a
promotion application and how best to present themselves. A CV review can be a useful exercise, helping the mentee to see how she presents herself on paper. A strategic look at the requirements for the next career threshold can help identify what development activities would help bridge any gap. Practice interviews can also prove helpful for external applications.

“I also found it useful to discuss my CV with someone who would have sat on the Professorial and Readership promotions committee.”
Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of mentoring. It is vital that both parties feel able to talk honestly and openly, safe in the knowledge that what they say will be repeated without former agreement. Complete trust in your mentoring partner can take a little while to emerge, but it helps to have an eye-to-eye conversation at the outset where mentee and mentor discuss what they understand by confidentiality. For example do they share these assumptions?

- What we discuss stays confidential for the duration of our mentoring relationship.
- What we discuss stays confidential for the foreseeable future – i.e. beyond the end of our mentoring relationship
- Any mentoring dialogue that takes place by email is seen only by the mentor and mentee concerned
- It is fine to give general feedback to scheme organisers and others about how the relationship has progressed, but no personal or confidential information will be revealed
- If one of us would like to refer issues raised by the other to a third party we will seek the other’s permission before doing so.

If difficult topics arise in discussions between mentee and mentor and either party needs support in addressing these, they can talk in complete confidence to the programme co-ordinator to discuss an appropriate response or agree a course of action. In this instance please contact Frances Dee at 21491 / f.dee@sheffield.ac.uk.
Futures Case Studies

How work-shadowing can give unique insights into the demands of a senior role.

Professor Elena Rodriguez-Falcon and Professor Paul White

Elena and Paul started meeting as mentor in mentee in February 2010 and worked together under the auspices of Futures for about 12 months.

‘When I saw the call for applications from senior women across the university to take part in Futures Mentoring I thought what an amazing opportunity! Then I wondered, am I senior? Do you have to be a professor? Do you have to be over 50?’ As a Senior University Teacher in her 30s Elena wasn’t sure whether she would qualify to be a Futures mentee, but because she lives by the maxim ‘Don’t ask, don’t get’ she put in an application and kept her fingers crossed. She was delighted to be paired with Professor Paul White, Pro Vice Chancellor, Learning and Teaching.

“The opportunity to follow and observe someone very senior for a whole day is scary on the one hand, but it gives the opportunity to actually see them in action.”

Over the last 3 years, Paul has been a big supporter of Futures, taking on a total of 6 mentees. ‘It has been quite a big time commitment for me, but I felt it was something that I learnt from as well as my mentees. It wasn’t just me doing pro bono work for others. I benefit from someone being a critical friend about my performance’ says Paul. ‘Not just my performance as a mentor, but my performance in tasks that my mentees see me undertake in my job, and the things they observe about my style. These observations lead me to be reflective about my own practice.’

The period at start of a relationship when mentor and mentee are getting to know each other is an important opportunity to build rapport. ‘Some of my mentees I already knew – like Elena. Others I didn’t know at all’ says Paul. ‘My approach is always to go out for lunch and have an informal discussion about you they are, who I am, what their stage in family life might be. A sort of no-holds-barred talk about who you both are as individuals before moving towards setting goals and looking at what they want to get out of the programme. ’Elena was very forthcoming about her goals. ‘I think it is best as a mentee to be brutally honest about what you want,’ she admits. ‘I said to him, you are a role model. I want to be like you. I want to be able to make a difference. I want to be a professor.’

From working with Paul Elena realised that one way a mentor can be useful is to help you construct and articulate your own goals. ‘Sometimes you have an idea about what you want to do and where you want to go, but the mentor has been there and done it already. They have the benefit of experience so they can help you convert your career ambitions into specific goals.’

“I think it is best as a mentee to be brutally honest about what you want.”

Paul has developed his own approach to Futures mentoring. As well as one to one meetings with his mentees to discuss their goals and ambitions, Paul sets up what he calls ‘Understudy Days’. Being someone with an active learning style, this suited Elena down to the ground. ‘I got there at 8.30 in the morning’ she recalls. ‘Paul was waiting for me. We sat at his desk and looked at his diary and every appointment he had. He provided me with a programme for the day and a set of
papers, and off we went. He had checked in advance with colleagues to ensure that they were happy to have me along and there wasn’t a single meeting I couldn’t attend with him.’ Elena observed Paul in action at a range of settings from University Court to individual discussions, addressing a variety of topics from student bursaries to links with schools. ‘What was really powerful for me was the walking time between meetings, because we had the chance to discuss the most important aspects of the meetings and Paul’s approach to each one. It was so exciting to understand how he was thinking and to see the way he did things.’ Towards the end of the afternoon Elena and Paul returned to his office and Elena was invited to sit with Paul whilst he tackled his emails. ‘Even that was fascinating’ she says. ‘He took off his tie and put on some classical music and then worked through his in-box. He showed me how he responded to things that he was supporting, things about which he felt lukewarm and the things he wasn’t happy about. He explained how he varied his language and tone to convey his feelings.’

Paul recommends this whole day approach to other mentors. ‘Talking over coffee can be useful, but it doesn’t really give a full insight into my role.’ Is a full day’s work-shadowing hard to arrange? ‘Well it can be,’ he admits. ‘My mentees have been at very different career stages from Dean to Senior Lecturer. You have to find a day when there are things that are not confidential and suitable for them to be involved with – things that are interesting for them at their career level. On the positive side they are following me doing the work I would be doing anyway, so I don’t have to change my plans.’

Elena completed 3 understudy days with Paul and loved the whole experience. After each one she wrote up a short summary reflecting on her experiences and conclusions and shared this with Paul. Her reflections are wide-ranging. They include observations about the way Paul behaved in meetings, the expectations people have of senior leaders, the benefits of delegation and the challenges of effective decision-making. ‘My one to ones with Paul have always been enriching, but the opportunity to follow and observe someone very senior for a whole day is scary on the one hand, but it gives the opportunity to actually see them in action.’

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Does Elena find herself emulating Paul in her own behaviour at work? ‘Some of his behaviours I can’t use because they are just not my style’ she observes, ‘but I can say that observing my mentor has very strongly influenced my approach to my job. I am inspired by him. I know he is political – in his role he has to be. But there is something about the way he does his job that I really like.’ An example is Paul’s ability to involve people in decision-making, to consult and encourage debate in order to achieve consensus and help people buy into change. ‘To see someone who is successful and good at his job working like this has confirmed for me that this is a good technique and made me confident in working this way’ explains Elena. ‘I am not scared of people disagreeing with me. If they have a better idea of how to achieve something I am happy to try it. I think that helped me a lot.’

To other mentees Elena would advise making the most of the opportunity by fully engaging with the programme. ‘Take some time to reflect’ she suggests ‘Sit down and think about what you have learnt. Decide if you want to make any changes and, if you do, get on and make them.’ Paul agrees. ‘Take it seriously’ he urges. ‘Use the opportunity to learn about yourself and your institution. Keep an open mind and challenge your mentor. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. I don’t like too much deference from my mentees!’
Paul and Elena are still in touch and still talk regularly. Elena will soon be accompanying Paul to a Higher Education Academy meeting in London, where she will be able to meet senior leaders from Universities around the UK. This type of support with networking is very much appreciated by Elena. ‘Paul has willingly and proactively has opened his networks to me by way of inviting me to events where I can meet people who can help me achieve my goals. He has supported me to be part of projects that help me move forward.’ Paul acknowledges that this is an important way he can help his mentees, especially in his role as a cross cutting PVC with a variety of networks that are not all discipline-specific. ‘How you open up your networks will vary from person to person. In Elena’s case I wanted to introduce her to people who could broaden her understanding of the university and the potential roles that she could have within it.’ Paul also introduced Elena to his other mentees – with the dual objective of facilitating peer support and sharing ideas about getting the most from your mentor.

"Use the opportunity to learn about yourself and your institution. Keep an open mind and challenge your mentor. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. I don’t like too much deference from my mentees!"

Paul’s top tips for other mentors include: ‘Expect to learn about yourself and be open to this. It is a shared experience. Be flexible and don’t assume that your mentee’s career will go in a particular direction. What you should be doing is opening up new avenues for them to explore, or finding new areas in which your mentee can feel a sense of self-confidence. Finally, don’t take anything for granted. We at senior levels tend to forget that people a little lower in the organisation don’t understand the workings of things. You need to properly brief your mentee and check her understanding.’

Elena has also completed Sheffield Leader Level 4 - a valuable but very different experience to Futures. ‘The Sheffield Leader course is about getting to know other leaders, your peers, and forming networks with them. It is about being away from work and talking together about leadership styles and approaches in a facilitated environment. Futures is about watching someone, a senior role model. It is about observing your mentor in action, reflecting on what you see and learning from your mentor one to one. I was so lucky with my mentor. For me Futures was fabulous."
How can The Futures mentoring programme help senior women prepare for positions of leadership?

Professor Vanessa Toulmin and Professor Mike Hounslow

Vanessa and Mike started meeting as mentor in mentee in March 2010 and worked together for about 12 months.

“When I first told people that I was paired with Mike Hounslow, they thought it was hilarious” Vanessa recalled. “Some predicted it would be a car crash!” When you consider Vanessa’s childhood as part of the travelling community on the fairground, her background in the Arts and her current post as the University’s Head of Cultural Engagement, it is easy to see why people would have been sceptical. Did she really have anything in common with the Pro Vice Chancellor for Engineering? “We are both very straight talking, both interested in sport and we got on very well” explains Vanessa. “I had specifically asked for a mentor from outside the Arts Faculty, as I already had a great line manager who had given me fabulous career advice, and I had other colleagues I could go to for academic advice. I wanted to learn about the rest of the University. Eighty per cent of Sheffield University is Science and Engineering and I didn’t think I could represent my institution properly without better knowledge of these areas.” Vanessa was also curious to know more about the challenges of accessing senior management jobs and operating at this level. “Being a senior manager wasn’t a goal I had identified for myself, but others were suggesting it to me. I wanted to know, if I did choose this path, do I have to wait for a tap on the shoulder? What does the job entail? Do I have the ability and the temperament?”

“Do I Have To Wait For A Tap On The Shoulder?”

Mike had no reservations about taking on Vanessa as a mentee. “I already knew of her. When we first met she had spoken to some people who thought we would not get on – but I never thought that way. This kind of programme is about working across Faculties and across differences.”

When Vanessa joined the Futures programme in March 2010 she was spending much of her time outside the University on research and consultancy projects. As the Founder and Director of the UK’s only National Fairground Archive and the first Professor at Sheffield University to belong to Professional Services rather than an academic department, Vanessa acknowledges that her professional journey has been far from standard. “My career has not followed a straight forward path,” she observes. “I created my own path.” Having such a non-traditional background was bound to impact on Vanessa’s self-perception.

“The fascinating thing about Vanessa was that she entirely characterised herself as an outsider” recalls Mike. “It was quite a deep part of her make up on many levels – including professionally. It was really interesting to me to meet someone who thought in such an extreme way. I think I was able to persuade her that this wasn’t going be a productive way to think. If all her perceptions of herself were as an outsider, she was never going to able to be an insider and you can’t lead from the outside. To be a leader you have to join the inside in some way.” Vanessa and Mike decided to meet monthly and soon found plenty to talk about. “The 1-1s were fantastic” says Vanessa. “They gave me the opportunity to talk privately to a senior manager, someone I respected in the university, who had no ulterior motive in the advice he gave me. I absolutely felt from the outset that the advice Mike gave me was based on his own belief of my
capability. There was no other agenda. That is why I think that the pairings across Faculties really work.”

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“The role of the mentor is to ask the big and difficult questions” says Mike “and then to listen to, rather than supply, the answer. “ His big question to Vanessa was: What do you want from your career?

“I normally think about everyone else and I am very good at asking for things for my staff, for my research, for my employer. But I never really thought much about myself” acknowledges Vanessa.

She came back to Mike a few weeks after their first meeting, full of energy, admitting that she had a lot of thinking to do and starting to identify and list her career aspirations. “I helped her to see herself as a serious academic, and as soon as she had that perspective she was away. From that point on it was a case of keeping her grounded! I was able to help her ‘unpack’ some of her answers and then think through how her aspirations might be achieved.”

In addition to their 1-1 meetings, Vanessa and Mike decided to carry out a joint project. “Mike’s big thing is that people don’t know what engineers do and how important they are. So I said, it’s not good enough to go round telling people that rule the world, you have to show people that you do.” Combining her skills in public engagement and his passion for his discipline they put on a public exhibition showcasing engineering talents and achievements and both found this to be an enriching experience. Mike learnt much about the how creative processes from the Arts could be harnessed to promote and market engineering to new audiences, and Vanessa tapped into a whole new academic network. “By providing complete access to his Faculty and his colleagues, he gave me a valuable understanding of the research that is being carried on there. I am so genuinely interested, and the contacts I made have proved invaluable for my later work. My greatest joy and privilege over the last year has been working with colleagues across the university who are magnificent academics.” Vanessa also observed Mike chair meetings such as Engineering Faculty Executive Board. “I was amazed at the breadth of things he had to deal with on a daily basis, from drainage upwards... I did like that aspect of the job. Like Mike, I am an extremely practical person.”

When asked whether it was difficult to find an hour a month to give to his mentee Mike is dismissive. “I don’t think I do anything that’s worth doing in less than an hour a month,” he says simply. “It helped that I didn’t see it as a lifelong relationship at that intensity. The relationship tapered after a while.” The pair was put together for 6 months but decided to meet for longer and they are still in contact. “I would not say that I am currently mentoring Vanessa, but I would acknowledge that I am still her mentor. We still see each other at University functions and make a note to catch up. Apparently it is always my turn to provide the coffee!”

“I was amazed at the breadth of things he had to deal with on a daily basis, from drainage upwards... I did like that aspect of the job. Like Mike, I am an extremely practical person.”

How does Mike think that his support had helped Vanessa? “I gave her confidence to be visible across the university – simply by being someone from a very different part of the university who clearly thought that what she had to say was intelligent and useful.” The process also increased
Vanessa’s self-awareness “I am someone who focusses on solutions rather than problems” she says. “Mike helped me to realise that about myself.” On the subject of what mentors can do for their mentees, Mike reflects on his own approach. “As a mentor I can’t just listen – I must challenge. It is just my nature. Vanessa clearly relished this approach. I think that says a lot about her, but also it says things about all people who are going to get a lot out of being mentored. They can accept the challenge as just that – not as criticism.”

Vanessa has much to say on the topic of benefits and has a concrete example. When faced with a huge career dilemma, she had a big decision to make and turned to Mike for confidential support. “He was the only person in the university I told” she remembers. “He didn’t try to influence me. He just listened and encouraged me to think things through. Once I had made the decision that my future lay at Sheffield University he suggested I go to talk to the Vice Chancellor about my ambitions for my research, my archive and myself. It would never have occurred to me to do this. Women don’t tend to ask for things for themselves. I certainly never asked for myself, until Mike taught me to. He gave me the ability to think - well actually there is nothing to lose.”

“I gave her confidence to be visible across the university – simply by being someone from a very different part of the university who clearly thought that what she had to say was intelligent and useful.”

So what advice would Mike offer to other mentors? “Ask questions and challenge answers. Don’t assume that things are obvious to you are obvious to your mentee. What is to you a self-evident truth might be completely hidden to someone else. We see the world in very different ways.”

Vanessa’s advice to mentees is to “accept the help that is being offered to you. If you don’t accept it, don’t be surprised if it is withdrawn.”

When asked whether he learnt anything through being a mentor Mikes answer is emphatic. “I learnt an enormous amount. That’s why one should do it. The role insists that you listen and set aside your preconceived ideas, so it is fantastic training for your listening skills. It is a role where you don’t necessarily know any of the answers (or indeed all of the questions) – so listening is an essential, not a bonus. Also there was the whole issue of what constitutes academic success in different disciplines. It was really interesting to see the similarities and the differences across such a broad range of disciplines.”

In summary, what did Vanessa most gain from her participation in Futures? “What was most interesting about Futures was learning about a part of the university that I otherwise wouldn’t know anything about. Also the 1-1 aspect was the thing that was valuable to me - the ‘what about you?’ question. It was about my individual growth as a professional person. I don’t know, yet, whether I want to be a PVC, or precisely what type of leadership role I aspire to. But I do now believe that I am capable of a senior role when the right opportunity comes along.”
Resources

Here are three forms you may find helpful:

- The Futures Mentoring Agreement, to be discussed and completed at the first meeting, page 22-24.
- A SWOT exercise, which could be completed by the mentee early on to encourage reflection and help generate useful topics for discussion, page 25.
- A mentoring review sheet, which could be completed by mentee and mentor together mid-year, page 26-27.

Also, a further reading list which you may find of interest, page 28.
The Mentoring Agreement and 'no fault divorce clause' principals

The Mentoring Agreement Form is a simple contract between mentee and mentor which records the 'ground rules' by which the relationship will operate and what each party expects of the other. It helps to establish a firm foundation for the relationship and therefore to build trust between mentor and mentee. It should be completed at the first mentoring meeting, signed by both parties if they both agree to, and revisited over the course of the year.

If either party is unhappy with the relationship is can be terminated without blame by contacting the Programme Co-ordinator, Frances Dee, at x21491 / f.dee@sheffield.ac.uk.
1. Confidentiality

We understand that, in order for this mentoring programme to succeed, it is vitally important that we both trust the other with regards to confidentiality. Therefore we agree that all information disclosed during mentoring sessions will be kept strictly confidential (by us both) and any information attained during the work shadowing process will also remain confidential, unless otherwise agreed.

2. Frequency of meetings and location

There are two main elements to this mentoring programme; face to face meetings and work shadowing

**Face to face meetings**
We will meet face to face regularly. (We understand we are encouraged to meet for a minimum of 6 sessions - 1 session every two months over a year).

**Work Shadowing**
Alongside the commitment to meet face to face mentees are also expected/encouraged to shadow their mentor. The shadowing provided will be dependent upon the needs of the mentee, however, it is likely that the mentee will shadow the mentor for 2 or 3 whole days over the 12 month period. We agree to discuss shadowing at an early stage in our relationship and to actively look for appropriate shadowing opportunities.

**Diary management**
The mentee is to liaise with their mentor’s Personal Assistant to arrange regular face to face sessions and any work shadowing. It is essential that the mentee remains as flexible as possible in order to take advantage of the shadowing element of this programme. It is essential that the mentor identifies relevant opportunities in as timely a manner as possible.
3. Communication

We will discuss and agree the best way of setting up our mentoring meetings. We may need to contact each other between meetings using the contact details below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
<th>Email address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee</td>
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Our expectations and preferences about the communications between us are:
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4. Focus of the mentoring relationship

a) Our primary objectives for the 12 month mentoring relationship are:
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b) As a mentor I expect the following from my mentee
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c) As I mentee I expect the following from my mentor
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d) Our other agreements/expectations/hopes for the mentoring relationship are
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5. Reflection/Evaluation

We understand the importance of monitoring and evaluation and agree to provide, when asked, appropriate feedback, that does not breach our confidentiality agreement. The programme co-ordinator (Frances Dee) will contact the participants on an ad-hoc basis during the year to check on progress and invite them to participate in a formal evaluation which will be conducted at the end of the programme.
6. Termination

We understand that if either party is unhappy with the mentoring relationship, it can be ended. If required, either party can speak to Frances Dee on ext 21491 or email at f.dee@sheffield.ac.uk.

7. Signatures

Mentor ..........................Date ..............................................................

Mentee ..................................Date ..............................................................

Please keep this contract safe and refer to it when you review your mentoring relationship mid-year and towards the end of the 12 month period.
A useful exercise for the mentee to conduct at an early stage in the relationship, and then share the results with her mentor. What are the mentee’s strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities before her and any threats, i.e. things that might prevent her from taking advantage of those opportunities?

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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
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Futures Mentoring Programme – Mentoring Review Form

This is a helpful exercise for mentor and mentee to conduct together mid-year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long have we been working together?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How regularly are we in contact? Is that the right level of contact?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do we know what we are trying to achieve? Do we need greater clarity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has gone well for us so far? How has the mentee benefitted?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What have been our biggest challenges?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Have we overcome our challenges? If not, how could we tackle them?

What are our next steps?

Are we both happy to continue? If yes, will we change anything?
Further reading

  http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/mentoring-progressing-womens-careers-in-higher-education/

Useful websites:

- The mentoring and coaching network
  http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/
- European Mentoring and Coaching Council
  http://emccuk.org/
- CIPD coaching and mentoring pages
  http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/coaching-mentoring.aspx