

UL Mentoring Scheme



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
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UL Mentoring Scheme

Contents

Mentoring in the University of Limerick	2
Definition of Mentoring	2
Mentoring Committee	3
Why become a Mentee?.....	4
Why become a Mentor?.....	4
Application	4
Support.....	4
Guidelines	5
Mentee / Mentor Relationship	6
Confidentiality Statement	6
Evaluation.....	6

*How we would have done things differently
20 years ago if we knew then what we know now!*

Mentoring in the University of Limerick

Throughout our lives we meet challenges, that had we had the support of a Mentor, we perhaps would have done things differently. Have you ever asked yourself the following questions? Where can I get advice on new responsibilities? What opportunities for promotion exist in the University? How can I apply for a different post? How can I successfully apply for funding? Is job-sharing for me? Where can I find out how the accounts systems work? How can I get a grip on UL culture? I am finding my management role challenging, can anyone offer me advice? **A Mentor could possibly help you.** There are often answers (or at least pointers), if we only knew where to get them!

The aim of this mentoring initiative is to provide a platform through which experiences can be shared on a one-to-one informal basis, thus providing support to people at various stages in their careers. The Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Graduate Studies Office provides a framework for the mentoring of new faculty.

The UL Mentoring Scheme further develops the mentoring culture and climate of UL by including all employees, male and female: faculty, staff, research and technical. This scheme is administered by the Mentoring Scheme co-ordinator. The Mentee-Mentor connection focuses on building trusting relationships. Mentees are supported and encouraged by Mentors who are voluntarily giving their time. The scheme is mentee led. All Mentee-Mentor exchanges are strictly confidential and training is provided.

Definition of Mentoring

What is Mentoring? Mentoring is a career management tool used by organisations to nurture and develop their staff. It is a relationship between two people in a work setting, the purpose of which is passing on knowledge and information, sharing wisdom and experience and offering advice and help in a confidential manner. The suggested duration of the mentoring relationship under the UL Mentoring Scheme is one year

Mentoring is a tried and tested process of developing individuals through organised programmes of guiding, training and counselling. **It helps people to help themselves.**

Why become a Mentee?

Have you ever wished you knew someone who had already experienced what you are going through? Do you want to learn from others' experience and perhaps their mistakes? Do you want to discuss issues with another faculty or staff member?

The University of Limerick is a large organisation and having a Mentor can increase your informal knowledge of how things work here, broaden your perspective and help you 'navigate' the UL maze. Depending on what you want, as Mentee, mentoring will give you the opportunity to receive support while you take responsibility for your career/personal goals. This should ultimately support your personal development within UL.

"The process as a whole has been hugely beneficial to my own development. I have found it to be hugely supportive and positive. The sessions can be challenging, which is important as the mentee is allowed the opportunity to consider decisions and attitudes to work/career etc. It is also an excellent 'time-out' when you have the opportunity to reflect on your own work and where you are at with it." – Mentee Feedback.

"Wow, it was fantastic to know that I was not alone in my time of need". – Mentee Feedback.

Why become a Mentor?

Many employees struggle with answering this question. Mentoring allows you to provide an insight, share experiences and 'put something back' so as to facilitate another person's development. Mentoring gives staff an opportunity to support those colleagues who are facing similar challenges within an agreed time frame, normally one year. Depending on the focus taken by you as mentor, and the mentee; mentoring will provide a forum for you to impart your career and/or personal knowledge and experiences. The development of University of Limerick employees, through mentoring, will result in a more positive working environment. Not only will mentoring give mentees an insight into how the university works, you will also be challenged to understanding how and why the system works in this manner. The role of the mentor is to be an objective critical friend supporting and encouraging the mentee by sharing ones own experience and institutional knowledge and encouraging the mentee to reflect on ones own career and progress.

"I have enjoyed being involved and think that I have been helpful to my mentee" – Mentor Feedback.

"I love being a mentor. Thank you for this opportunity and to its continued success" – Mentor Feedback.

Application

Applications are invited once a year to the Mentoring Scheme (normally at the commencement of the calendar year). Information is circulated to all employees by email announcing the launch of the scheme for the year. Those interested in taking part in the scheme complete an application form and return it by email to the mentoring scheme co-ordinator marie.connolly@ul.ie

Support

Training is provided for both Mentees and Mentors. In addition, support is provided through the Mentoring Committee, through focus groups and on-going development initiatives.

Guidelines **Mentoring – what is it?**

- Mentoring is a Mentee-led relationship between two people.
- Mentoring is a voluntary, confidential process for both Mentors and Mentees.
- At any time either party may withdraw from the relationship.
- Mentoring should not replace more formal structures already in place e.g. formal faculty mentoring programme; formal reporting relationships in UL.

Mentoring – The aims of the mentoring programme are

- Helping Mentees to build self confidence.
- Sharing knowledge, skills and experience.
- Increase cross departmental networking.
- Help with career planning.
- Encouraging inclusivity across the University.

Mentoring – first steps

1. Potential Mentees and Mentors complete an application form and return it by email to mentoring@ul.ie
2. Mentees and Mentors undertake a training programme.
3. Following training, pairs are matched to meet as many of the Mentees requests as possible. Pairs are not matched from within the same Division/Department.

Meetings guidelines

- The partnership lasts for one year.
- Mentoring pairs should meet regularly during the year but how often you meet depends on your personal circumstances i.e. availability to meet. However the recommendation is that you meet a minimum of 6 times per year.
- The length of the meeting will be decided between the Mentor and Mentee but meetings normally last 1 to 2 hours.
- Meetings can be held in a variety of places, wherever suits the pair best. Some people have more email type meetings after the initial couple of face-to-face meetings. This is entirely up to both people.
- Both parties should commit to maintaining regular contact.

Discussion topics can include e.g.:

- Current position
- Career
- Equality issues
- Challenges that the Mentee is encountering in his/her role
- Networking possibilities
- Personal development
- Holistic view

Mentee / Mentor Relationship

The Mentee needs to bring commitment and follow-through to the mentoring relationship. He / she needs to keep in touch with the Mentor and articulate their needs in relation to the Mentor/Mentee relationship. It is a Mentee led relationship therefore the Mentee is responsible for keeping regular contact with the Mentor and for following up on agreed action items.

The Mentor's role is to help the Mentee develop his / her career and life goals while working in the University and to support the Mentee in meeting his / her objectives.

Confidentiality Statement

- Information provided on application forms will only be used to facilitate the mentoring matching process
- Mentees and Mentors should note that the professional and personal information shared during mentoring is confidential to the pairs involved, and should remain so, even when the mentoring relationship has ended
- When discussing general views on mentoring (e.g. for the purposes of evaluation), care should be taken that specific individuals cannot be identified
- In written reports, individual views and statements will be presented anonymously
- Any professional and/or personal information shared, discussed or disclosed during mentoring shall be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

Evaluation

All those involved in the UL Mentoring Scheme will have an opportunity to provide feedback. The scheme will be evaluated on an on-going basis through surveys, focus groups, open discussion forums and training evaluation. (see FAQs on the Mentoring Website – www.ul.ie/hr)



