

# Mentoring Implementation Program

This program outlines a sequence to help steer practices and individuals through the process of implementing a mentoring program, using the tools offered by the Champions of Change Architecture Group.

## 1

### Research

This is the process of understanding mentoring and how it might relate to your practice.

- ≥ Nominate a champion for mentoring. Who will be responsible for its implementation and management in your practice? This will need to be someone with a good overview of your team, trustworthy with confidential and personal information.
- ≥ Understand the general principles of mentoring and why it's important as well as a broad overview of the business case for mentoring.
- ≥ Understand what you do now. How does mentoring work in your practice currently (even if it is informal)? Who has benefitted? Who hasn't and why?
- ≥ Understand what your staff are looking for in mentoring. Ask them through listening and learning discussions as well as with our draft questionnaire.
- ≥ Complete an unconscious bias test or training. Mentoring can be very successful in improving equity and the diversity of your practice but being aware of your bias will help you better structure your program.

## 2

### Setting goals

What does the practice hope to achieve through establishing a mentoring program?

These goals should be recorded and used to interrogate the systems set up and to reflect on the success of the program when underway.

These goals should relate to the overall business plan of the practice. The mentoring strategy should be part of a larger staff development strategy including training and sponsorship.

Examples of these goals might include the following:

- ≥ Integrating new staff into the culture of the practice.
- ≥ Transitioning new graduates into practice.
- ≥ Assisting architects as they develop into new roles (for example, project architects to team leaders).
- ≥ Graduates getting registered.
- ≥ New, more diverse practice leaders.
- ≥ Rectifying skill gaps in the practice.
- ≥ Developing new skills deemed useful to the practice.

Setting a budget is closely related to the goals. How much time can the practice commit to the mentoring program?

A more successful program will be integrated in daily work, programmed and costed. It is hard to prioritise mentoring, particularly when time is tight. Treating the mentoring program like a project can help with this.

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## Selecting participants

This is the process of choosing participants, mentors and mentees as well as pairing them.

- ≥ On the basis of your practice goals, who do you want to participate in your program? Do you want it to be open to everyone or a select few? If the second, how will this be handled within the practice to minimise the potential negative impact of not being selected?
- ≥ Do you have the right people to be mentors? Do they have the right skills and temperament to provide the support the mentees need? If not you might need to go outside your practice.
- ≥ Develop processes for identifying mentors and mentees in an unbiased way, as well as pairing complementary people.
- ≥ Use the participant questionnaire to ensure that participant goals are compatible.
- ≥ Review your selections from the perspective of equity. Are there biases driving your selection?

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## Establishing protocols

Establish the rules and process that will guide the practice's mentoring system and help to assess its success.

- ≥ **Setting a budget.** Key considerations include: How much can the practice commit to this process? Will it take place out of hours or within working hours? Are external resources required and what will they cost? How many people will participate and at what frequency? What financial support beyond this will the practice provide?
- ≥ **Setting a program.** What is the timeframe for the program? How does this relate to the program goals? How much do you want to structure the process the mentor and mentee go through? Will the practice provide a script for the first meetings to guide the mentor and mentee?
- ≥ **Integrating external resources.** Do you need external resources? If so, how will they fit into the program timeframe? What is the lead time for these resources and these programs?
- ≥ **Integrating types of mentoring.** Understand how different types of mentoring fit into the program. Goals should be set for each mentoring type and there should be a clear understanding of how they work together. Careful consideration of project teams and structured training can help with this.
- ≥ **Setting guidelines.** What rules or guidelines structure the relationships of the participants? These need to be recorded for clarity and to ensure a shared vision of the process.
- ≥ **Document protocols.** Record and map your protocols so that they are readily understood by all. This will form the basis for an equitable experience for all participants as well as the review and assessment and ongoing evolution of the program.

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## Implementation

Start the program!

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## Review and assessment

Considerations to support review and assessment include the following. (Structured proprietary mentoring programs can also provide this feedback as part of their service.)

- ≥ **How successful has the program been?** Has it allowed the practice goals to be met and has it done it in the best way possible? What could you do to improve the program?
- ≥ **Review staff development.** To what extent can staff development be related to the mentoring program they have participated in? Compare this growth to those that didn't participate in the program.
- ≥ **Participant feedback.** What did the participants think of their experience? This can be understood through questionnaires, one-on-one interviews and broader group discussions. A focused listen and learn session may be a useful way to gain this feedback.

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## Evolution

Integrate the lessons from 6. Review and Assessment and formalise these changes.