



**OLD DOMINION**  
UNIVERSITY

Darden College *of* Education  
*and* Professional Studies

# **MENTORING HANDBOOK**

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## **What is Mentorship?**

Mentorship has been defined in a myriad of ways. Simply speaking, mentorship generally involves two people in a collaborative relationship, where one, is more knowledgeable (i.e., mentor), provides some amount of guidance to the second person (i.e., mentee) who is developing greater knowledge and skills. Despite the unequal knowledge base, the relationship should be an equal, trusting, and safe relationship in which both the mentor and mentee interact with mutual respect and openness. Toward this goal, the mentor is a good listener, non-authoritarian, and understanding while providing the mentee with information and timely feedback with respect to the context (e.g., scholarship, teaching, cultural norms, etc.) of their relationship. The mentee is also a good listener, who values, considers, and is reflective about the proffered advice or feedback received, and takes appropriate and timely action in response to mentor suggestions when warranted. Effective mentor-mentee relationships are collegial and friendly, and both individuals benefit from the interaction.

## **Mentorship Objectives**

A number of specific objectives should result from a mentoring relationship in the College of Education at Old Dominion University. These may include some or all of the following:

1. Increased professional partnerships across departments, colleges, and university.
2. Increased knowledge of department, college, and university policies and procedures.
3. Increased knowledge and participation in department, college, and university meetings and events.
4. Increased collaboration for scholarly activities.
  - a. Increased knowledge of ways to access information on grant and funding opportunities.
  - b. Increased understanding about the publishing process.
5. Increased understanding of the tenure and promotion process.
6. Increased knowledge about teaching and using effective pedagogical methods.
7. Increased understanding of the expectations regarding involvement in department, college, and university service.
8. Increased retention of all faculty and staff.

## **Benefits of a Mentoring Relationship**

*For the mentor:* In addition to obtaining the satisfaction of helping a person navigate through his or her occupational path, mentoring has a number of possible hands-on benefits for the mentor, including: developing new avenues of scholarship, being able to obtain support for joint grant submissions through the Junior Faculty Mentoring Program through the Office of Research (see “Resources” p. 12), developing new and enriching relationships, and gaining recognition for supporting junior faculty through his or her annual evaluation. In addition, the Darden College of Education’s Dean’s office offers stipends to be used for mentor-mentee lunches or meetings.

*For the mentee:* For new faculty who have little experience working in academia, having a mentor can provide a number of benefits. For instance, the mentee may acclimate faster to the culture and politics of his or her department, college, and of the university; gain opportunities to explore new avenues for research and scholarship, and participate in scholarly activities, such as writing articles and contributing to grant proposals; improve teaching by observing or being observed by mentor; strategically accept (or decline) service opportunities; increased ability to manage balance between research, service, and teaching.

## Finding a Mentor

If you are a junior faculty member and you desire mentoring, and if your Department Chair has not assigned a mentor, you should consider discussing the possibilities of mentorship with your department chair. You may also consider reviewing the College Faculty Expertise Database ([odu.edu/education/research/faculty-expertise](http://odu.edu/education/research/faculty-expertise)) to find a faculty member who shares similar research interests. You may have multiple needs, and may need multiple mentors; many people have multiple mentors with different strengths. Consider seeking mentorship from within your department, outside your department, from within the college, across the university, and outside of the university. If you want to be a mentor, and have not been assigned a mentee, let your Department Chair know of your interests and even consider letting additional department Chairs know that you are available to mentor.

**The National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity:** Currently, the university is exploring the possibility of having an institutional membership with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD). NCFDD provides a wide range of mentoring activities including a weekly supportive message or idea, webinars on mentoring, multi-week courses on mentoring, an online discussion forum, an online library that includes a wide range of resources from past years, a career center, and resources and referrals that provide coaching, readings, writing clubs, and more. If ODU does not develop a formal relationship with NCFDD, you can join NCFDD independently for a fee (on occasion they offer free trials during breaks, see their website for more information). We believe that this institutional membership, along with mentorship at ODU, can help you have a productive and long career at Old Dominion University. (See Link to NCFDD on p. 12).

## General Mentorship Guidelines

The following are some very general guidelines regarding the mentoring process. These guidelines are not meant to be “set in stone” but may give the mentor and the mentee some ideas about what to expect during the mentoring relationship.

### General Guidelines:

1. *Frequency of meetings:* Face-to-face meetings should generally be held a minimum of once a month, approximately 4 times a semester.
2. *Communication:* The mentor and mentee should maintain open lines of communication by email or other communication methods.
3. *Endorsement:* Mentors and mentees should be endorsed or assigned by the Department Chair.
4. *Working alliance:* The working alliance between the mentor and mentee is probably the most critical factor in determining positive outcomes for the mentee. This alliance should be based on trust, commitment, a caring attitude, and honesty. In addition, mentees should be ensured that what they share with their mentor is confidential; that is, it will not be shared with any other individuals at the University.
5. *Professional boundaries:* The mentorship relationship is a professional relationship and appropriate boundaries need to be upheld if it is to be successful. This is not to say that mentors and mentees cannot be friendly, or even engage in “friendship activities” (e.g., having dinner together). However, both the mentor and the mentee should keep in mind the limits of this relationship.
6. *Evaluative relationship:* Often, mentors are also involved in some type of evaluative process with their mentees. For instance, they may be on a yearly committee to evaluate the mentee’s progress toward tenure. Such evaluation should be based on the evidence of what the mentee has produced, and not on any personal feelings or subjective opinions about the mentee--positive or negative.
7. *Dissolving the Relationship:* Mentors and mentees should feel comfortable asking for a new mentor should either feel there is not a “fit” between the two of them.

## The Mentorship Process

Every mentoring relationship is different and how it develops is unique to the personalities of the mentor and mentee, the discipline in which the mentor and mentee works, and the specific needs of the department, college and university. However, there are often some general patterns that one sees in a mentoring relationship. The following illustrates what may be some typical patterns in a mentoring relationship.

### Meeting 1: Beginning the Relationship

Mentors will often schedule an initial face-to-face, kick-off meeting within the first 2 weeks of the semester which involves building the working alliance with the mentee and providing some basic information. Some items that are typically covered and some important points to remember about this first meeting include the following:

- o The mentor should be cognizant of the working alliance that is being built and should do his or her best to exhibit the qualities necessary to build a successful mentoring relationship including trust, commitment, a caring attitude, and honesty.
- o The mentor and mentee should get to know each other's professional teaching and research interests.
- o The mentor should review this handbook's information regarding the objectives of mentorship and the role of the mentor.
- o The mentor and mentee should establish broad goals for both the mentoring partnership as well as the mentee's professional and tenure goals.
- o The mentor should inquire about any broad scholarship interests and needs that the mentee might have.
- o A meeting should be scheduled, sometime for the next month, to talk about the personnel structure of the university, college, and departments and important procedures.
- o The mentor should set the tone that this is a professional relationship that has professional boundaries.
- o The mentor stresses to the mentor that what he or she reveals will be kept confidential throughout the mentoring relationship.
- o Near the end of the meeting, the mentor should answer any questions the mentee might have.

**In between meetings the mentor should encourage the mentee to attend events and meetings on campus that the mentor, and/or other department members, may be attending.**

## Meeting 2: Building the Relationship

During the second meeting, the mentor is particularly cognizant of the ongoing working alliance, checks on the mentee's goals and objectives, and continues to provide him or her with important information about the University community.

- o The mentor and mentee should review the goals established during the first meeting, updating as needed.
- o The mentor should continue to exhibit those qualities necessary to build a working alliance with the mentee.
- o The mentor should “check in” with the mentee and ask the mentee how he or she is adjusting to being at Old Dominion University. The mentor should see his or her role as someone who is concerned about the mentee's fit at the university and should consider what he or she can do to help the mentee feel more comfortable at the university.
- o The mentor should provide a “who's who” overview of any faculty or staff within the department or college and across the university that the mentee needs to know. Examples should be provided of when the mentee may need each person. Consider including committee chairs, assistant and associate deans, deans, fiscal tech, the provost, faculty senate chair, office managers, program coordinators, graduate program directors, reference librarians, and others.
- o The mentor should inform the mentee of any evaluation procedures that typically take place in the department and particularly highlight those that are critical to the mentee.
- o The mentor should review pertinent procedures the mentee may need to be aware of on a department, college, and university level. These may include disability services, ombudsman communication, submitting grades, human resources, library resources, travel, reimbursement funds, and more.
- o The mentor should invite the mentee to discuss any concerns that he or she might have about his or her work at the university. Particular focus should be placed on teaching responsibilities, scholarship expectations, and service activities.
- o A meeting should be scheduled sometime for the next month to talk about the mentee's teaching and research agenda.

**In between meetings the mentor should encourage the mentee to attend events and meetings on campus that the mentor, and/or other department members, may be attending.**



### Meeting 3: Solidifying the Relationship

As the relationship continues, and if the mentor is able to exhibit those qualities necessary to develop a successful working alliance, the relationship between the mentor and mentee will begin to solidify and the mentee will increasingly feel as if he or she can trust the mentor. During this time, the mentor's responsibility includes delving deeper into the scholarship, teaching, and service needs of the mentee.

- o The mentor and mentee should review the goals established during the last meeting, updating as needed.
- o The mentor should continue to exhibit those qualities necessary to build a working alliance with the mentee.
- o The mentor should "check in" with the mentee and ask the mentee how he or she is adjusting to being at Old Dominion University.
- o The mentor should share some of his or her own great moments and struggles in teaching. The mentee may then want to share some of his or her own great teaching moments and struggles. The mentor should offer resources or alternatives to help the mentee improve upon his or her own teaching.
- o The mentor and mentee should discuss research and scholarship interests. The mentee should share his or her current research and what stage the research is in. The mentee should discuss the "plan" for the research in terms of presentation (where? when?) and publication (where? when?). The mentor can share his or her own experiences presenting at conferences and in publishing. This may also be a good time for the mentor and mentee to consider collaborative research efforts. Mentors are encouraged to invite mentees to participate in existing research efforts, where appropriate.
- o The mentor should help the mentee begin to think about service activities he or she can do at the department, college, university, and professional level, keeping in mind the limitations of service for a new faculty member.
- o The mentor should invite the mentee to discuss any concerns that he or she might have about his or her work at the university.
- o A meeting should be scheduled sometime for the next month to discuss the mentee's positive strengths.

**In between meetings the mentor should encourage the mentee to attend events and meetings on campus that the mentor, and/or other department members, may be attending.**

### **Meeting 4: Strengthening the Relationship**

As the relationship continues, the mentor and mentee will increasingly feel a strong professional bond and the mentor will feel at ease at offering positive as well as constructive feedback to the mentee.

- o The mentor and mentee should review the goals established during the last meeting, discussing how the goals have been or could be met in the future.
- o The mentor should continue to exhibit those qualities necessary to build a working alliance with the mentee.
- o The mentor should “check in” with the mentee and ask the mentee how he or she is adjusting to being at Old Dominion University.
- o The mentor should provide the mentee with a list of the mentee’s positive strengths and characteristics of his or her teaching, service, and scholarship. The mentee and mentor should discuss these traits and characteristics and how they can be valuable to the department, college, university, and profession. In order to develop this list, the mentor can offer to observe the mentee’s class, review instructional materials, provide feedback on a research manuscript, or perform other activities that enable the mentor to learn about the mentee’s work.
- o Gentle and constructive feedback can be now given to the mentee about his or her job roles. Such feedback should be delivered with an attitude that conveys the mentor wants to assist the mentee in developing the skills necessary to be successful at ODU.
- o The mentor should invite the mentee to discuss any concerns that he or she might have about his or her work at the university.
- o The mentor should inquire if the mentee feels comfortable with the mentor. If not, an honest discussion should ensue about how the relationship can deepen. Not all mentors and mentees have a “fit,” and the dissolving of such a relationship should be viewed as positive in the sense that initial goals were met and that a new mentoring relationship that is more suitable for the mentee can now be started. If it is decided that the mentoring relationship needs to dissolve, then the mentor should advise the Department Chair that the mentee might be better off with a new mentor starting the following semester.
- o If the mentee feels positive about the relationship, a regular schedule of meetings for the year should be determined.

**In between meetings the mentor should encourage the mentee to attend events and meetings on campus that the mentor, and/or other department members, may be attending.**

### **Meeting 5 and On: Continuing the Relationship**

As the relationship continues, the mentor and mentee will feel a strong professional bond and the mentor will gradually feel at ease offering positive as well as constructive feedback to the mentee. The mentee will increasingly feel part of the department, college, and university as the mentoring relationship continues and grows.

- o The mentor and mentee should continue to meet regularly to 1) review and update goals; and 2) discuss any concerns the mentee may have.
- o The mentor should continue to: 1) check in regularly with the mentee; and 2) provide feedback noting strengths and suggestions to guide the mentee in his/her role.

## Resources

### Mentoring Relationship Resources

- What might a mentoring program look like? (University of California: San Diego)  
<https://grad.ucsd.edu/student-life/professional-development/mentorship/index.html>

### Mentor Resources

- Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring (Columbia University)  
<https://provost.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/MentoringBestPractices.pdf>

### Mentoring Resources

- Ideal qualities of a mentor (Research Study)  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0002934311000088>
- Mentee Handbook (Wake Forest University)  
[https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/35/2017/10/Mentee-Handbook\\_2017.pdf](https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/35/2017/10/Mentee-Handbook_2017.pdf)
- Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring (Columbia University)  
<https://provost.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/MentoringBestPractices.pdf>