



Radcliffe Department of Medicine

# Mentoring Scheme Handbook



# Radcliffe Department of Medicine Mentoring Scheme (RDMMS)

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# Radcliffe Department of Medicine Mentoring Scheme (RDMMS)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document is intended to assist prospective mentors, mentees and other members of staff, including graduate students, by defining what the RDM Mentoring Scheme (RDMMS) is, identifying the benefits for all concerned and outlining some practical guidance regarding the operation of the scheme.

Some mentoring occurs naturally and informally in the workplace, but usually it needs some coordination to ensure that it happens for all those who want mentoring. The RDMMS aims to provide that coordination and to actively facilitate the building of relationships across RDM units.

## **WHAT IS MENTORING?**

You may find it useful to be mentored (or coached) at different stages of your professional life – perhaps when new to the University; in transition between posts; when wanting your career to progress or change direction; for support in balancing work and family life; returning to work after a career break or for some other reason.

But what is mentoring? Mentoring is a powerful personal development tool, which can be an effective way of helping staff to progress in their careers and life more generally. It should be viewed as a confidential non-judgmental relationship, which can facilitate a wide range of learning and development, rather than a management tool.

Mentoring in the RDM is a voluntary arrangement through which “an experienced individual, outside the normal working relationship (a mentee’s direct supervisor(s) cannot act as mentors), holds regular meetings and discussions and takes a personal interest in guiding and supporting the development of a less experienced person in progressing within and beyond their immediate role.”

The RDM Mentoring scheme aims to match a person with relevant experience(s) with an individual who wishes to benefit from this experience and to provide support for both mentees and mentors in maximizing the benefits of their mentoring partnership. The objectives are to provide support and informal guidance for any staff or students who wish to join the scheme.

Matches will be made across the divisions of RDM wherever possible and appropriate, as mentoring relationships are an excellent way to build new relationships and networks across the Department.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME**

The RDM Mentoring Scheme’s overall aim is to assist mentees to achieve personal and professional growth through a mentoring relationship that provides support as he/she progresses and develops within the University. Equally the scheme also offers benefits to the mentor and to the Department.

All staff and graduate students can register to be mentored.

All staff and graduate students with at least twelve months experience in the RDM or University of Oxford can register to be a mentor.

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This aim will be facilitated through the following objectives:

- To help to build a framework of support for both mentees and mentors
- To facilitate career and personal development planning via mentoring
- To enhance personal effectiveness and motivation
- To improve communication, interpersonal skills and networking within RDM
- To give mentees and mentors time for reflection on current practices
- To challenge pre-conceived ideas held by either the mentee or mentor
- To improve the quality and commitment of the community within RDM

### **WHY DOES THE RDM NEED A MENTORING SCHEME?**

It is almost certain that mentoring-like relationships already exist within the Department without any formal mentoring scheme. Such relationships are valuable and should continue where it works for both individuals. However informal mentoring can present problems where, for example, the different parties start with different expectations of the relationship. In addition, informal mentoring puts the onus very much on the individual seeking a mentor to find one. The introduction of a Departmental scheme will, it is hoped, open up the opportunity for mentoring to a much larger group of staff.

The RDM mentoring scheme will be self-driven. It will rely on mentees to take responsibility for their own learning and development through a mentoring relationship.

By making some matches across the divisional boundaries within the RDM it is hoped the RDMMS can contribute towards better coordination, communication and networking of the individual divisions within the RDM. For some staff it may be preferable to match with mentors outside the RDM entirely and the RDM scheme will endeavor to facilitate inter-departmental matches where useful.

The RDMMS forms part of the Department's commitment to improving opportunities for all staff by supporting them in realizing their full potential.

### **WHY HAVE A MENTOR?**

A mentoring scheme is a well-recognised method of delivering effective support for professional and personal development in a range of large organisations. But why should RDM staff seek a mentor? A mentor can:

- Act as an impartial sounding board. They create valuable time and space for a mentee to take a step back and reflect on where they are now, where they might want to be, and how they might get there.
- Contribute advice, information and viewpoints based on their own knowledge, experience and expertise; such independent and objective contributions can be very valuable
- Assist in achieving change and/or specific goals to enhance a mentee's professional and personal life

The combination of these is what can make a mentoring relationship so fruitful and productive.

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If you wish to be a mentee please complete the registration form for mentees via <http://www.rdm.ox.ac.uk/mentoring>. If you have any questions about the scheme please email [mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk)

### **WHY BE A MENTOR?**

A common motivation for individuals volunteering to be mentors is a desire to 'give something back' especially where they believe their experiences can be of use to the progress of less experienced colleagues.

However, mentoring also helps the mentor to develop their own transferrable skills. The skills required to be an effective mentor transfer well to a wide range of contexts that can assist career progression, including building interpersonal communication and leadership skills. The mentoring relationship helps the mentor to:

- Develop their own strengths (and those of the mentee)
- Challenge assumptions and clarify misunderstandings (on behalf of both mentor and mentee)
- Work with people from different contexts and backgrounds
- Practice offering positive and constructive feedback
- Generate workable solutions together in a mutually respectful way
- Motivate, advise and support whilst empowering someone to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own actions and development.

And of course, as well as enhancing the mentor's curriculum vitae, there is the satisfaction and reward of helping some else progress and succeed. If you wished to be considered as a potential mentor or wish to discuss the role of mentor further please email [mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk) in the first instance. All mentors will be provided with additional information and offered training prior to starting a mentoring partnership.

Mentors are needed from all staff groups and all grades and can offer to share professional and/or personal experiences. All staff, irrespective of grade, who feel they have a contribution to make in helping others develop are encouraged to volunteer as potential mentors.

### **THE RDM MENTORING COMMITTEE**

The overall responsibility for the RDM Mentoring Scheme rests with the RDM Mentoring Committee, currently chaired by Professor Alison Banham (NDCLS) The RDM Mentoring Committee comprises representatives of all the RDM's academic divisions and has staff from a variety of functions at different career stages. All members of the Committee share a common interest in improving staff development opportunities in the RDM.

The Committee is responsible for the recruitment and training of mentors; matching mentors and mentees across the RDM; the effective dissemination of the availability and benefits of the scheme to all staff; monitoring the effectiveness of the scheme by seeking regular feedback from mentors and mentees.

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The current committee membership (2016-18) is:

- Alison Banham (Chair) – NDCLS
- James Brown – CVMed
- Lynn Clee – RDM Strategic
- Vanessa Ferreira – CVMed
- Ruth Coleman – OCDEM
- Jan Rehwinkel – IMD/WIMM
- Zahra Aboukhalil – NDCLS/WIMM
- Michaella Smart – NDCLS

The committee membership is renewed every two years, giving the opportunity for current members to step down if they wish to and new members to join. If you are interested in joining in the future, email [mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk)

The RDMMS Coordinator is the administrative officer who provides day-to-day support to the Department's mentoring activities. The RDMMS Coordinator is currently Michaëlla Smart.



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## FURTHER INFORMATION

### INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE MENTORS

#### *What can a Mentor expect?*

A mentor will be an experienced member of staff (not necessarily senior) who will take on the role of guiding, advising and facilitating a defined aspect of the professional and/or personal development of a mentee. They will provide support to the mentee to enable them to try out new ideas and will challenge a mentee when in their view this may provide more benefit than sympathy. A mentor is not expected to take direct action on behalf of a mentee.

The mentoring relationship should provide a non-threatening environment in which the mentee feels able and willing to express their concerns and anxieties as well as discuss their ideas and aspirations. The mentee must feel assured that their confidentiality will be respected and that their discussions will not be reported back to their line manager or any other party without their agreement. For the relationship to be effective it needs to be built around mutual trust and respect.

#### *The roles of the Mentor*

During a mentoring relationship a mentor is likely take on a number of different roles. These will vary with the needs of the mentee, the particular situations, and the mentor's areas of expertise.

The Mentor can expect to take on a number of roles within the mentoring relationship involving a range of skills and behaviours. Which role the Mentor adopts at any time will depend on the needs of the Mentee and the situation and his/her own areas of expertise. No one role is more important than another.

Sounding Board	➔	Someone to test ideas and suggestions
Facilitator	➔	Point to potential opportunities, arrange introductions and access key people
Adviser	➔	Provide objective advice on a range of issues, including career opportunities
Coach	➔	Assist the learner to improve a specific skill
Expert	➔	Be a source of technical/professional knowledge
Organisational knowledge	➔	Explain and clarify and university policies, culture, politics and values
Role model	➔	Promote and encourage positive behaviours in others
Source of feedback	➔	Provide objective and constructive feedback on development
Confidant	➔	Listen to fears and concerns
Motivator	➔	Encourage and motivate the mentee to achieve their goals, and boost moral
Challenger	➔	Play devil's advocate, challenge assumptions, encourage different ways of thinking

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### The attributes of a mentor

A mentor will be an experienced member of staff with a good understanding of working in the area of their expertise.

He/she will:

- Have volunteered to act as a mentor and be committed to the process
- Be in a position to dedicate sufficient time to making the mentoring relationship a success (usually one to two hours per month, although relationships with infrequent meetings will require less time)
- Be prepared to share experience and pass on skills to others
- Have a genuine interest in developing potential in others for the future
- Have an enthusiastic and positive attitude towards their own work, other people and the University
- Be able to gain the trust of other people

### The expectations of a mentor

The Mentor will:

- Appreciate the differing experiences and needs of their mentee
- Respect the importance of trust in the mentoring relationship
- Ask open and appropriate questions
- Reflect back feelings and opinions that he/she observes
- Make suggestions without sounding prescriptive

The Mentor is not expected to be an expert on every subject they are asked about.

### The benefits for a mentor

While the focus of the mentoring relationship is primarily on the development needs and opportunities of the mentee there are also benefits for the mentor including:

- Refreshes own view of work
- Enhances job satisfaction
- Encourages self-reflection
- Develops professional relationships
- Enhances peer recognition
- Provides an opportunity to give something back
- Provides closer and greater networks and contacts within the University
- Develops management and leadership skills
- Enhances their CV/Portfolio
- Allows sharing of experience and knowledge with another member of staff
- Provides satisfaction of helping others develop and fulfil their potential

Mentors are not expected to solve mentee's problems for them but part of the role is to act as a sounding board for discussion of problems identified by the mentee. Through a confidential process of listening and questioning, mentors should help mentees to reflect upon their own progress, clarify issues and help them towards resolving their own problems.



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It is a good idea to keep a record of the meetings, noting what has been discussed and agreed, and the objectives for the next meeting.

In general it is anticipated that a mentor will have no more than two mentoring relationships active at any one time.

Each potential mentor will be asked to provide a brief biography (no more than 250 words) on their registration form in order to assist the process of matching mentees to mentors. An example biography is provided at appendix A.

### **INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE MENTEES**

#### *What can a mentee expect?*

First and foremost a mentee needs to be clear as to what they would like to achieve from a mentoring relationship and be prepared to take responsibility for making things happen. The success of a mentoring relationship depends very much on the mentee.

A mentor may not be able to help a mentee with *all* their objectives and in some cases it may be appropriate for a mentee to have a further mentor (with different skills and expertise) following the conclusion of a first mentoring relationship.

#### *The role of the mentee*

Mentoring is a two way process, however, the Mentee is expected to drive the relationship forward and be proactive about setting objectives for the relationship.

A Mentee is expected to be:

- Willing to enter the relationship with a clear set of objectives
- Committed, for example attending planned sessions and taking actions agreed with their mentor
- Willing to learn and to challenge their views, behaviours, assumptions and ways of working
- Able to ask for and receive feedback
- Willing to discuss issues as openly and honestly as possible
- Professional in relationship with mentor, for example respecting agreed ground rules and being punctual

#### *The benefits for a mentee*

There are many potential benefits for the Mentee to gain from the mentoring relationship including:

- Improves and builds self-awareness and confidence
- Provides the opportunity to learn from a role model
- Offers professional development
- Provides advice and information
- Encourages reflection on practice
- Provides personal support and career development
- Offers contact with people who are succeeding
- Develops various skills, particularly interpersonal communication

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- Provides personal contact - feel part of the University and its community
- Promotes career assessment and provides impartial advice
- Allows you to speak to someone outside your work area
- Offers the opportunity to network with staff and increase your knowledge of the University
- Increases job satisfaction and motivation
- Provides a wider perspective and insight into the University and its culture
- Allows sharing of issues in a confidential and impartial environment
- Helps in clarifying and setting development goals
- Offers a safe environment to test out ideas and suggestions

### THE PRACTICALITIES

Individuals who wish to volunteer to be a mentor or who wish to request mentoring are asked to complete the relevant registration form (available at <http://www.rdm.ox.ac.uk>). Any individuals who are unclear regarding their suitability for the scheme are encouraged to contact the RDMMS Coordinator ([mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk)). The RDMMS Coordinator can also be contacted with other queries related to the scheme but it is hoped that all relevant information is contained within this handbook.

It is envisaged that there will already be informal mentoring relationships within the RDM. People in such relationships are encouraged to register with this scheme by completing the online registration forms for mentor and mentee so that their contribution within the RDM can be formally recognised. If you have any queries about how to register an existing relationship via the registration forms please contact the RDMMS Coordinator ([mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk)).

### The matching process

The match is the critical part of the mentoring process. It needs to be right to achieve a productive partnership. The mentor and mentee will be matched on the basis of the information provided when they register with the scheme. Skills and experiences offered by prospective mentors will be held centrally and the specific areas in which a mentee is seeking support in will be matched against those recorded for prospective mentors.

The RDMMS Coordinator will identify potential matches for each mentee. The mentee will then receive a brief biography of each potential match and be offered the opportunity to express any preferences they have for the potential matches. The mentee should identify any of these potential mentors with whom they have an existing personal or professional relationship that could compromise the mentor's ability to provide impartial advice. The RDMMS will then review the potential matches alongside any mentee preferences, and make a matching decision (RDMMS meetings will be held at 2 month intervals). Occasionally a mentee may wish to request a specific mentor, the RDMMS will be willing to consider this request but cannot guarantee specific matches.

Matches will be made across the whole range of RDM's activities. Mentees will not necessarily be matched to a mentor in their division of RDM. The key determinant of matches will be the skills and experiences offered and sought by mentors and mentees but duration of relationship, frequency, timing and location of meetings will also be included.

After a first face-to-face meeting mentors and mentees will be asked to confirm whether they believe the proposed match will lead to a productive mentoring relationship. If either party does not

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believe this to be the case then the relationship will not continue. If mentoring is sought then a further matching exercise will take place.

### A mentoring agreement

It is important that at the beginning of a mentoring relationship both mentor and mentee agree upon what they expect of each other. The best way to ensure this is to have an agreed note that covers the ground rules for the relationship. A brief and straightforward template that can be customized is available as Appendix B of this document and is available for download via <http://www.rdm.ox.ac.uk/mentoring>The mentor and mentee should discuss such a note at the first meeting. Topics to cover could include:

- The Mentee's objectives for the mentoring relationship
- Areas for discussion e.g. work/personal issues
- Confidentiality
- Contact information e.g. how and when
- Meeting and location of meetings
- The intended length of the mentoring relationship, if known in advance

### Meetings

It is difficult to prescribe the number of meetings which will be needed in order for a mentoring relationship to be effective, as this is driven by individual needs. However in order to give some guidelines perhaps approximately one or two hours per month for six to 12 months. The frequency and method of contact will be agreed within each individual mentoring relationship.

The Mentee should be the driver behind the mentoring relationship, therefore it is the Mentee's responsibility to make initial contact with their mentor.

The first meeting should include agreement on future ways of working together (allocation of time, confidentiality, any limits to the role)

Subsequent meetings might include:

- Reflection on induction process
- Reflection on professional progress
- Identification and exploration of problems
- Identification and exploration of development needs
- Identification of information needed and ways of acquiring it
- Action planning
- The review of progress against the objectives agreed in the mentoring agreement
- The provision of feedback
- The discussion of issues and concerns of the Mentee

### On-going support

Support will be available to mentors and mentees internally from both the RDMMS Coordinator and the Chair of the RDM Mentoring Committee. The RDMMS Coordinator is also there to discuss any concerns either party may have.

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Once a mentoring relationship is set up, the Mentoring Coordinator will only contact the Mentor and Mentee, to check whether the relationship is continuing, in order to maintain an up to date list of available mentors.

### *At the end of the mentoring relationship*

The RDM Mentoring Coordinator should be notified when the mentoring relationship is concluded. Both the mentor and mentee will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire to enable the Department to monitor the scheme's successes and to facilitate future improvements.

Forms are available at:

<http://www.rdm.ox.ac.uk/mentee-exit-questionnaire>

<http://www.rdm.ox.ac.uk/mentor-exit-questionnaire>

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### FURTHER INFORMATION:

#### Within the University:

- The University of Oxford Research Staff Support Services** - [http://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support\\_for\\_researchers/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support_for_researchers/) - an array of opportunities and tools available to help you develop your career.
- Oxford Learning Institute** - <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/resources/mentoring/> - the OLI offers a comprehensive guide in setting up mentoring schemes and the expected standards of practice.
- Ad Feminam** - <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/support/women/adfeminam/> - the scheme offers Oxford women the opportunity to explore with a senior member of the university what they would like to do next in their academic or professional lives and how to set about that.
- Oxford Career Accelerator Academic Mentoring Programme** - <http://www.cetlrecord.ox.ac.uk/resources/resource22.php?reURL=../themes/story.php> - an innovative academic mentoring model designed to put Oxford D.Phil.s and early stage research staff in touch with experienced academics, all former Oxford alumni, now working as academics outside of Oxford
- Springboard mentoring scheme** - <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/support/women/programmes/> - Springboard mentoring does not depend on a mentor with seniority 'opening doors' for a more junior mentee. Instead it is mentoring by a peer, who may be more senior or more junior than the mentee, but who shares her experience of the Springboard programme.
- Navigator** - <http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/skillstraining/coursecatalogue/allcourses/203> - this is a University of Oxford Development Programme for Men, which doesn't provide mentoring but offers peer coaching and workshops.
- MSD Divisional Peer Mentoring Scheme** - <https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/research/resources-for-researchers/divisional-peer-mentoring-scheme-for-research-staff> - The Medical Sciences Division runs a peer mentoring scheme for research staff, which involves the formation of mentoring circles comprising 3-4 members of research staff and one more senior member of staff.

#### Outside of the University:

- Mentor Net** - <http://www.mentornet.net/> - an e-mentoring scheme for students and post-docs in STEM careers.
- UK Resource Centre for Women** - <http://www.theukrc.org>: a useful page containing links to many other sources of mentoring information (not exclusively for women)
- The European Mentoring and Coaching Council** - <http://emccuk.org/> - an organisation which promotes international good practice in mentoring and coaching.
- Vitae** - <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/focus-on> - a global leader in supporting the professional development of researchers, experienced in working with institutions as they strive for research excellence, innovation and impact.

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### APPENDIX A – EXAMPLE MENTOR BIOGRAPHY

#### **Dr Jane Doe**

I am currently a Senior Research Associate in IMD and have been working within the University of Oxford for 12 years, since obtaining my PhD from University College London. My particular research interests include cancer immunology and the development of DNA vaccines for cancer therapy. My husband is also a scientist and we have a 3-year old son, who attends the University nursery. I would be very happy to mentor people on how to achieve a successful work and family life balance within a dual career household. I also have recent experience of successfully applying for an Oxford University Research Lecturer title. An important aspect of this application was my experience of supervising undergraduate project students and the applications for small grants that enabled me to supervise summer students and pursue some of my own research ideas. The preliminary data from these projects was sufficient to enable me to obtain two charity funded project grants of my own. I hold a Junior Research Fellowship at St John's College that enables me to undertake some undergraduate teaching and I would be very happy to mentor other members of RDM who would like to establish a College Affiliation.

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### APPENDIX B – TEMPLATE MENTORING AGREEMENT

**Name of Mentor:**

**Name of Mentee:**

Purpose of the mentoring relationship and key goals:

Practical arrangements for meetings (location, duration and frequency):

Contact arrangements between meetings (telephone/email and frequency):

Arrangements for monitoring/recording progress and concluding the relationship:

**Confidentiality**

We agree to keep the content of these meetings confidential.

Signature of Mentee and date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Mentor and date

\_\_\_\_\_