

Mentoring in the Doctoral School Economics -

Mentoring in der Doktoratsschule VWL

Objective

Continuous and personal mentoring seeks to enhance the success of PhD students and their research projects. Mentoring is undertaken by members of the Doctoral School or by external expert volunteers. The students may select a mentor from Uni Graz faculty or recommend another qualified person. Agreement on and with the mentor should be achieved during the first semester in the doctoral school and announced to the Doctoral School lead team. Students will discuss with their respective mentor topics like formulating visions and values for carrying out the project, personal long-term career goals (to be reflected in a personal career development plan), working techniques, teaching experience or conflicts at the work place. The thesis supervisor remains responsible for scientific questions as well as for overseeing the successful completion of the PhD project as a whole (contents, timing, publications etc.).

Specific guide:

For further details see:

<http://koordination-gender.uni-graz.at/de/gleichstellung/mentoring/ihre-fragen-unsere-antworten/>

Here is an overview taken from this source:

1. Who is a mentor?

A mentor is a person who supports the development of one mentee. A mentee seeks advice through the mentoring relationship, regardless of the age or position of the mentor(s). Both, mentees and mentors, can benefit from reflecting and learning during a mentoring process.

A mentor may provide advice for a mentee, e.g. on how one might gain more information or support. However, direct advice and guidance should be limited for the benefit of good listening, observing and effective questioning.

Hence a mentor needs good communication skills in order to support the reflection and learning process. He or she is also ready to provide feedback and to share observations. Good communication is empathic, demonstrating that the mentor understands the situation, the challenges and needs of the mentee.

To support career development, mentors need institutional expertise and experience in order to ask good questions and provide guidance for the mentees on how to plan and foster their personal career path.

Mentoring offers a safe place to reflect sensitive career issues. However, a mentor does not take decisions for a mentee or offer solutions (e.g. on whether to prolong an academic career or not). A mentor rather supports the decision finding process.

When a mentor is fully convinced of the mentee's future potential, she or he might turn into a sponsor by advocating for the mentee within the institution, offering access to networks and/or information on career opportunities.

2. What Makes a Mentoring Partnership Successful?

Successful mentoring relationships are built on clear expectations about goals and the mentoring process. Especially the number of meetings and the responsibilities of mentees as well as mentors should be clarified.

Both mentor and mentee benefit from the relationship. The mentee should plan the mentoring process, actively remind the mentor and take responsibility for the next steps. He or she might also give the mentor feedback – based on mutual respect for effort and experiences. Respect is based on a personal connection that can be created if the persons involved demonstrate that they pay attention by mutual listening and reflecting (see above). Shared values and similar work style preferences might also help to build a common basis.

3. What Main Topics Should Mentoring Focus on?

A mentoring process where ‘junior professionals’ are guided and supported in their career development by more senior professionals is meant to contribute to:

- A deeper understanding of the ‘business of the business’
- Awareness about leadership requirements at different levels
- Knowledge about how to contribute to business at higher levels
- The formation of relationships
- Leveraging one’s strengths in service of organizational goals

Susan Colantuono talks about two approaches to mentoring: One that focuses on enabling, confidence and encouragement (CAKE). This is more commonly provided to women, but neglects some fundamental issues regarding essential business, financial and strategic skills to achieve and sustain outcomes. Colantuono calls that ‘The Missing 33%’, as it is the basic third part of leadership success, besides the use of great personal attributes and strengths and the ability to engage greatness in others. To learn about the fundamentals of performance, image and exposure, PIE-Mentoring (which is more commonly provided to men) is required to a greater extent, especially for women. Mentors should much more focus on their mentees’ career growth and their preparation to contribute at higher business levels. This includes self-reflection on leadership qualities, but also the notion of not necessarily striving for perfection, but for good enough performance. For instance, when it comes to job requirements, women typically think they have to meet all of the requirements, whereas men who are shaped by PIE-mentoring might think that 60% are enough and would apply for the job anyway.

In other words, Susan Colantuono argues that mentors should provide their female mentees more generously with PIE than with CAKE. The table below gives a more detailed overview on the essential elements of both types of mentoring.

CAKE

C

Confidence: Developing confidence and courage to do something that the mentee had not thought about at all or did not think she could do.

Ask yourself: How is confidence developed in your mentoring relationships (being a mentor or mentee)?

A

Aptitude & Attitude: Aptitude is about highlighting a mentee's skills or pointing out her areas for development. A mentor often has a broader perspective and sees latent talent or skills – sharing these with the mentees helps to further refine their career path. Attitude refers to the discussion of and complaint about work-related challenges, which should be kept to a minimum.

Ask yourself: How much time do you spend on aptitude & attitude discussions? Could that time be reduced and used for other purposes?

K

Konnection (sic!) to resources: Putting the mentees in touch with the 'right' people, 'right' professional development opportunities, 'right' internal resources for success. This includes recommendations on courses; helping to attain important credentials, degrees or qualifications; support to attend or speak at conferences; advice on net-working; tips on job openings; referring the mentee to others; etc.

Ask yourself: What role does resource connection play in your mentoring relationships and field of activity?

E

Encouragement: Give backing to mentees, based on truly recognizing their value and qualities.

Ask yourself: To what extent is encouragement given or needed?

PIE
P

Performance: Performance is about achieving outcomes. A job must not be done perfectly, but should simply be done good enough to get the required results..

Ask yourself: Who has enabled you to know what it means to achieve outcomes and which outcomes are most important?

I

Image: Image is about cultivating a 'leaderly presence' and exhibiting one's leadership qualities. There are different ways to do so, and they are not necessarily linked to clothing (e.g., Steve Jobs was dressed very casually but acted like a leader).

Ask yourself: What types of image advice have you received or given?

E

Exposure: This involves getting the right job assignments to move up, to see and learn how work is done at higher levels (e.g., finding out who makes strategic decisions, what rationales guide decision making, how decisions affect the company/organisation)

Ask yourself: What kind of job assignments have you received/given? How did that provide insights into higher level thinking and decision making?

References

Colantuono, S. L (2012): Make the Most of Mentoring – Capitalize on Mentoring and Take your Career to the Next Level; Interlude Productions, Charlestown

Colantuono, S.L (2010): No Ceiling, No Walls: What Women Haven't Been Told about Leadership from Career-start to the Corporate Boardroom, Interlude Productions, Charlestown

Ragins B.R., Kram K. E. (2007): The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice, Sage Publishing

Straus S.E., Johnson M.O., Marquez C, Feldman M.D.(2013). Characteristics of Successful and Failed Mentoring Relationships: A Qualitative Study Across Two Academic Health Centers.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

Kurzfassung in deutscher Sprache:

1. Voraussetzungen einer Mentoring-Beziehung

- **Unabhängigkeit:** Es besteht kein direktes Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zwischen Mentee und Mentorin bzw. Mentor, d. h. keine direkte oder indirekte Arbeitsbeziehung, Promotions- oder Habilitationsbetreuung.
- **Freiwilligkeit:** Mentorin bzw. Mentor übernehmen diese Aufgabe freiwillig.
- **Definierter Zeitraum:** Die Mentoring-Beziehung besteht über einen definierten Zeitraum und kann – nach individueller Absprache – auch darüber hinaus informell weiter geführt werden. Für die Doktoratsschule VWL ist die Mentoring-Beziehung jedenfalls für den gesamten Zeitraum der Dissertation vorgesehen.
- **Persönlicher Kontakt:** Der persönliche Kontakt (face-to-face) der Tandems bereits zu Beginn bzw. während des Mentoring-Prozesses ist von großer Bedeutung für dessen Erfolg und kann durch Mail-Korrespondenz, Telefonate oder ggf. durch Skype-Kontakte ergänzt werden.
- **Vertraulichkeit:** Die Mentoring-Gespräche finden in geschütztem Rahmen statt und sind von den Beteiligten streng vertraulich zu behandeln.
- **Verbindlichkeit:** Der verbindliche und zuverlässige Umgang mit Terminen und Absprachen ist eine wesentliche Grundvoraussetzung für eine erfolgreiche Mentoring-Beziehung.
- **Erwartungen und Vereinbarung:** Zu Beginn der Mentoring-Partnerschaft sollten konkrete Erwartungen und Vereinbarungen über das formale Ziel, Kontaktaufnahmeregeln, Feedback, etc. zwischen Mentee und Mentorin bzw. Mentor kommuniziert und Eckpunkte ggf. kurz schriftlich festgehalten werden.

2. Matching

Bei der Zusammenführung der Tandems sollte auf Unabhängigkeit und höchstmögliche Übereinstimmung der Interessen geachtet werden. Zugleich sind die Wünsche und Erwartungen der Mentees zu berücksichtigen. Dies kann über verschiedene Matchingformen erfolgen:

- Eigenrecherche der Mentees („Selbstsuche“) mit Unterstützung durch Programm-Koordination
- Rückgriff auf Mentorinnen- bzw. Mentorenpool

3. Inhalte des Mentoring-Prozesses

Die Mentoring-Beziehung wird sowohl inhaltlich als auch zeitlich individuell gestaltet. Mögliche Themenbereiche sind:

- **Zieldefinition und Entwicklung individueller Karrierestrategien:** (gemeinsame) Entwicklung von Zielen (kurz- und langfristig) und die dazu notwendigen Schritte und Umsetzungs- bzw. Lösungsstrategien
- **Ausbau persönlicher Kompetenzen:** Reflexion und Ausbau persönlicher Kompetenzen u. a. durch Standortbestimmung, Potentialanalyse und Stärken-Schwächen-Analyse
- **Transfer informeller Wissensbestände:** Vermittlung von Erfahrungswissen und Spielregeln
- **Vernetzung in Wissenschaft und/oder Wirtschaft:** Vermittlung von Kontakten, Auslandspraktika, Forschungskooperationen etc.