

Mentor Scheme Guidelines in Placement Handbook

July 2013

7.3 The Mentor Scheme

Purpose of mentor scheme.

Mentors are a source of guidance and support for trainees at arm's length from the evaluative and employment functions of the Programme. It is recommended that mentors only work with one trainee per cohort (they may decide to mentor more than one trainee from different years) and that they are not involved in providing supervision for the trainee they mentor. The programme will aim to avoid allocating a trainee to the same service as their mentor but if this is unavoidable they are required to find a temporary alternative for the duration.

Mentors fulfil a range of functions for trainees, including advice and support on managing the demands of training, personal development and careers advice. It is expected that trainees will talk with their mentors about personal issues if this feels appropriate. However, trainees needing additional therapy could discuss this with their mentor who may signpost them to the appropriate resources e.g. Bath reciprocal therapy scheme, reflective group, or independent therapy. The trainee may also request that their mentor act as an advocate on their behalf when attending meetings with the programme team, with the prior agreement of the programme director.

Frequency of contact.

It is recommended that trainees meet their mentor initially at least twice per placement, and for there to be contact at least once per placement thereafter. Trainees are entitled to ask their supervisor to approve an absence from placement for these meetings. However, a wide variety of mentoring arrangements exist; trainees may meet their supervisors outside placement time, at mutually convenient times and locations, or keep in touch via phone or email. We ask placement supervisors to give support to any reasonable request.

Selection of mentor.

Potential mentors are asked to provide a short profile including information about their location, availability and the mentoring support they are willing to offer. These profiles are made available on Blackboard for trainees to consult. Once a trainee has found a mentor they are asked to notify the Placement administrator who keeps a record of mentoring arrangements, which is updated annually. Trainees may approach a clinician who is not on the mentor list but it is suggested that this is someone from within the locality in order that they are aware of the Programme requirements. We would encourage trainees to contact any potential mentor swiftly as some mentors may be approached by a number of trainees in each cohort.

We are currently piloting a new scheme at Southampton University. Previously, trainees were provided with information on individual mentors, and were expected to identify their mentor within the first few months of training. Although this can be a positive experience for some, others were unable to identify a suitable mentor within their first few months of training. The new scheme will give trainees until the end of January of their first year to

identify a mentor. If they have not got a mentor by this time, the course will help by allocating a mentor.

How the Programme supports the mentor scheme/mentors.

The Programme supports mentors by organising meetings for those already mentoring and people who may be interested. This provides an opportunity for mentors to meet each other, to inform the Programme of any common issues which have been arising and for the Programme team to facilitate the revision of mentoring procedures as appropriate. Mentors are provided with a Programme contact to discuss any issues which may arise from their mentoring.

Every three years, the Programme carries out an audit of the mentor scheme by questioning mentors and trainees about their experiences of the scheme. Anonymised results of this audit are shared with trainees and mentors, and are used to update the mentor scheme.

Information on the mentor scheme.

These guidelines are the main source of information on the mentor scheme. A session introducing the mentor scheme to trainees will be run in the first week of the course and this will be followed up before Christmas in order to help facilitate the process.

(Also see "From mentors to trainees" document).