

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENTS MENTORING
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA

BACKGROUND

The Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna has noticed that more undergraduate students are subject to situational stress in the first year due to various factors: homesickness, fear of the unknown, ragging and other related violence, need for financial aid, anxiety regarding the size and complexity of the university system, apprehension about the competitive nature of undergraduate study programmes, diversity among the students and so on. The situational stress may cause the students in their following years to spend too much of their time and energy trying to engage in disharmony between themselves and their environment in the University rather than concentrating on their studies and career by developing analytical, application, comparative and critical skills. Further, situational stress leads to disabling effects on undergraduate students by failing to exhibit the following behaviours which are needful for successful undergraduate students:

- associate with the faculty and other undergraduate students;
- imitate successful classroom and laboratory practices;
- seek and utilize assistance that is generally available to all students;
- accept critical and constructive critiques of their work as the norm;
- fully participate in classrooms, forums, workshops and extra-curricular activities.

In order to produce successful undergraduates with the above positive behaviours, the Faculty of Arts intends to introduce the guidelines for implementing mentoring among undergraduate students.

INTRODUCTION

The academics responsible for undergraduate education need to be more knowledgeable and understanding of the relationship between undergraduate students and the university environment. To this, the guidelines would be useful to the academics.

Mentoring is defined as a process by which mentors instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and/or career developments of persons identified as mentees.

The mentoring relationship is a personal and individualized relationship that develops over time between an undergraduate student and one or more faculty members, or with other

professionals who have a deep interest in the students' educational and career interests. This requires not only instructional guidance but also lengthy nurturing of the student's private, academic and professional development.

Quality mentoring greatly increases the chance that students will be engaged in learning and extra-curricular activities. It is also evident that students with good mentoring have a higher chance of acquiring academic tenure-track positions outside of the university in administration or fields or greater prospects for career growth.

COORDINATOR

The Coordinator shall be a Senior Lecturer in Grade II or above.

MENTOR

Mentors shall lead mentees through mentoring. A mentor shall be a lecturer confirmed or above who has a deep interest in the students' educational and career interests. (Except Department of Law where the Lecturer (Prob) can serve as a mentor while the temporary lecturer can serve as a co-mentor with a permanent lecturer).

MENTEE

The mentee is under the special care of mentor/s and receives mentoring from mentors. A mentee is a first-year students in the Faculty of Arts.

PROCEDURE

1. Each staff member will be assigned 10-12 students. Since it is difficult to get to know students well in such groups, it would be best to divide the group into two and meet each group separately for mentoring purposes.
2. All sessions and information from sessions should be kept confidential and not shared with other lecturers/ students outside of the mentoring group. Ideally, therefore, the mentoring meeting should take place outside the Department.
3. Mentors are expected to meet with their group four (4) times in one semester. Thereafter, it can be reviewed and see how the mentoring process can take forward.
4. Initial Meeting: The initial session should focus on the introduction to mentors and mentees. They can be motivated to talk about what interests them outside of their routine class work, family, background, and even their struggles and dreams –as well

as their interest in the subject they chose. This will encourage mentees to be open with their mentors.

5. Further Meeting:

- a. Critical thinking: There are many ways in which this can be done. Give them a topic which is an interest of their domain and ask them how they would approach it. With the outcome of the discussion, the mentor may guide the students for further improvements.
- b. Academic writing: The mentor can ask them to write a small essay (say, 500 words) on a topic and correct it for them and give them feedback. Things like identifying the main idea that the mentor needs to address in a question; how to logically structure an essay; etc. can be addressed through this.
- c. Presentations: How to prepare a presentation, how to present effectively – The mentor may provide an opportunity for each person to present on a given topic and finally the mentor may moderate the presentation to improve their communication skills.
- d. How to be adapted appropriately to the existing university system: guiding students to make student appeals for examination, re-following the courses, subject selection, organizing a meeting or function among the students with permission, meeting officials, code of conduct for students etc.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COORDINATOR

1. The coordinator shall serve in the post for one academic year.
2. The appointment of the coordinator shall be made by the Dean, Faculty of Arts with the approval of the Faculty Board by calling expression of interest.
3. The coordinator shall be a Senior Lecturer in Grade II or above.

The Coordinator is responsible for the following:

1. organize meetings with mentors once a month.
2. collect progress reports from mentors.
3. submit progress reports monthly to the Faculty Board through the Dean/Arts.
4. Collaborate with internal and external institutions and resource persons to provide refresher sessions and training for mentors.

ROLE OF A MENTOR

A mentor in the relationship plays out several roles: as a coach, sponsor, confidant, teacher, advisor and door-opener by way of:

- Engaging students in current discussions
- Providing a clear picture of the course and university system for students
- Providing positive assistance and feedback
- Providing inspiration and support
- Supporting and promoting networks
- Looking out for the needs of students
- Building self-esteem
- Empowering students to produce successful graduates
- Treating students with appreciation
- Maintaining confidentiality with regard to the information shared by students
- Reporting any conflict of interest or potential issues to the relevant authorities
- Reporting the outcome of the meeting in the given template within a stipulated time.
- Maintaining attendance at the meeting or interventions and follow-up in a given format
- Scheduling time for mentoring to be confirmed with the discussion of the Dean's Office
- Developing relationship between lecturer and staff
- Sharing the mentor's experience (success, failures & lessons learnt) periodically
- Forming a *Viber* or *WhatsApp* group to get in touch with mentees and share relevant information or mobilize them for mentoring

Reference:

Adams, H. G. (1992). *Mentoring: An essential factor in the doctoral process for minority students*. Notre Dame: The GEM Program

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