
OLD IGNATIAN MENTORING PROGRAM



*Old
Ignatians'
Association*

Connecting Old Ignatians

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Introduction

The Old Ignatian Mentoring Program may be the first experience and exposure for mentees and mentors to a structured mentoring experience. We recognise mentoring can take on many forms throughout one's life. Therefore, this guide has been developed to support Old Ignatians currently studying, transitioning into the workforce or in the very early stages of their career.

This guide explores how mentoring can be arranged for mutual benefit of the mentor and mentee. It suggests different principles, frameworks and outlines a range of factors to maximise the benefits and impact of your particular needs and unique mentoring arrangement.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a voluntary two-way relationship involving deliberate pairing of a skilled or experienced person with one who is less experienced. Mentors share their professional skills and life experience to assist their mentees to develop. The process is based upon encouragement, constructive commentary, openness, mutual trust, respect, and a willingness to learn and share. It is considered a power-free relationship where both people in the relationship gain benefit, and where the mentor acts as a role model. Mentoring relationships differ according to the way they are formed, their aims, the context and the degree of difference in the experience of both parties.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring offers direct and indirect benefits to both parties, as well as the organisation.

Benefits for the mentee:

- The opportunity to 'walk with' a person who has been there before
- New competencies, skills and knowledge
- Increased self-awareness / confidence
- Fresh insights and perspectives
- Assistance with career promotion
- Potential for increased visibility and sponsorship
- Greater organisational knowledge and understanding
- Improved understanding of organisational structure and role/industry expectations

- Increased networking opportunities
- Development of a sense of professional identity.

Benefits for the mentor:

- Personal satisfaction through contributing to others' development
- The ability to share knowledge, talents and experience
- Fresh perspectives, ideas and knowledge
- Reflection on their own practice, style and experience
- Professional recognition and reputation
- Skills in developing others
- Increased networks within the organisation.

Benefits for Saint Ignatius' College

Conveys to our Community and the Association, the College's commitment to a sustainable professional development program and support network.

- Professional and leadership development / opportunities for the Alumni Officer and Association
- Enriched connection across the Old Ignatian community
- Reinforces elements of Jesuit Education

Roles and Responsibilities in the Mentoring Process

Role of the mentee:

- Shape the overall agenda and goals for the relationship
- Identify priority issues for action or support
- Be willing to look at issues from a different perspective
- Listen actively
- Seek feedback and take it on board
- Respond to questions and challenges thoughtfully
- Communicate openly
- Be respectful of the mentor's time and commitment
- Come prepared to each meeting
- Reflect and act between meetings
- Maximise the benefits of the relationship
- Agree on and commit to the ground rules set out in the mentoring agreement.

Role of the mentor:

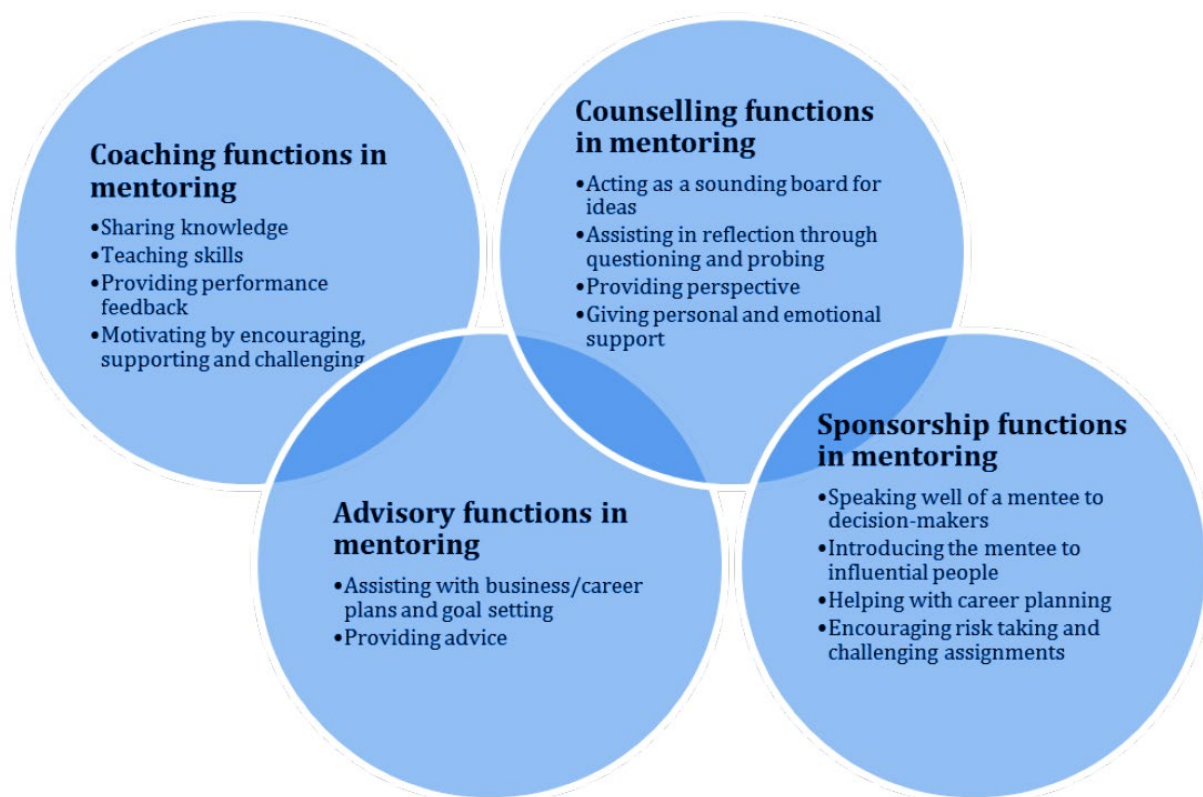
- Establish realistic and attainable expectations
- Set the learning climate and encourage risk-taking
- Listen actively
- Provide guidance based on past experience
- Share stories, including failing forward stories
- Assist in solving problems and setting goals
- Encouraging openness to different perspectives
- Give constructive, specific feedback, and suggest areas for improvement
- Act as co-learners and ask for feedback on their contribution to the relationship
- Prepare for, and reflect between, meetings
- Link the mentee to others who may provide additional support or advice
- Agree on and commit to the ground rules set out in the mentoring agreement.

How Does Mentoring Differ from Other Development Functions?

There is overlap between mentoring and other personal development activities such as coaching, training and counselling. The main differentiator with these activities however is a mentor is generally a person who has direct experience in the areas they are mentoring in. They should also be outside of the reporting chain. In this way they are able to share organisational or professional knowledge, act as role models and act as a sponsor for the their mentee.

Coaches, counsellors and trainers often do not have this direct experience and can sometimes be line managers. In addition, mentors are also mostly more senior. Coaching is a solution-focused, results oriented process that usually involves self-directed learning. Counselling focuses on personal and other issues that may be inhibiting performance. In reality however mentoring is likely to involve a blend of functions – including coaching, advisory, counselling and sponsorship functions as outlined in the following diagram.

Mentoring Functions



Key Qualities of Effective Mentors and Mentees

The quality of a mentoring relationship is not solely dependent on the skills and knowledge of the mentor and how well these are matched with the development needs of the mentee. A variety of other qualities, as listed below, are also desirable.

Desirable Mentor qualities:

- Interpersonal skills with the capacity to challenge, support and empower others
- 'Expert' knowledge – knowledge of the organisation, field or profession
- Commitment to the mentor role
- Exhibits Enthusiasm
- Values ongoing investment in learning and growth
- Standing and credibility within the organisation, field or profession.

Desirable Mentee qualities:

- A willingness to learn and develop
- Openness to feedback and advice
- Motivation to try out new ideas or strategies
- Respect for the time and commitment shown by the mentor
- Capacity to reflect and build self-awareness.

Developing a Mentoring Agreement

In formal mentoring relationships a written mentoring agreement is often beneficial. This can be completed together at the first meeting. It allows for boundaries to be discussed and goals to be set and recorded.

While not aiming to stifle the possible flexibility or informality of the arrangement, it is important that both parties understand the parameters of the relationship.

A template of a mentoring agreement is attached see Appendix A.

Areas to cover include:

Realistic expectations: It is important both people understand the purpose of the relationship. That is, the mentee clearly states their clarified purpose for wanting a mentor and the kinds of functions they would like; and the mentor clearly states the strengths they could bring to the table. In this way both can confirm there is a match between needs and strengths, and the pairing is appropriate.

Accessibility: An agreement should be reached about the type, duration, location and frequency of meetings. Boundaries around availability and accessibility are a factor in mentors agreeing to offer their time to mentor.

Time frame: What is the time frame of the agreement, is this set? If not, over what timeframe do the parties expect to achieve their goals – 6 months, 12 months?

Confidentiality: This is a critical clause that requires discussion to ensure both parties understand what confidentiality means within the context of the relationship. In situations where both parties work in the same organisation or have mutual connections it can be easy to unintentionally break confidences.

No blame exit clause: The capacity to end the relationship, without blame, when it does not work for either party is extremely helpful. It allows sensitive issues such as clash of values, mentor inexperience and mentee non-commitment to be addressed positively and without in-depth explanation. Examples of pitfalls that may arise where the exit clause is important are outlined later in the guide.

Working together through the questions posed in the template in Appendix A will enable the parties to create a shared understanding of how the relationship will work. Realistic shared expectations set the scene for a successful partnership.

Mentoring Process

Once a mentor is established the preparation and actual sessions can go ahead. Considering the right space and time is a critical element.

Preparing for the First Meeting

Mentee preparation:

Prior to the initial session the mentee should consider, but not complete, elements of the mentoring agreement in Appendix A. This should be completed together with the mentor.

Self-reflection is a critical part of any personal and professional development exercise. A useful activity in this regard is completion of a SWOT analysis as outlined in Appendix B.

Mentor preparation:

Mentors should consider, but not complete, elements of the mentoring agreement in Appendix A. As outlined above, this should be completed together with the mentee. Another useful preparation resource is the Mentor Meeting Preparation Sheet: First Meeting in Appendix C.

Conducting the First Session

The first session is an opportunity to discuss and be clear on the goals of the mentoring relationship, as well as the expectations of each party. Ideally it comprises of the following:

- An opportunity for parties to establish rapport and learn about each other's roles and background
- Discussion regarding the purpose and goals of the mentoring
- Completion of the mentoring agreement as outlined above
- Agreement on next steps.

Setting Mentee Goals

While it is essential to clarify goals at the beginning of the relationship, it is also important to be flexible as sometimes they may change over time. For example, as a mentee reflects on an area for development their needs may shift in accordance with improved self-understanding. A general goal of improving influence may, for example, develop into a focus on negotiating or developing communication skills. It is common for goals to shift and become refined as self-awareness increases and being open to change is important.

A well-established coaching model built around goal setting is the GROW model. Established by Sir John Whitmore, this approach is commonly used by managers when coaching staff. An outline of the process and questions that support this process is provided in Appendix D.

Tips for Mentors on Structuring Meetings

There is no set pro-forma for a session and too much pre-determined structure by the mentor may detract from what the mentee's needs are at that time.

Some tips for consideration are:

- Ask the mentee what they would like to focus on at the beginning of the session
- Follow-up and review actions from previous sessions
- Challenge in a constructive way, build the person's confidence and self-belief
- Hold the mentee accountable for what they agreed to do
- Explore blockages when there has been no progress
- Question and listen more than speaking – unless sharing experiences or offering specific advice
- Recognise and build on successes
- Reflect back what the mentee has said from time to time to reinforce points
- Agree on next steps or actions at the end of each session.

Reflection between sessions

Reflection by both parties after each session, and before the subsequent one, assists in adding structure and focus to sessions.

Mentee reflection and preparation

At the end of each session with their mentor, the mentee should reflect on the actions arising from the session and find time to follow through with these. Keeping a reflection diary as outlined in Appendix E may prove useful.

Prior to each subsequent session it is useful to prepare by considering the questions below:

- What have I accomplished since the last session? What did I not do that I intended to do and why?
- What current challenges or issues can I take to the session?
- What opportunities are available to me right now that my mentor can assist with?
- What is the best use of the upcoming meeting with my mentor?

Mentor reflection and preparation

As mentoring is a learning process for the mentor as well as the mentee, some reflection on the process and outcomes of each session are useful. A checklist of aspects of mentoring to reflect upon is listed below under mentor self-assessment.

It is useful to ask the mentee directly for feedback on how useful each session was and how best to continue to add value. Specific questions are better than general ones. For example a question such as “Did the focus on steps in XYZ today work well for you?” will more likely provide an honest response than a general comment such as “Did the session add value today?”

When preparing for the next session, a review of the mentee’s agreed actions is important.

Mentor Self-assessment: Commonly Asked Questions

How do I show I am interested?

Showing interest provides a platform for developing a productive relationship.

- Listen more than you talk
- Ask open questions
- Watch for body language and cues - acknowledge and respond
- Talk about the mentee not yourself – focus on their interests and problems
- Pace the conversation – don’t rush it
- Be flexible – let the mentee lead the conversation.

How do I determine the mentee needs?

A mentee should assess and come to the session with their development goals reasonably well defined. As part of the mentoring process these may be clarified and redefined. If a mentee is unprepared discussions on the following topics may assist.

What are their future career aspirations and what do they need to do to achieve these?

What are their strengths and weaknesses? Reviewing the mentee’s SWOT analysis (see Appendix B) may be useful. What are specific challenges or issues they are facing at the moment that they need advice/support on?

How do I check that I am doing all right? How can you ensure things are going well?

- Ask them!
- Observe if they are engaged, responsive and spontaneous

- Use your intuition – watch for signs of discomfort or hesitation
- Use goals and signposts, or other objective measures of progress
- Define stages of achievement so that you both know you are making progress.

How do I give good feedback? Feedback is a vital part of the learning process.

- Focus on the behaviour not the person
- Focus on observation rather than intuition or guesses
- Focus on description rather than judgment
- Be specific rather than general
- Balance the negative with the positive.

How do I motivate? A mentee's motivation will vary over the period of the relationship. When this is low, a mentor can:

- Provide perspective and a 'reality check'
- Identify strengths to build on
- Determine the blockages and problem-solve around these
- Maintain optimism and confidence in their capacity
- Look for, acknowledge and leverage from progress.

How do I deal with a failing or unproductive relationship between Mentor and Mentee? Mentoring relationships do not always turn out as planned and it is important not to just press on regardless

- Reflect and diagnosis before making a decision. Discuss the issues openly with the mentee
- Check out what the mentee thinks is happening and how they feel
- Discern and Reflect, on your own misgivings
- Try to identify and describe issues in a detailed rather than a generalised way
- Make a plan for improvement or recovery and then monitor it
- Use the 'no blame exit' clause of the agreement if the relationship needs to end.

Linking Into Other Support

One crucial role a mentor often plays is linking a mentee into other support and advice that may be of value in achieving their goals. Sometimes specific needs arise during discussion that are outside of either the skill of the mentor or the boundaries of the relationship.

Typical examples of arranging additional support include linking the mentee with:

- University counselling services
- Employee Assistance Scheme – For personal issues that fall outside of the mentoring relationship or for specific assistance in managing interpersonal issues at work (If applicable)
- Other managers/colleagues – For additional advice and guidance that complements that given by the mentor
- A professional coach
- Networks such as professional associations - For building relationships with key personnel
- Reading material, training programs or other resources – For more in-depth knowledge or skill relating to specific topics.

Ending the Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring relationships should have a finite life. As part of your initial agreement you may have agreed on time commitments. Despite this agreement the duration will still need to be managed and monitored as to its appropriateness as the timeframe negotiated may need to change.

Timeframes may need review if:

- External factors such as mentor availability or role change mean it is no longer logistically viable
- The specific achievements or outcomes are reached earlier than expected
- The mentoring relationship does not work out (see common pitfalls below).

Conducting the Final Session

As part of the final session it is appropriate to review progress and recognise and celebrate the learning that has occurred. Sometimes parties agree to continue the relationship, but usually in a different form. As learning is a life-long process it is also useful to discuss the next steps and processes in the mentee's development. Many mentees go on to act as mentors themselves.

Potential Pitfalls – Commonly Asked Questions

As indicated above, mentoring relationships do not always work out as planned. Common pitfalls are explored here.

What if my mentor has a very different style or personality from me?

In pairing mentors and mentees different leadership styles or personalities are common. Unless the style or personality is inhibiting learning, for example too critical or directive, personal differences can be a useful

learning process. Across the career life span a mentee will need to work with a variety of people. Having insight into different thinking processes and perspectives is critical. Mentoring from a similar person may not stretch or challenge a person in the same way.

What if there is an inability to establish rapport?

For a mentoring relationship to work there needs to be an atmosphere of trust and respect. Giving and receiving feedback can be sensitive and without a level of rapport a mentee may feel inhibited in what they can say. A critical or directive mentor, or a mentee who is not open to feedback and reflection, can be problematic – as can a sense of power imbalance or feeling intimidated. In short-term relationships where skill-building is the goal, the level of rapport will not be as important an issue. However, where the mentee requires a sounding board for personal issues, the capacity for openness is important.

In such cases parties should trust their intuitive judgment and acknowledge any mismatch as soon as possible. The earlier it is addressed the easier it will be to manage.

Clearly there is no necessity to specify the personal aspects of the mentor or mentee that you find difficult. The 'no blame exit clause' allows this to be accepted without full explanation. For example if you find that a mentor is too critical and directive, and is a major inhibitor in your learning it is sufficient to say *"I'm finding that our styles are so different that I am having difficulty following through on your suggestions. I think that it may work better for me to find a mentor with a style more like my own."* As a mentor you could say *"I'm finding that I can't support you in the way I think you need and it may be better for you to find somebody better able to assist you."* Addressing the issue is difficult but not addressing it may be more difficult as expectations of, and commitment to, the mentoring relationship advances.

The 'no blame exit' clause is designed for situations like this.

What if there are differing expectations?

Mentees may have idealised and unrealistic expectations of what their mentor can assist with, or the mentor may be expecting too much of a mentee who may also be managing a very demanding role. This situation can be largely resolved by frank and open discussions upfront around goals and expectations. Regular progress reviews against goals is also helpful. Achieving this demands honest, yet constructive, feedback from both parties.

What if time pressures get in the way?

Lack of time, especially in busy work environments, is a common reason for a break down in the mentoring process. It may be that either the mentor or mentee, or both, do not invest the time and effort required.

Completing the mentoring agreement at the beginning is important in establishing expectations but it helps to be realistic about time commitments. It is not uncommon for people to over-commit at the beginning without realising that it may be difficult to keep to the agreement. Both parties should acknowledge the possibility of re-negotiation around availability.

Conclusion

The Old Ignatian Mentoring Program has been designed to support and engage Old Ignatian Community. A best practice approach is aimed to support open feedback channels to ensure we can continue to provide valuable lifelong development for our Ignatian graduates.

APPENDIX A

Sample Mentoring Agreement

Purpose of the mentoring:

Duration of mentoring relationship:

Frequency and length of meetings:

Type of contact for scheduled meetings (e.g. in person, email, phone):

Confidentiality agreement:

We agree that all discussion and communication between us remains confidential and that no information will be shared without mutual consent.

Are there any off-limit topics in this relationship?

No-fault conclusion to the relationship:

We agree to a no-fault conclusion of this relationship if, for any reason, it seems appropriate.

Mentor's name:

Mentor's signature:

Date:

Mentee's name:

Mentee's signature:

Date:

APPENDIX B

Mentee SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a tool commonly used in business planning. It is also useful to apply to individuals and teams and can be used as a preparatory activity for mentees before commencing mentoring. The process involves identifying your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. For the purpose of this exercise it may be best to consider these within a timeframe of the next **six months**.

<p><i>Your Strengths</i></p> <p>What strengths do you have that can help you?</p>	<p><i>Your Weaknesses</i></p> <p>What areas do you need to develop in?</p>
<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>What opportunities will you have in the next six months?</p>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <p>What could threaten achieving your goals?</p>

How can you leverage from your identified strengths?

What can you do to address your identified weaknesses and how can your mentor assist in this?

How can you capitalise on opportunities in the next 6/12 months?

How can you address the threats you have identified?

APPENDIX C

Mentor Preparation Sheet: First Meeting

Clarifying purpose of meeting

- How much time do we have?
- What do you want to achieve from this meeting?
- What do you want from me during the meeting?

Clarifying purposes of mentee's learning development plan

- How did you feel about your development plan?
- Where is your energy for change coming from?
- What are you trying to achieve?
- If all goes well, what will you be doing differently from what you do now?
- How much confidence do you have in your ability to achieve your plans?
- What will you feel like when you achieve your goals?
- How will you know when you achieve your goals?
- Have you identified all opportunities?
- Is there anything else that you can do?
- Which course of action do you favour?
- What obstacles do you think you'll encounter on the way?

Support required by mentor

- What support do you want from me in this plan?
- What support do you want from others in order to make this plan work?
- Who else should be involved?

Review

- How useful has this meeting been for you?
- Where do we go from here?

APPENDIX D

The GROW Coaching Model

The GROW model is a popular model as it is simple-to-use and oriented around goals. It was first popularised by Sir John Whitmore in his 1992 text "Coaching for Performance".

This model uses a sequencing of questioning as follows:

Goal Setting: Precisely what do you want? Developing long-term broad goals that can be translated into short-term performance goals.

Reality Checking: Exactly what is happening now? Exploring the current situation.

Options Generation: What more could you do? Identifying all the alternative strategies and courses of action.

What Next? Specifically what will you do? Planning what is to be done - the when, by whom, and the will to do it.

How to use the GROW Model

In each area it is good to start with a broad question and then focus in on the detail.

Step 1: The Goal

- Positively introduce the performance areas to be discussed
- Use open-ended questions to clarify situation – that is 'what', 'when', 'where', 'how come'. Minimise the use of 'why' and 'how' as this demands analysis and opinion and can result in defensiveness
- Agree on a broad goal. Even though it seems odd to develop a goal before exploring the reality, doing this first will open the possibilities and not limit a response to past performance and negative perceptions. This can be fine-tuned in the Reality Stage. Make sure the goal is stated positively e.g. 'I will become more organised versus I will stop procrastinating'.
- Establish a desire for a solution.

Step 2: The Reality

- Agree what the current situation is
- Use the questions below to involve the mentee and gain commitment to change.
- Note that often in this stage a thorough examination of the reality throws up an answer before you *enter Stages 3 and 4*.

Step 3: The Options

- Involve the mentee in generating ideas – avoid making suggestions where possible. Go for quantity not quality to open up possibilities and encourage creative options not previously considered
- Explore all of the options presented
- Agree on the best option forward

Step 4: What Next?

- Prepare a clear written record of the agreed action steps outlining the who, what, where, when and how
- Set a specific date to review progress
- Confirm how you will give your support
- Reinforce the importance of the action and your confidence in the mentee achieving it.

APPENDIX E

Mentee Reflection Diary

Date of Meeting:

Session overview: What did we discuss?

Post session reflections: What came out of the session for me?

Agreed next steps: What do I need to do or think more about?

Next meeting: When is this and what will we cover?

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