

ECU Career Alumni Mentoring Program Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in the ECU Career Alumni Mentoring Program. The purpose of this program is to provide opportunities for alumni to share their wealth of professional and life experience with ECU students, to help them in making the transition from university to their career.

To ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the program, these guidelines deal with the conduct of both alumni (mentors) and students (mentees) and the expectations they can reasonably have of each other. They provide guidance to both mentor and mentee on how to achieve the most out of a mentoring partnership.

Commitment to and Expectations of the Program

The program will run for six months, and commences once per semester. Mentors and mentees are expected to complete training, after which they will be introduced to each other via email.

Each mentee-mentor pair will need to decide together how often they will communicate with each other throughout the program and how they plan to do so. This is to be arranged by the mentee-mentor pair at your mutual convenience.

There will be an end of year celebration which we would like to encourage all mentors and mentees to attend. Mentors and mentees will also be asked to participate in an end of program evaluation and provide a testimonial about your experience.

Characteristics of Effective Mentoring

Effective mentoring involves the mentor and/or mentee:

- Discussing the mentoring agreement and completing the agreement together
- Agreeing on the method, frequency and response time for communication
- Fulfilling commitments or providing adequate notice of changes
- Listening with empathy, being objective and non-judgemental
- Sharing experiences and learning from both successes and failures
- Developing a professional relationship by being honest and respectful
- Observing confidentiality and professional standards of behaviour and safety

Who are our Mentors?

Mentors are ECU alumni from a wide range of industries, many of whom have some years of work experience. They benefit mentees with valuable insights, advice and guidance in relation to the mentee's career and other aspirations.

Who are our Mentees?

Mentees are current students at ECU, from a range of disciplines and areas.

How does the program work?

Both students and alumni are invited to apply through the program through an online form. The aim of the information gathered is to enable us to effectively match each mentor and mentee based on a number of criteria, as part of a process undertaken by the University. Student mentees are asked to consider whether they require a mentor who is directly working in their goal profession, or whether they would consider working with someone from a slightly different industry who can provide mentoring from a general leadership perspective, which we believe can often be as valuable as a direct industry match.

Students and alumni who have been matched will be contacted by the University and asked to complete training. Following this, it is up to you! We will check in at certain points of the program, and the University is always here as support if you have any problems (see the end of this document), but outside of this it is down to the mentor-mentee pairs to determine when, how and how often to meet.

Unfortunately, the program can be oversubscribed, so sometimes not everyone will be matched. This is simply due to the profile of the pool that you are to be matched with, and does not reflect your suitability for the program.

Benefits of being a Mentor

Mentors will achieve:

- Satisfaction from making a difference in the career development of someone new to their career
- Satisfaction from giving back to the ECU community through helping current students and nurturing the leaders of tomorrow
- Satisfaction from contributing towards the enhancement of ECU's reputation
- Development of your leadership, interpersonal and mentoring skills
- Professional networking opportunities with other mentors through events
- Enhancement of your own resume
- Hearing fresh perspectives from future members of your profession
- Engaging in a volunteering opportunity, valued by employers

Benefits of being a Mentee

Mentees will gain:

- Opportunities to explore career options and aspirations with experienced professionals
- Advice and guidance on job application and presentation skills
- Access to inside knowledge of business, industry and government
- Insightful information and advice on leadership, management and workplace relations
- Access to the experiences of seasoned professionals for guidance in time management, communication, negotiation and networking skills

Some Dos and Don'ts of being a Mentor

Do's

- Challenge, motivate, inspire and encourage
- Be patient and build trust
- Offer alternative perspectives
- Encourage self-directed reflection, analysis and problem solving

Don'ts

- Simply provide solutions
- Assume responsibility for the student's career development
- Tutor or offer personal counselling
- Neglect agreed commitments without explanation

Mentoring is...

...a process of helping an individual gain more practical understanding through the shared knowledge of someone more experienced

...a one-to-one learning relationship, where the mentor either has experience or expertise in a particular area, and provides information, advice, support and feedback to the mentee

... an educational process where the mentor serves as a role model, trusted counsellor or advisor who provides opportunities for professional development, growth and support to less experienced individuals

... based upon encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

Some Dos and Don'ts of being a Mentee

Do's

- Be proactive
- Question and reflect
- Communicate openly
- Be open-minded to opportunities, new experiences and different ideas
- Accept feedback and learn from it

Don'ts

- Have unrealistic expectations (e.g. such as work experience, job offer, etc.)
- Neglect agreed commitments without explanation

What if there are problems?

Anyone experiencing concerns with a mentoring relationship should contact ECU at careers@ecu.edu.au or on (08) 6304 5899 immediately.

Role of ECU

ECU will:

- Match mentors and mentees through a confidential process based on the information provided on the registration form
- Hold a copy of each pair's mentoring agreement on file
- Ensure contact details and submitted information are treated confidentially according to University privacy policy
- Ensure mentors and mentees are aware of their roles and responsibilities before and during the mentoring relationship
- Monitor all mentoring arrangements through regular contact with mentors and mentees and provide assistance where required
- Deal promptly with all matters raised by mentors and mentees
- Organise events which provide alumni and students with the opportunity to meet each other and expand their network with other mentors and mentees

Thank you very much for your interest in the program, and we hope that you find it valuable. Any feedback is welcome; please email alumni@ecu.edu.au with your comments.