**Effective endings for your mentoring relationship**

The Research Staff Mentoring Programme has an expectation of a mentoring relationship lasting 6 months, but with mutual agreement this could be extended. Building this possibility early in to the mentoring relationship helps preparation for both mentor and mentee. This can therefore be covered during the informal contract agreement for the mentoring relationship. Over the duration of the relationship there will have been a shift from dependence to greater independence for the mentee, in terms of gaining confidence in their skills and abilities to ‘fly solo’.

Designating time to have a proper ending, where mentor and mentee can focus without distractions, is really important.

**What should be covered in an ending?**

The ending of the relationship for mentor and mentee needs to be carefully managed with time protected to give it the space and time it deserves. It is a key stage of the mentoring relationship, which can be a sensitive and emotional time, and has two parts essentially:

**First part**

* Seek mutual agreement to end the relationship
* Reflect and evaluate overall learning
* Celebrate achievements
* Clarify routings for support and help for the future
* Acknowledge the ‘ending’ and how the relationship will be going forward

**Second part**

The relationship may involve some interaction, more casual, and mentor and mentee now regard each other as **equals** :).

Ending or dissolving the mentoring relationship can be a mixture of feeling satisfaction for the mentee, now that they are more self-sufficient, and for the mentor satisfaction that their job is now done.

However, there can be a feeling of loss too, almost a grieving, that the mentoring relationship is ending. Effective preparation for the ending is therefore really important so that both parties feel it has been attended to appropriately and sufficiently.

**Preparing for the ending**

When the mentoring partnership enters the last couple of sessions, both mentor and mentee need to plan for an appropriate ending. Flagging the ending is close at the penultimate meeting will allow for a mental and emotional preparation, and any discussions that need to be had. The mentoring relationship can be very personal and emotional in nature, so needs sensitive handling.

At the final meeting there may be a review of progress against objectives, perhaps a celebration of what has been achieved in the partnership as well as on the Aurora initiative, and a sharing of experiences. The aim is to give the relationship a sense of closure.

**Beyond the ending**

If both parties feel there is benefit in a continued relationship this can be discussed as part of the closure. For some the relationship will end, but for some it will alter into an acquaintance for an occasional coffee, for others it might evolve into a friendship. Essentially, the bond of gratitude takes over from the bond of need.

Others might want to continue with a mentoring relationship if that is possible. If this is the case both parties need to agree and set out the new boundaries and agreement to start the cycle again.

**Ending a challenging mentoring experience**

Unfortunately not all mentoring relationships work for both parties. If that is the case, once it is raised with the Graduate School team, the termination of the relationship should be given some thought to avoid ill-feeling on either part.

**Clarify routings for support and help for the future**

A final reminder is that the mentor will include, as part of the ending, any routes for support and help for the future that the mentee may need. This may include directing the mentee to support for career development resources available within the university, training and development and any other areas of help identified by the mentee.