Guidelines for Good Practice in Mentor Programs in Higher Education

Endorsed by the National Executive of ANZSSA 2009

Programs in which senior students take on a role mentoring more recent enrolees are in operation across many post-secondary institutions in Australia and New Zealand. They are widely acknowledged be immensely valuable experiences for both mentors and mentees, and to make a positive contribution to the quality of student life and institutional effectiveness.

ANZSSA endorses the following guidelines as appropriate standards for mentor programs.

1. Duty of Care

1.1 Student mentors must not be seen as abrogating an institution’s responsibility to retain appropriately trained professional staff in any capacity.

1.2 The role of mentor must be sufficiently limited so that the required tasks do not place the mentor’s study in jeopardy

2. Recruitment

2.1 Recruitment information – potential participants must be provided with clear information on the mentor program. This will include information on:

- Time commitment
- Task Expectations
- Training
- Recognition of the role

2.2 Recruitment processes must be fair and equitable

3. Training

3.1 There must be a training or preparation program commensurate with the demands of the role. This program should address issues such as:

- 3.1.1 Clear information on operational and administrative processes of the program
- 3.1.2 Understanding Student Development and Transition
- 3.1.3 Mentor Activities: Mentors should have clear information about the tasks they are expected to carry out
- 3.1.4 Role Boundaries – including roles which must be avoided (teacher, counsellor etc)
- 3.1.5 Risk Management
- 3.1.6 Information about Key Support Services available to mentors and mentees
- 3.1.7 Equity and Diversity Issues
3.1.8 Evaluation Processes

3.2 It is acceptable for delivery of the training or preparation program to occur in a variety of alternative ways – in groups, individually, or on-line.

3.3 Post Training – Mentors must have easy access to a professional staff member to clarify any matters of concern.

4. Staff support for mentors

4.1 Mentors should have clear access to a professional staff member in charge of the mentor program for guidance and support throughout their role as mentor

4.2 Mentors must have access to support services during the period of their role

4.3 Regular meetings (or other contact) between coordinating staff and mentors is highly desirable

5. Resources for Mentors

5.1 Mentor programs should have adequate administrative support to achieve the program objectives

5.2 Mentors should be provided with appropriate resources such as a handbook, resource pack or similar

6. Time boundaries terminating the role of mentor

6.1 The time limits of the mentor:mentee relationship should be clearly established so that participants are aware of when the relationship begins and ends

6.2 There should be clear processes for mentors who wish to withdraw from the role,

6.3 The circumstances under which a mentor’s role may be terminated shall be made clear to all mentors and mentees

7. Information provided to Mentees

7.1 Information should be provided to mentees about all aspects of the mentor program

7.2 The program coordinator should take particular care to ensure that mentees are provided with clear information about the role boundaries of mentors.
7.3 Participation by mentees should be optional – although it is acceptable to establish an “opt out” process.

8. Recognition

8.1 There should be recognition mentors commensurate with the demands of the role.

8.2 Recognition may take the form of payment, recognition on the student record, certificates of participation or similar.

9. Evaluation

9.1 Formal evaluation of the program will be embedded in the program –

9.2. Evaluation should be sought from mentors, mentees and coordinating staff

10. Roles of Coordinating Staff

10.1 It is highly desirable that there be continuity of staff involved in mentor programs.

10.2 Staff coordinating the program must retain information which allows them to make contact with mentors quickly and easily

10.3 Academic staff participating in the program should have access to professional support form staff with expertise in mentor programs

10.4 Coordinating staff may participate in such activities as:

- 10.4.1 Assisting with recruiting mentors
- 10.4.2 Participating in the training program – especially with the course specific information
- 10.4.3 Active involvement in the Orientation program
- 10.4.4 Assigning mentees to mentors
- 10.4.5 Organising regular meetings (or otherwise have regular contact) with mentors
- 10.4.6 Gathering evaluation data from mentors and mentees
- 10.4.7 Being available to advise mentors

11. Complaints, Concerns and Grievances

11.1 Mentors and mentees should be made aware of the channels through which complaints, concerns and grievances may be addressed