



ACT
Government

GUIDELINES FOR THE ACTPS ENGINEER MENTORING PROGRAM

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
MAJOR PROJECTS CANBERRA

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INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government highly values its engineering workforce and is committed to further investing in the development of the cohort to ensure it continues to reach its full potential. To support this goal the ACT Government launched the Engineering Workforce Plan in September 2020. The purpose of the Workforce Plan is to enable the ACT Government to build the engineering capability required to meet the future needs and growth of the Territory.

The Engineering Workforce Plan aligns with the broader focus of the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) to build a diverse, agile, responsive and innovative public service that delivers the ACT Government's priorities and provides effective services for the ACT community.

The ACTPS Engineer Mentoring Program (the Program) has been established for ACTPS employees with an engineering qualification. The Program provides an opportunity for participants to build on their career skills and to connect with professional individuals and networks across the ACTPS. Opportunities will be available for the ACTPS engineering cohort to connect with each other and high-profile experts external to government.

Mentoring offers a great opportunity for both mentors and mentees to develop their skills, share key knowledge, encourage the formation of networks and work towards future goals.

The aim of these guidelines is to provide a framework for the basis on which mentors and mentees participate in the program. It is expected that each mentor and mentee pair will communicate, interact and achieve their mentoring program goals differently – in a way that best suits each pair.

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge, networks and understanding that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and/or personal growth.

Mentoring is not the same as training, teaching or coaching, and a mentor does not need to be a qualified trainer or an expert in the role the mentee carries out. They need to be able to listen and ask questions that will challenge the mentee to identify the course of action they need to take in regard to their own development.

Mentoring should:

- take place outside of a line manager-employee relationship, at the mutual consent of both parties;
- be career focused or focus on professional development that may be outside a mentee's area of work; and
- build relationships that last for a specific period of time in a formal program, at which point the pair may continue in an informal mentoring relationship depending on their mutual consent.

A mentor provides support, a sounding board, knowledge, encouragement, guidance and constructive feedback to the mentee by developing a genuine interest in the growth of their abilities and talents. A mentor can assist in finding support services for their mentee and guide them if required.

A mentee actively seeks support and guidance in their career and professional development from an experienced public servant. A mentee always has ultimate responsibility for their career and professional development.

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

The benefits of mentoring are widespread, from offering professional development to improving communication and developing professional relationships. Additionally, benefits are not just for mentees, but also for mentors and directorates.

For the Mentee	For the Mentor	For the ACTPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the formal and informal culture and structures in the ACTPS. • Connect with professional individuals and networks across the ACTPS. • Consider career opportunities in the ACTPS. • Increased self-confidence and motivation. • Support and challenge in formulating a clear sense of personal direction. • An opportunity to develop skills by observing others. • A sounding board to discuss ideas and approaches before action is taken. • An opportunity to think about things in a different way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job satisfaction from seeing others develop. • Increased recognition from peers. • Challenge and stimulation. • Identifying future potential of the person you are mentoring. • Self-learning and development from the process. • Satisfaction at the success of the mentee. • Recognition of your mentoring skills across the ACTPS. • Motivation from self-development and responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased levels of motivation from those involved. • Employees have a clear direction and clear objectives. • Improved communication at, and across, all levels. • Sharing of knowledge and experiences. • Ensuring best practice is the standard working practice. • Tangible and measurable gains if work tasks and projects are used as a development tool. • Innovation and continuous improvement in the way that employees approach their work.

MENTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to get the most out of the mentoring relationship, it is valuable for the mentee to be open and willing to genuinely engage with the mentor. They need to be engaged in the process, be present in all meetings with the mentor and commit to taking responsibility to support their own professional and personal growth. A mentee's responsibilities include:

- committing to the mentoring relationship and keeping appointments as agreed;
- understanding the mentor will not make decisions for them, only facilitate conversations to assist the mentee in reaching their own conclusions;
- being clear that a mentor will facilitate conversations to assist mentees in relation to their career and that career decisions and progression remains the responsibility of the mentee;
- having open conversations including being receptive to honest feedback, discussions and self-reflection;
- contributing to discussions and resolution of issues and sharing information that will assist the conversation;
- discussing and developing their professional and personal goals;
- developing rapport and trust with the mentor;
- having an open mind and harnessing opportunities, even with challenges, as they arise;
- maintaining confidentiality of all conversations; and
- participating in evaluation processes.

MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

In the context of the Program, a mentor is an ‘experienced and trusted advisor’. This description reflects how the Program seeks mentors that will work with mentees. Your role as a mentor will cover at least some of the following:

- committing to the mentoring relationship and keeping appointments as agreed;
- listening;
- asking questions to help develop both your and the mentee’s understanding of a situation or problem;
- providing information and knowledge and sharing informal networks;
- providing advice on career development;
- offering different perspectives;
- providing support and encouragement;
- providing an insight into your work and career;
- being a sounding board;
- being a critical friend;
- encouraging self-reflection; and
- helping mentees identify areas for development.

As a mentor you will have the opportunity to use your experience and knowledge in a facilitative manner to support the development of the mentee. However, the responsibility for making things happen and putting plans into action lies primarily with the mentee – not with you.

To get the most out of a mentoring relationship, it is valuable for mentors to be able to provide a range of advice and experiences. The following skills and experience can assist:

- **Self-awareness** – have a good understanding of your own strengths and development needs.
- **Organisational nous** – have a good understanding of government and how to achieve outcomes in the ACTPS environment.
- **Credibility** – have personal and professional credibility and be recognised as having strong leadership skills.
- **Accessibility** – be prepared to commit enough time to your mentee to offer support and guidance.
- **Interpersonal skills** – be able to build rapport and trust with your mentee through excellent communication skills. Valuing your mentee by being able to understand different perspectives, approaches/ideas and backgrounds of your mentee.
- **Ability to empower** – be able to create an environment where it is safe for individuals to discuss different issues and be empowered to take responsibility to grow.
- **Empathy** – the ability to put yourself in other people’s shoes and not be judgmental.
- **Value diversity** – to understand and model behaviors that demonstrate and support diversity.

THE MENTORING PROCESS



MATCHING MENTEES AND MENTORS

The process for matching mentees and mentors is based on the information participants provide at **Appendix A** for mentees, and **Appendix B** for mentors.

Mentees and mentors will be matched based on compatible information, primarily from the mentees' preferences in line with areas they want to learn or grow; and areas they identify where their skills lie, which can then be harnessed by a mentor.

The Program is engineering focused, but will also support engineers who are seeking a partnership to build their knowledge and skills with government processes.

Based on compatibility information additional mentors may be sourced external to government from high profile engineering industry organisations.

THE INITIAL MEETING

The initial meeting can be unnerving for both the mentor and mentee. The initial meeting is critical in establishing the foundations for the development of the mentorship. The level of formality and ground rules for the mentorship are determined at that meeting. The mentor and mentee should agree on a mutually suitable time and place for the meeting.

The initial meeting should be focused on rapport building and understanding more about each other, confirming logistics for future meetings and commencing a discussion on goals. The initial meeting can also incorporate goal setting, but this may be left for a second meeting to allow the mentee to do some initial thinking.

MENTORING AGREEMENT

If they wish, the mentor and mentee can sign a Mentoring Agreement at the first meeting as a tool to formalise their mentoring relationship and expectations. This is optional, and can be found at **Appendix C**.

FREQUENCY AND MODE OF CONTACT

There is no set frequency of contact that mentors and mentees are required to have. Mentors and mentees will be expected to agree on the frequency and mode of contact as part of their mentoring agreement or as agreed in the initial meeting. This should be established in the interest of supporting an effective mentoring engagement.

As a guide, it is suggested that mentors and mentees should have face-to-face contact for at least two hours each month with additional exchange of correspondence or documentation via phone or email.

ENDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

It is important to consider how the mentoring relationship will end. In certain situations, the end date is agreed during the initial meeting, but it is not always possible in all situations to be able to identify a clear end date. Reasons for ending the mentoring relationship can be varied:

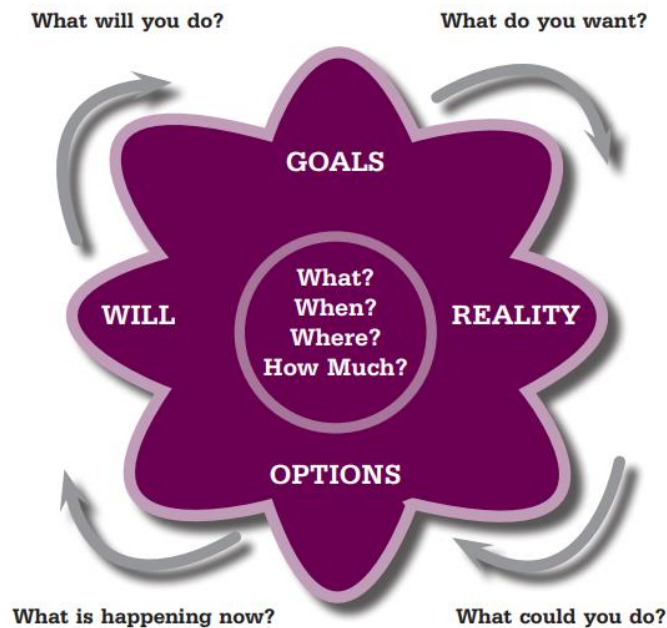
- the relationship has achieved its objective;
- the mentor feels that the mentee is confident and ready to move on;
- one party is trying to connect but the other party is not responding;
- the program is coming to a close; or
- the relationship is not working successfully and both parties wish to move on.

It is useful and good practice for the mentor and mentee to revisit the original goals and objectives and compare them with actual outcomes. This allows both parties to review what progress has been made and to acknowledge what has been achieved. It is useful to encourage the mentee to find another mentor for the next stage of their journey and the mentor may even be able to suggest individuals the mentee may like to approach. The mentor should take time to evaluate how they feel they have developed during the relationship and what lessons they have learned.

The ACT Chief Engineer is available to act as a mediator should mentor and mentee relationships need support.

MENTORING USING THE GROW MODEL

The GROW model is a good way to structure mentoring meetings. You can either start with the goal and work logically through the model or you can move the model around, starting with the reality and then the goal, if this works best. Remember to always finish with the way forward and ensure that this is set and owned by the mentee.



GROW Model	
Goals	Mentees focus on their future and what they want to achieve as an individual. It is not where the mentor thinks they should be aiming.
Reality	Mentors ask questions to assist mentees to establish where they are now. This is an important step. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering their starting point, and often they're missing some information they need to reach their goal effectively.
Options	Mentors assist mentees in identifying options and different approaches, including considering the benefits, challenges and opportunities of different approaches. If mentees are struggling, mentors should also share their own experiences or provide suggestions without being too directive and allowing mentees to make their own conclusions.
Way Forward	Mentees work with mentors to create an action plan that incorporates SMART (Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic and Timely) principles that will assist them in moving forward to achieve their goals. Decide on when and how progress will be reflected on.

THE MENTORING CONVERSATION

As identified above, the GROW Model is a useful tool for ongoing mentoring meetings. The purpose of each meeting may be different and could include, but not be limited to:

- reviewing and identifying the mentee's experience;
- helping the mentee to identify individual strengths and areas for development;
- discussing professional and work issues;
- agreeing what support is required;
- exploring the options open to the mentee;
- coaching on specific skills;
- reflecting on actions taken or experiences;
- exchanging information or feedback on specific documentation;
- supporting the mentee to set achievable, realistic and stretching action plans; and
- workplace scenarios.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – MENTEE

Thank you for your interest in being a mentee in the ACTPS Engineer Mentoring Program. Please outline your details and interest below in order to provide the best opportunity for a quality mentoring match. The Office of the Chief Engineer will aim to match you with a mentor who can assist you in achieving your personal goals.

Please ensure you have reviewed the Guidelines for the ACTPS Engineer Mentoring Program before completing this expression of interest.

Completed forms should be provided to chief.engineer@act.gov.au by 18 March 2022.

Name	
Email	
Classification	
Current role and directorate	

**I would prefer to be mentored in the following areas
(please nominate in order of your top 3 preferences):**

Broad Experience		Policy		Regulatory Functions		Corporate	
Project management		Service delivery		Government processes		Technical (civil, electrical)	
Construction		Leadership/ Management		Digital		Other:	

I would prefer to be mentored by a person who has knowledge of the workings in the

following directorates:						
Canberra Health Services		ACT Health		CMTEDD		Community Services Directorate
Education Directorate		Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate		Justice and Community Safety		Transport Canberra and City Services
Major Projects Canberra		Other areas of government: External to government:				

Information on directorates/agencies can be found at:

https://www.directory.act.gov.au/ccexternal_5.1/extdir/directorates.html

Is there anything we need to know to make the most suitable and effective mentoring match for you?

By submitting an expression of interest to be a mentee, I acknowledge and accept the program guidelines and will discuss with my mentor our shared expectations of the program.

Signature _____ Date _____

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – MENTOR

Thank you for your interest in being a mentor in the ACTPS Engineer Mentoring Program. Please outline your details and interest below in order to provide the best opportunity for a quality mentoring match.

Completed forms should be provided to chief.engineer@act.gov.au by 18 March 2022.

Name	
Email	
Classification	
Current role and directorate	

I am able to mentor on these specific skill sets (please rate in order of 1-3 at a minimum):						
Broad Experience		Policy		Regulatory Functions		Corporate
Project management		Service delivery		Government processes		Technical (civil, electrical)
Construction		Leadership/ Management		Digital		Other:

I have a knowledge of the workings in the following directorates:							
Canberra Health Services		ACT Health		CMTEDD		Community Services Directorate	
Education Directorate		Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate		Justice and Community Safety		Transport Canberra and City Services	
Major Projects Canberra		Other areas of government: External to government:					

I can support an engineering mentee in the follow specific areas:

By submitting an expression of interest to be a mentor, I acknowledge and accept the program guidelines and understand the importance of committing to the program. I will treat all conversations in-confidence and will discuss with my mentee our shared expectations of the program.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C - MENTORING AGREEMENT

We, (mentor) and (mentee) voluntarily commit to the ACTPS Engineer Mentoring Program for the duration to

We will meet every for face-to-face (if possible) and we will not cancel meetings unless it is unavoidable. We will also contact each other by phone or email.

We commit to:

- having a genuine interest and commitment to this mentoring relationship;
- being objective, honest and supportive;
- acting ethically and with respect towards all participants;
- respecting and maintaining strict confidentiality;
- focusing on the mentees needs and goals;
- contributing to discussion and resolution of issues raised in meetings; and
- participating in program evaluation and review.

We have discussed and agreed upon the role of the mentor and mentee, as well as the expectations and values.

We acknowledge that either person has the right to discontinue the mentorship for any reason, and we will notify and debrief with the Office of the Chief Engineer.

Signed: (mentor)

Date: / /

Name:

Signed: (mentee)

Date: / /

Name:



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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
MAJOR PROJECTS CANBERRA

Email: Chief.Engineer@act.gov.au

Website: www.act.gov.au/majorprojectscanberra