

Uva Wellassa University

The adoption of the following policy is recommended by the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and the Senate of Uva Wellassa University.

Policy Title: Policy on Academic Mentoring of Uva Wellassa University
Policy Number: UWU-P-017
Responsible Party: Director, Staff Development Centre-Uva Wellassa University
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Purpose Statement:

Mentoring is a nurturing process where an experienced individual, acting as a role model, engages in teaching, researching, encouraging, counseling, and befriending a less experienced person to promote their professional development. This process unfolds within an ongoing, supportive relationship between the mentor and the emerging academic. In the academic sphere, mentoring stands as a cornerstone for personal and professional growth, offering a structured and nurturing alliance that surpasses conventional teaching methodologies. It embodies a symbiotic bond between an experienced professional (the mentor) and an emerging academic (the mentee), fostering a dynamic exchange of knowledge, guidance, and expertise. Beyond mere instruction, this partnership delves into personal and professional realms, nurturing the mentee's aspirations and contributing to the development of future scholars, researchers, and administrators. Academic mentoring plays a crucial role in transferring knowledge, fostering an environment that empowers mentees to excel in their academic pursuits. It equips them not only with what to learn but also how to learn and evolve as integral contributors within their academic field.

The mentoring policy at UWU aims to provide effective guidance for mentoring young, new, or existing staff members in areas of publications, teaching, and administration. This policy is designed to enhance performance, improve overall image, and develop the potential of UWU's academic staff.

Rationale:

The rationale behind establishing an Academic Mentoring Programme and policy lies in several key objectives:

- Professional Development: To foster the growth and development of junior or less experienced staff by providing guidance, support, and advice from more experienced colleagues.
- Knowledge Transfer: To facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills, and expertise within the academic community, ensuring the continuity of institutional knowledge and practices.
- Enhanced Performance: To improve the overall performance, productivity, and effectiveness of academic staff by offering tailored support and guidance in areas like research, teaching, and administration.
- Cultural and Institutional Development: To build a culture of support, collaboration, and continuous learning within the academic environment, promoting a positive and growth-oriented atmosphere.
- Retention and Succession: To aid in the retention of talented staff and facilitate their career progression within the institution by providing structured guidance and mentorship.
- Quality Assurance: To ensure that the mentoring relationships are conducted ethically, professionally, and effectively, aligning with institutional goals and values.
- Overall Academic Excellence: Ultimately, to contribute to the academic excellence and reputation of the institution by nurturing and developing the capabilities of its faculty members.

The role of Uva Wellassa University

To ensure the provision of high-quality mentoring, UWU should implement the following measures:

- **Establishment of Service:** Offer mentoring services at SDC/UWU targeted at newly appointed academics within the faculty.
- **Logistical Support:** Provide logistical support and necessary infrastructure for the effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the academic mentoring program.
- **Orientation Programs:** Conduct comprehensive orientation programs designed for both mentors and mentees. These programs will equip participants with the requisite knowledge, skills, and guidelines for effective mentoring relationships.
- **Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Implement proactive measures to address potential misunderstandings and conflicts of interest between mentors and mentees. Develop and enact clear protocols for resolving any arising conflicts to ensure the smooth continuation of the mentoring relationship.

General Principle of Mentoring

For successful mentoring, the following principles should be adhered to:

- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation in mentoring should be voluntary for both mentors and mentees, fostering a genuine commitment to the process.
- **Mutual Respect:** Both mentor and mentee should value each other's perspectives, experiences, and contributions to ensure a respectful and collaborative relationship.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintaining confidentiality in discussions, respecting each other's privacy, and safeguarding sensitive information shared during mentoring sessions is crucial.
- **Open Communication:** Encouraging open and honest dialogue allows for the free exchange of ideas, feedback, and concerns, ensuring clarity and understanding.
- **Goal-Oriented Approach:** Establishing clear goals and objectives at the onset helps align mentoring activities with the mentee's professional development needs.
- **Continuous Learning:** Embracing a culture of continuous learning promotes ongoing growth and development for both mentor and mentee.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Embracing diversity in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives enhances the richness of the mentoring relationship and fosters inclusivity.
- **Accountability:** Both mentor and mentee should hold themselves accountable for commitments made during mentoring sessions, fostering a sense of responsibility.
- **Constructive Feedback:** Providing and receiving constructive feedback in a supportive manner facilitates learning and development.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Recognizing that mentoring needs may evolve, being open to adjusting mentoring approaches to suit changing circumstances is crucial for success.

Role of Mentors

The role of mentor teachers is evolving as they aim to offer more robust faculty-based support to novice educators. The effectiveness of mentorship relies significantly on establishing clear roles and responsibilities for all participants involved. Successful programs have shown that mentors should

- continue to teach while serving as a mentor,
- understand the typical needs and challenges of the beginning teacher,
- develop and use a variety of strategies to assist the beginning teacher,
- prepare themselves for effective one-on-one consultation with individual teachers,
- initially focus their efforts on areas known to be difficult for novice teachers,
- make the accumulated wisdom of other experienced teachers accessible to beginning teachers and

- develop strategies for giving acceptance and support to the beginning teacher within the faculty context.

Mento Responsibilities

Mentor responsibilities include:

- **Guidance and Support:** Provide guidance and support to mentees in their professional development, offering insights and advice based on experience.
- **Regular Discussions:** Engage in regular discussions with mentees to assess progress, share knowledge, and offer assistance.
- **Goal Setting:** Assist mentees in setting realistic and achievable professional goals, helping them navigate their career paths effectively.
- **Feedback:** Offer constructive feedback on mentees' performance, projects, or areas needing improvement, aiding in their growth.
- **Resource Sharing:** Share relevant resources, materials, and opportunities beneficial for the mentee's academic and professional advancement.
- **Networking Assistance:** Aid mentees in expanding their professional networks, introducing them to relevant contacts, and guiding them in networking strategies.
- **Championing Development:** Encourage mentees' professional development by identifying and providing opportunities for skill enhancement or career advancement.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Address conflicts or issues that arise during the mentoring relationship and work towards amicable resolutions.
- **Advisory Role:** Serve as an advisor to mentees, offering insights, perspectives, and advice on academic, career, or personal matters when appropriate.
- **Role Modeling:** Lead by example, demonstrating ethical and professional conduct to inspire and guide mentees.

Other responsibilities

- Hands-on guidance, explaining how and why; creating opportunities to learn
- The challenger, making waves, challenging, stimulating, questioning, probing
- The Role model, Unseen, largely unfelt.
- Make yourself available
- Listening
- Supportive
- Talk about failure experience

Role of the Mentee

The role of mentees is intricate. While both the mentor and the mentee are qualified professionals, the distinction lies in the breadth of teaching and management strategies possessed by the

experienced, seasoned mentor. Just as the role of the mentor is based on several understandings, the role of the protégé is based on some key principles. For the most part mentees

- still have much to learn about putting their knowledge to work;
- develop their teaching styles over time;
- develop active listening and consultation skills;
- are committed to an ethos of collegial reflective practice;
- develop observation and analytic strategies to enhance their teaching effectiveness;
- provide guidance, support and assistance in analyzing teaching that enhances their teaching effectiveness; and
- move through well-delineated stages of development from day-to-day survival to concerns about managing responsibilities to concerns about the impact of their teaching to raising questions about their profession.

Mentee Responsibilities

The successful outcome of the mentoring relationship heavily relies on the active participation and commitment of the mentee. Initiating the relationship rests primarily with the mentee, who seeks guidance and support from the mentor to achieve predetermined objectives. Maintaining transparency, openness, and integrity are foundational in nurturing a healthy and productive mentoring relationship, mirroring the standards expected in any professional association. Within this context, the key responsibilities of the mentee encompass:

- **Initiation of Relationship:** Proactively initiate the mentoring relationship.
- **Commitment to Meetings:** Adhere to scheduled meetings and communications with the mentor.
- **Active Participation:** Prepare for and actively engage in mentoring sessions.
- **Dedication and Hard Work:** Show dedication and willingness to work hard for guidance.
- **Open Communication:** Be open, honest, and transparent in communication with the mentor.
- **Progress Updates:** Keep the mentor informed about progress and any challenges faced.
- **Seeking Guidance:** Ask for help, advice, and guidance from the mentor when needed.
- **Accepting Suggestions:** Be open to and accept suggestions provided by the mentor.
- **Appreciation and Respect:** Show appreciation for the mentor's efforts without expecting financial remuneration

Implementation Procedure

Establishment of Committee: Set up an “Academic Mentoring Committee” responsible for policy implementation. The Senate shall appoint the committee

Composition of the Academic Mentoring Committee

- Chairperson: Director of the Staff Development Center (SDC) or a senior academic appointed by the Senate.
- Deans or Faculty Representatives: Representatives from different faculties within the university.
- Senior Academic Staff: One or more senior academic staff members, preferably with mentoring experience, appointed by the faculty or department.
- Management Assistant: Secretarial support provided by an administrative staff member, usually from the SDC office, responsible for coordinating administrative tasks.

Responsibilities of the Committee:

- Facilitate the mentoring program, organize training, and maintain program communication.
- **Mentor-Mentee Communication:** Facilitate communication and interaction among mentors and mentees.
- **Recognition System:** Institute a recognition and reward system for exemplary mentors.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly monitor and evaluate the mentoring program for effectiveness.
- **Training Sessions:** Conduct periodic training sessions for mentors and mentees through the Staff Development Center.
- **Identifying Mentors:** Invite senior academic staff to be part of the mentoring pool and provide them with necessary mentoring training.
- **Selection of Mentees:** Identify new staff or those requesting mentorship and pair them with suitable mentors within a specific timeframe.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Implement feedback mechanisms, including regular surveys or forms, to assess the program's progress and success.
- **Training:** Regular sessions via UWU's Staff Development Center.

Needs Assessment:

- Identify the needs of new academics. Conduct surveys or interviews to understand their challenges, expectations, and areas where mentoring could offer support.

Define Objectives:

- Establish clear objectives for the mentoring program. Determine what the program aims to achieve for both mentors and mentees.

Design Program Structure:

- Decide on the program structure, such as one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring, or a combination.
- Determine the duration, frequency, and format of mentor-mentee interactions.
- Assign responsibilities and roles to mentors and mentees.

Mentor Selection:

- Choose experienced faculty members or senior academics as mentors based on their expertise, availability, and willingness to participate.

Mentor-Mentee Matching:

- Match mentors and mentees based on compatible interests, expertise, goals, and personalities.
- Consider diversity in matching to provide a well-rounded mentoring experience.

- **Orientation and Training:**

- Conduct orientation sessions for mentors and mentees, outlining program goals, expectations, and guidelines.
- Provide training or resources to mentors on effective mentoring practices.

Establish Program Guidelines:

- Develop guidelines or a mentoring agreement outlining expectations, goals, confidentiality, and meeting schedules.

Program Launch:

- Officially launch the mentoring program, introducing mentors and mentees to each other.
- Encourage initial meetings between mentors and mentees to set goals and expectations.

Ongoing Support and Evaluation:

- Provide ongoing support to mentors and mentees throughout the program.
- Conduct periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the program and gather feedback for improvements.

Review and Adaptation:

- Regularly review the mentoring program's effectiveness and make necessary adaptations based on feedback and evolving needs.

Recognition and Celebration:

- Acknowledge and celebrate milestones or successes achieved through the mentoring program to motivate participants.

Continuous Improvement:

- Continuously improve the program based on feedback, best practices, and the changing needs of new academics.

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