



How to develop a mentoring program

There are different ways to approach mentoring in your workplace. You can take an **informal** approach to fostering mentoring in the workplace, or you can take a more **formal** approach by matching mentors and mentees and providing structure for the mentoring relationship.

Your organisation might benefit from using a blended approach including both formal and informal elements.

Many veterans are accustomed to a highly structured working environment. It can therefore be beneficial for veterans to establish some formal elements to mentoring in your workplace. These might include clear objectives for mentoring, guidelines for mentoring, and a structure for mentoring meetings.

Getting started:

To help you decide how mentoring might look in your organisation, consider the following questions:

Guiding questions

- What are the goals and objectives for your mentoring program?
- How will mentoring fit within your organisation's culture?
- What resources can be allocated to the program?
- At what scale will the program operate?
- How long will the program aim to operate for?

Developing a **formal** mentoring program

In a formal mentoring program, mentors and mentees are matched in a targeted way. Participants are provided with guidance to ensure they get the most out of the mentoring relationship. The structure of a formal mentoring program can be particularly beneficial for veterans.

The graphic over the next pages outlines steps to develop a formal mentoring program.

1

Design

Establish the overall objectives of the mentoring program.

These may include objectives such as:

- increasing connection
- facilitating learning
- upskilling in target areas.

Set eligibility criteria for mentors and mentees.

This may relate to level of seniority, or skills and experience.

Veteran-specific objectives may include:

- helping veterans adjust to the civilian workplace
- assisting veterans to make full use of their skills and ADF experience
- assisting veterans to plan their civilian career development.

You might establish a veteran stream within an organisation-wide mentoring program.

2

Prepare

Establish an application process for mentors and mentees.

This may be a short online form. Before commencing the program, you may wish to seek expressions of interest from employees.

It is a good idea to encourage newly transitioned veterans to apply.

Promote the program.

This may be via a staff-wide email, a newsletter or other form of communication. You may also include information about the program in on-boarding material or job advertisements.

Develop meeting templates for participants.

Meeting templates can add structure and help participants get the most out of mentoring.

Ensure that new veteran employees are aware of the program and its benefits. You might:

- promote the program as being tailored for veterans or including a veteran stream
- include program details as part of a veteran 'welcome pack'
- promote having mentors who are veterans if applicable.

Templates can keep participants on track to:

- achieve the purpose of the program
- work towards the goals of each mentor/mentee relationship
- identify avenues for supporting veteran mentees.

3

Match

Match mentors and mentees.

Consider the goals, interests and mentoring needs of the mentee, as well as the skills and experience of the mentor.

Establish goals for the mentoring relationship.

Support mentors and mentees to establish these goals together for their mentoring relationship. These goals may relate to:

- the mentee's personal career goals
- skills the mentee requires in their role
- the overall objectives of the mentoring program.

Ensure that mentors and mentees are adequately resourced to achieve their goals.

Set out milestones.

Use milestones to record progression through the program. You can mark milestones with events at various points of the program. This could be during induction, mid-way and at the end of the program.

Check in with participants at these milestones to ensure they are getting the most out of the program and working towards their goals.

Veteran mentees can benefit from veteran and non-veteran mentors, depending on their goals.

Veteran mentors can contribute their understanding of ADF experience and offer more assistance adjusting to the civilian workplace.

Non-veteran mentors can offer general guidance and skills development. Consider delivering 'working with veterans' staff training to non-veteran mentors.

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Sustain

Establish evaluation criteria and methods.

You may ask participants to complete a pre- and post-program survey. The program should be evaluated against its overall objectives.

Promote program success.

Using quotes from participants or other data in your internal promotion of the program can help to attract more participants.

Use evaluation data to improve the program.

Assess progress towards the program's objectives. Take the time to adjust the program based on participant feedback.

Create an alumni network.

This will encourage mentors and mentees to stay in contact and continue the mentoring relationship.

Long-term mentoring can be beneficial for veterans who have recently transitioned. These veterans may otherwise lack civilian networks.

Supporting **informal** mentoring

Informal mentoring involves fostering an environment where mentoring relationships develop naturally between employees. Employees will connect and provide each other with guidance and support. Informal mentoring increases connectedness and wellbeing in the workplace, which benefits all employees.

Follow these steps to establish an informal mentoring environment.

1 Establish a mentoring culture

To establish a culture that supports mentoring relationships, you can:

- ensure that new employees interact with a wide range of colleagues during on-boarding
- ensure that senior leadership is present and accessible to staff
- facilitate collaborative work among staff and between different teams
- establish an internal veterans' group
- encourage networking and peer-to-peer support among staff.

2 Establish opportunities for informal interactions

These opportunities may include:

- morning teas
- regular team meetings to check progress and catch up with colleagues
- team or organisation away days
- encouraging staff to attend the workplace in-person on set days
- opportunities such as 'lunch and learn' or 'coffee and connect' events.

In a **remote** workplace, you can:

- hold a regular virtual team meeting, with opportunity for informal interaction
- hold online events or socialisation opportunities
- encourage increased communication over video conferencing
- spotlight employees in internal communication.