

Guidelines for implementing mentoring for tenure track professors

Within the framework of the federal and state programme for promoting early-career researchers, the University of Oldenburg (UOL) has committed to offering all tenure track professors access to a mentoring opportunity for the entire duration of their contract with the UOL. In the case of joint appointments, the participating scientific institution and the UOL shall agree on the offer. The UOL sees mentoring as an effective tool for strategic personnel and organisational development.

These guidelines are intended to facilitate implementing mentoring programmes and establishing a standard procedure at all Schools.

Objective

Mentoring programmes support tenure track professors (mentees) in developing academic leadership skills and contribute to developing their careers successfully towards a tenured professorship.

Target group

All tenure track professors who are either appointed at the UOL or who are appointed jointly with an external scientific institution are eligible to take part in a mentoring partnership.

Prerequisites

Participation in a mentoring partnership is voluntary for tenure track professors. The offer can be rejected without giving reasons.

The mentoring partnership is subject to strict confidentiality. It is not affected by rank. Consequently, the mentor cannot be a member of an evaluation committee or tenure board for their mentee at the same time.

The role of the mentor

Mentors must be available to meet regularly with the tenure track professor; meetings must take place at a minimum of once per year. Meetings are recommended at the beginning of the employment contract, in advance of the interim and tenure evaluations and following the performance review meeting after the interim evaluation.

In particular, the mentor has the role of advising the mentee on all matters relevant to the evaluations. The mentor should also support the mentee's career development by sharing their own experience of the research landscape and university structures, and offer networking opportunities for the mentee in the academic community.

The role of the mentee

The tenure track professor (mentee) is responsible for organizing and determining the scope of the mentoring partnership. The mentee should prepare their concerns or topics for the meetings and is also responsible for scheduling meetings.

Implementation

During the preparation of the appointment negotiations, the School must select a full-time professor who is suitable and available as a mentor for the tenure track professor. If the tenure-track professor is appointed jointly by the School and another scientific institution, the School shall consult with the scientific institution involved regarding the selection of the mentor.

During the appointment negotiations, the dean will inform the tenure track professor about the mentoring programme. The dean will also inform the tenure track professor of the mentor proposed for them by the School.

The tenure track professor shall be granted a period of time within which they shall decide whether to participate in the mentoring programme and whether to accept or reject the proposed mentor.

The tenure track professor may suggest an alternative mentor to the mentor proposed by the School. In principle, it is also possible to appoint a mentor from another university or research institution in Germany or abroad; in these cases, however, the mentoring relationship cannot be supervised by the UOL. A further option is to appoint a second mentor. Alternative or supplementary proposals must be confirmed by the School, and in the case of joint appointments by the scientific institution involved as well.

Duration

The formal mentoring relationship begins with the commencement of employment and ends either with the successful tenure evaluation, with the termination of employment as a tenure track professor at the UOL or at the request of one of the parties at an earlier date.

Mentoring agreement

The mentoring partnership can be formally concluded by a written agreement between the mentor and the tenure track professor. A mentoring agreement template is included in these guidelines for this purpose. However, mentoring agreements are not compulsory and are rather concluded on a voluntary basis subject to the agreement of both parties.

In case of conflict

Should conflicts arise in the course of the mentoring partnership that cannot be resolved by the parties themselves, either party may contact the dean in confidence. The dean may propose mediation as a further step. If the conflict cannot be resolved, the dean will recommend terminating the mentoring partnership and offer the tenure track professor the opportunity to choose a new mentor. This nomination must be confirmed by the School, and in the case of joint appointments by the scientific institution involved as well.

Further support services for mentors and mentees

For general information on mentoring and the role of mentor and mentee, please contact Dr Susanne Elpers, Department for Research and Technology Transfer, susanne.elpers@uol.de, 0441 – 798 2939.

In addition, all tenure track professors are entitled to participate in the qualification and peer coaching training offered by the Graduate Academy.

Contact: Dr Susanne Elpers (see above)

<https://uol.de/graduierenaakademie/angebote-der-akademie/>

In addition, all tenure track professors are cordially invited to take part in the Academic Leadership programme (Führung in der Wissenschaft).

Contact: Anja Kruse, Personnel & organisation/Management and specialist training anja.kruse@uol.de, Tel. 0441 – 798 4653

<https://uol.de/personalentwicklung/fuehrung-in-der-wissenschaft/>

Mentoring agreement

Mentor and mentee

Mentoring programmes support mentees (tenure track professors) in developing academic leadership skills and contribute to developing their careers successfully with the goal of achieving a tenured professorship.

The mentee is responsible for the preparation and follow-up of the content of mentoring meetings. The mentee will take a written record of each meeting and document their activities. The mentor is responsible for imparting relevant knowledge and for guiding the mentoring process.

Both partners agree to respect each other's privacy and to treat any form of data and information privileged to the mentoring partnership confidentially. This applies during and after the mentoring partnership.

Mentoring is a voluntary and personal agreement and may be terminated by either party at any time. This must be expressed in writing to the dean of the School.

Mentee date, signature

Mentor date, signature

Attachment

Appendix Guide for planning a mentoring partnership:

Planned mentoring duration:	
Meeting frequency:	
Organisational aspects (place, duration...)	
Objectives of mentoring	
Expectations of the mentee	
Expectations of the mentor	
Principles of cooperation (openness, confidentiality, approach...)	
Dealing with conflicts	
Topics for the first meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
Other	