

## The SOAS Mentoring Policy

### 1. What is Mentoring?

'Mentoring' has long been used as a successful form of learning, training and development within the workplace, with the role of the 'Mentor' being to assist and support the personal and professional development of their 'Mentee' outside the reporting relationship. Mentoring should be viewed as a relationship rather than a management activity.

Traditionally, a 'Mentor' is a more experienced member of staff who seeks to pass their skills, expertise and knowledge of the workplace on to a (usually) less experienced member of staff, with a view to fostering their development. It should be a safe, non-judgemental relationship that facilitates a wide range of learning, experimentation and development.

Traditionally at SOAS, the mentoring scheme has been available only to new academic staff but it will now be broadened out and will be available to all staff. The SOAS mentoring scheme, while open to all, will particularly target the following groups of staff:

- a) Staff new to SOAS, who can be helped to settle in and become effective with the help of a mentor, with support continuing up to probation, and beyond for those who would find it useful. Further information can be found in the 'Guidelines for the Mentoring of New Staff (on Probation)';
- b) Existing staff who may be starting in a new role, continuing in a developing role, or who are looking at career development and possible new roles. Further information can be found in the 'Guidelines for the Mentoring of Continuing Staff (other than those on Probation)'.

This mentoring policy has been designed to complement other training and development policies and activities within the organisation. It reflects the institutional belief in the development of all staff, both full and part time, and permanent and temporary, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, religion or sexual orientation.

### 2. Purpose of Mentoring

The purpose of this mentoring policy is to position mentoring as a key activity within the overall approach to staff learning and development.

The purpose of mentoring is to:

- discuss what skills and experiences are needed to develop into a new role or to develop an individual's career;
- provide opportunities to learn from someone with a greater or different understanding of the organisation;
- provide the individual with an objective and alternative source of advice and information;
- provide opportunities for the development of all staff through the mentoring relationship, either as mentor or mentee;
- enable both managers and mentees to understand the different roles within the mentoring relationship and how each should be undertaken.

### **3. Implementation**

The mentoring scheme will be developed, supported and monitored by the Staff Learning and Development Office. The implementation will be at Department / Directorate Level, supported by the Staff Learning and Development Office.

- Line managers will identify new staff who are to be provided with a mentor, and match them with a suitable mentor;
- Where a continuing member of staff requests a mentor, they will normally make their request to the Staff Learning and Development Manager using the 'Mentee Application form';
- The mentor will normally be an experienced staff member and will not be the line manager of the mentee;
- The role of mentor is to provide appropriate advice, guidance and support to enable mentees to complete their induction into their roles and new duties, or help them with career or personal development;
- Colleagues who undertake the mentoring role will be provided with appropriate training and guidance;
- It is expected that line managers will take mentoring responsibilities into account when determining staff workloads and when reviewing the professional development needs of both mentors and mentees.

### **4. Training**

Training will be available for all mentors.

### **5. Length**

Decisions on the length of the mentoring programme will be determined by individual needs. However, as a guideline, a scheme will normally last for a period of up to one year, and not less than six months.

### **6. Confidentiality**

All meetings held between mentor and mentee will be confidential to those individuals.

October 2014