



**Flinders
University**

**Nursing
& Health Sciences**

2025 Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program Overview & Guide



Welcome

Welcome to the Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program has been developed in conjunction with the annual Flinders University Joan Durdin AM Oration to connect Flinders University graduates with established Healthcare Leaders (preferably Flinders Alumni).

The purpose of the program is to facilitate mutually beneficial mentoring relationships that provide students an opportunity to connect with an established healthcare leader to develop their leadership skills.

Mentors will enjoy the opportunity to influence the mentees confidence and knowledge while developing their leadership skills.

Mentees will benefit from the support and advice of an experienced nurse leader to further develop the skills needed to become a highly effective healthcare leader.

This document is intended to provide a set of useful guidelines as a framework for the mentoring relationship. We encourage mentors and mentees to become familiar with their roles and responsibilities, and to negotiate plans to suit their individual circumstances.

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Definitions

Mentor – A mentor in the Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program will be an established leader in healthcare working in either aged care, primary care, or an acute care setting. They will be industry based, have 10+ years' experience in the field, a desire to gain mentoring skills and preferably be a Flinders University Alumni. A mentor is a person who shares knowledge and experiences, offers advice, and provides support to assist a mentee in developing their leadership skills.

Mentee – A mentee in the Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program must have completed the topic NURS 9126: Leadership in Health Studies at Flinders University. A mentee must be willing to listen, learn and challenge their ideas to gain the most benefit most out of the mentoring relationship.

Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring in nursing is a collaborative confidential relationship that gives mentors the opportunity to give back to their profession and support leadership development. On the flipside, mentees gain knowledge, become empowered, build confidence, and develop skills to become an effective leader in healthcare. Other benefits include:

Mentor

- Nomination for Flinders University Academic Status (if requested)
- Exposure to fresh perspectives, ideas and approaches,
- Opportunities to reflect on one's own goals and practices,
- The chance to practice interpersonal skills,
- Personal satisfaction through supporting the development of others,
- CPD points negotiated through your professional associations,
- Free membership to the Flinders University Library
- Access to staff professional development workshops, where relevant
- Guaranteed discount rate to 50 Years of Nursing celebratory event/s
- Acknowledgment on 50 Years of Nursing website

Mentee

- Being encouraged and empowered in personal development,
- Developing purposeful self-reflection skills to identify and achieve career goals.
- Identify and reflect on leadership aspirations,
- Advancing communication and networking skills
- Being supported to increase confidence,
- Being supported to develop and maintain a broader perspective on career options and opportunities,
- Access to a senior role model, with a peer relationship that is separate from your workplace to guide and support your career development,
- Networking with other mentor and mentees in the program to broaden your own network.



How it Works

To be a mentee in the Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program you must have completed the topic NURS 9126: Leadership in Health Studies at Flinders University. If you believe you are eligible to apply, please complete the application form and return it via email to alumni@flinders.edu.au with the subject heading **Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program Application**.

The 2025 Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program launches in May 2025. At this time successful applicants will be notified and matched with their mentors.

It is recommended that participants meet at least once a month from June 2025 – March 2026 for at least an hour. However, participants are encouraged to negotiate the frequency, length and style of meeting that suits them best and this should be discussed and agreed upon at first contact.

Each mentor and mentee pair will be asked to complete a Mentoring Agreement within their first two sessions and return it to the program coordinator via email to alumni@flinders.edu.au.

The Program Coordinator will be available to resolve any difficulties or provide support to both mentors and mentees and can be contacted by emailing alumni@flinders.edu.au with the subject heading **Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program**. The Program Coordinator will also make regular contact with mentors throughout the program.

Mentors and Mentees will be asked to complete a survey at the end of the Program to determine its success and suggest potential improvements.

Standards of Behaviour

The mentor / mentee relationship involves trust, support and empathy to create a mutually beneficial experience. As such, confidentiality and professional conduct are expected behaviours of all participants. In situations of incompatibility, conflict of interest or inability of either party to continue in the program, the program coordinator will attempt to establish alternative arrangements for both parties.

The mentoring relationship is not intended to be a pathway to employment. Should a mentee apply pressure to secure such an arrangement from the mentor, please notify the program coordinator. The Program Coordinator is the first contact point for mentors and mentees should they need to report sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination or other inappropriate behaviour during the mentoring relationship. Such complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant University policy. The Program Coordinator can be contacted by emailing alumni@flinders.edu.au with the subject heading **Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program**.

Other expectations of participants in the Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program are:

- Adequate time is given, by the participants, to developing the mentoring relationship.
- The application form is completed honestly to encourage successful matching.
- All participants will adhere to all the expectations outlined in this section and conduct themselves according to the role descriptions outlined in the following section.
- All mentoring pairs will be required to complete a mentoring agreement, which outlines the mentor and mentees goals and standards of behaviour for the duration of the partnership.

Participant Roles

Participants in the Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program are required to familiarise themselves with the responsibilities of the roles of the program to enable them to make the most of the mentoring relationship. Participants are welcome to contact the Program Coordinator at any time for assistance/clarification, additional information or resources, or to raise any concerns, email alumni@flinders.edu.au with the subject heading **Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program**.

Role of the Mentee

- Become familiar with the program guidelines,
- Contact your mentor within one week of received notification of match;
- Take responsibility for your development (see resources attached to these guidelines) and be proactive about initiating contact with your mentor;
- Always maintain confidentiality;
- Set your goals – what do you hope to learn from your mentor? Be open and honest with your mentor about your expectations;
- **Do** be willing to listen and learn from your mentor's experience, **don't** be defensive;
- Ask for feedback and give feedback when required;
- Plan your meetings ahead, create a list of things you would like to discuss;
- Develop trust and respect your mentor's role as a trusted advisor – **do** be reliable and professional, **don't** ask for a job;
- Be flexible – mentors have many pressures on their time, be understanding and catch up at mutually convenient times.
- Record meeting outcomes and agreed tasks.

Role of the Mentor

- Become familiar with the program guidelines,
- Respond to the mentee introductory email within 48 hours or receipt;
- Schedule the mentoring meetings in advance – minimum of once a month from June 2025 to March 2026 inclusive – at a mutually convenient time with your mentee;
- Always maintain confidentiality;
- Be willing to listen to, and communicate with, your mentee;
- Provide guidance, offer relevant advice, and give feedback when required;
- Plan for your meetings ahead of time, prepare some initial questions to help get the conversation started;
- Take an interest in your mentee's leadership aims and provide insights that will help to shape these into realistic goals;
- Share your story and leadership experiences with your mentee – help to develop their understanding of positive leadership;
- Be understanding and patient – your mentee may have limited, or no, leadership experience.
- Return the completed Mentoring Agreement to the program coordinator within the first two sessions.



How to be a Great Mentee

First Meeting Checklist

To get the most out of your mentoring relationship – and move past possible pitfalls – use this checklist to guide your first meeting with your mentor.

Before the First Meeting

- ✓ Explore your mentor's digital presence – learn how they interact with their professional environment.
- ✓ Send an introductory email and a short bio about your interests and leadership aspirations.
- ✓ Consider your goals for the mentoring relationship (what leadership insights or skills do you hope to gain?) and write down 3 possibilities for discussion.

At the First Meeting

- ✓ Confirm the arrangements for your meetings – when, where, how long? How will you communicate in between meetings?
- ✓ Let your mentor know how you'll be tracking success (you should be the one driving the relationship) – at the very least email a summary of your discussions with actions or tasks that you will complete before the next meeting, clearly stated.
- ✓ Share your prepared goals (check out the goal setting tips on page 8) and take feedback with an open mind, and come up with an agreed list of objectives for the duration of the relationship.
- ✓ Pay your own way if you meet over coffee or for lunch (this applies to subsequent meetings too!).

After the First Meeting

- ✓ Share a follow-up highlighting the key points from your meeting and any agreed actions (this also applies to subsequent meetings).
- ✓ Connect with your mentor on LinkedIn and other professional social media platforms they are using.
- ✓ Schedule the agreed meetings and invite your mentor, including all relevant details.

Great Questions To Ask Your Mentor

Stories – ask your mentor about their career journey:

- ? How did you land your current role?
- ? What did you discover that you didn't anticipate when you were studying?
- ? What do you wish you had known before taking your first management role?
- ? What leadership skills were the most difficult to develop?
- ? What's the most important leadership skill you've learned and how has it proven invaluable?

Situations – use your mentor as a sounding board to resolve a challenge you are facing:

- ? How can I be an inspiring leader in a difficult and challenging work environment?
- ? How do you help a team develop rapport and trust?
- ? Tell me about some of the challenging aspects of leadership and how you tackle them.

Self-awareness – invite your mentor to help you improve your self-awareness:

- ? Where do you see my leadership strengths/potential and where should I focus on improving?
- ? What do you consider to be my blind spots?
- ? How would you describe me to others (how do I come across)?

Skill-building – ask your mentor for advice/resources for developing specific skills:

- ? What's the most important soft skill I should focus on developing to be better leader?
- ? Which qualities are most important for me to have in order to be an effective leader?
- ? I'm struggling with ____ (empathy, confidence, public speaking etc). Do you have any advice on how I can grow in this area?
- ? What sort of extra/co-curricular activities or professional bodies/groups would be valuable to grow my leadership skills?

How to be a Great Mentee cont.

Things To Remember

- ! A mentor is not a therapist – try to avoid conversations that veer away from your goals or objectives.
- ! They're not a recruitment agent either – avoid the temptation to ask them for a job.
- ! They are not your best friend – don't ask them to solve your problems.
- ! Don't be too clingy – contacting your mentor with every question or idea is not demonstrating leadership qualities.
- ! Don't expect your mentor to just 'give you the answers' – you will need to put the work and thought in to be prepared for your sessions, actively participate in any exercises your mentor gives you and be open to self-reflection and holding yourself accountable.



How to be a Great Mentor

First Meeting Checklist

To get the most out of your mentoring relationship – and move past possible pitfalls – use this checklist to guide your first meeting with your mentor.

Before the First Meeting

- ✓ Send your mentee an introductory email and ask them for a short bio if they haven't already provided one.
- ✓ Consider what experiences and strengths you have that will align with the mentee's leadership aspirations.
- ✓ Think about what you would like to get out of the mentoring relationship.

At the First Meeting

- ✓ Advise your mentee of the times you have made available for meetings over the course of the program and try to schedule these ahead of time, clarify with your mentee how you would like to be contacted and whether/how often you'll be available to them outside of the mentoring meetings.
- ✓ Tell your mentee a bit about your leadership journey, particularly any unexpected opportunities or setbacks and how these helped you grow professionally.
- ✓ Tell your mentee what you hope to gain from the mentoring relationship and why you've offered your time to be part of the program.
- ✓ Make sure you come away with a clear idea of what your mentee is looking for.

After the First Meeting

- ✓ Start planning how you can best assist your mentee and how you might be able to guide them in achieving their leadership goals.
- ✓ Share any industry leadership articles or newsletters that you find interesting – look for opportunities to help your mentee grow.
- ✓ Follow up with your mentee to get their summary of the meeting and check-in on how they're feeling about themselves and the mentoring relationship.

Great Questions To Ask Your Mentee

Vision/Strategic

- ? How do you define leadership? What values do you think a good leader should have?
- ? Where do you see a gap in your leadership skills?
- ? What leadership challenges have you faced before, or are facing now? How did you deal with them?

Practical/Action

- ? What will you do differently this week to grow your leadership skills?
- ? How can I help/where do you need the most help?
- ? What has happened since the last session?
- ? What have you done that you said you'd do?

Directional

- ? What progress have you made in your leadership goals?
- ? What key thing have you learned since the last session?
- ? Where do you need more guidance or support?
- ? What is the next action or goal to take on?

How to be a Great Mentor cont.

Four Ways To Make An Impact On Your Mentee

1. *Don't make quick assumptions.* Whether you think your mentee is getting it wrong or is moving too quickly, let them explain, hear their rationale and be slow to make assumptions. Making assumptions or offering unsolicited feedback before solidifying trust with your mentee can be detrimental to the relationship.
2. *Be gracious.* Failing or struggling with something is hard enough to admit, especially to someone you respect. Remember you were once in the same shoes and be honest about your own mistakes. Encourage them not to give up and remind them that everyone makes mistakes, it's how we learn.
3. *Ask questions.* As your mentee develops their leadership and communication skills, help them by asking informed questions. Encourage them to explain themselves fully and make sure you have the full story before you offer feedback. Teaching your mentee to question their own perspective and approach, and enabling them to hone their delivery, are some of the most valuable skills you can offer. And it ensures you offer the right kind of feedback.
4. *Inspire them.* Tell them your story. Notice their strengths and best qualities and explain why these are valuable. Congratulate them for doing well. Show you believe in them by challenging them to do more. Remind them to focus on their vision and point out the steps they've already taken to get there.

6 Things Mentors Can Do To Increase Their Impact

We've provided some ideas below to help you maximise the impact you have on your mentee and their professional career.

1. *Take Action* Don't over-commit but do follow through on anything you have agreed to do.
2. *Present Challenges.* Help your mentee discover what they're capable of by encouraging them to stretch themselves with your support.
3. *Share Your Mistakes.* Glossing over your challenges and mistakes is not going to help your mentee. Being honest with them about your own failings, and how you learnt from them, will help your mentee when they face similar challenges.
4. *Keep Your Experience Relatable.* Remember your mentee has only recently completed their post graduate study in leadership - try to think back to your early career and don't assume they have the same working knowledge of leadership and workplaces that you do.
5. *Be Emotionally Intelligent.* Be open-minded, curious, empathetic and listen actively. If you are experiencing any difficulty establishing the mentoring relationship, please contact the Program Coordinator by emailing alumni@flinders.edu.au with the subject heading **Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program.**
6. *Set Boundaries.* Remember that your mentee is still developing how best to work with you as their mentor and may need some guidance if they over-step. Similarly, saying "yes" or "maybe" when it will be difficult to follow through (see point 1.!) will be detrimental to the mentoring relationship. Situations in which mentors should say "no" include:
 - Making an introduction the mentee isn't prepared for
 - Requests from your mentee that you don't have time to accommodate
 - Requests you know you won't follow through on

Application Form (mentees only)

To be a mentee in the 2025 Flinders University Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program you must have completed the topic NURS 9126: Leadership in Health Studies. If you believe you are eligible to apply, please complete the application form and return it via email it to alumni@flinders.edu.au with the subject heading **Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program Application**.

FULL NAME:

STUDENT ID No.:

MOBILE No.:

EMAIL:

COURSE YOU ARE/WERE ENROLLED IN:

PROFESSIONALLY, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IN 3 YEARS TIME?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE IDEAL VALUES AND BELIEFS A LEADER SHOULD HAVE:

WHAT ATTRIBUTES ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A MENTOR?

PLEASE PROVIDE A 50 WORD STATEMENT OUTLINING THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET OUT OF THIS PROGRAM AND YOUR VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS AS A LEADER.

WHICH INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS DO YOU BELONG TO (if any)?

Application Form (mentors only)

To be a mentor in the 2025 Flinders University Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program you must:

- Be working in healthcare with a link to nursing in one of the following areas:
 - Aged care
 - Primary care
 - Acute settings
- Be industry based (not working in an academic or university setting).
- Be considered a leader in your industry.
- (Ideally) have 10 years + experience in the field post graduation
- Have a desire to gain mentoring skills as part of your professional development.
- Not be a Flinders University staff member.

Please complete the application form and either return it via email to alumni@flinders.edu.au with the subject heading **Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program Application**.

FULL NAME:

MOBILE No.:

EMAIL:

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE AND VALUES?

WHO IS SOMEONE YOU WOULD IDENTIFY AS AN IDEAL LEADER:

ARE THERE ANY IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES YOU WOULD HOPE TO SEE IN A MENTEE?

HOW COULD WE BEST SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR MENTORING?

WHICH INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS DO YOU BELONG TO (if any)?

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR CV TO SHOWCASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE IN NURSING, LEADERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP

FAQ's for mentee's

Having a mentor will help you look to the future as you establish your career and begin your journey as a healthcare leader. You may have questions such as:

- How can I be a good leader?
- How can I build trust and rapport in my work team?
- What skills do I need to grow to be a good leader?
- What opportunities for leadership are there in healthcare?
- What industry groups or events should I be a part of to establish myself as a leader?

Your mentor will give you insights into leadership in the healthcare industry and help you expand your knowledge and skills as a leader.

You'll gain an understanding of how your studies and skills gained at Flinders will transfer to leadership in the workplace.

And you'll have the opportunity to develop your professional network and build your personal and professional confidence.

What is the Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program?

The Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program is facilitated by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences to provide postgraduate leadership students with the opportunity to be professionally mentored in leadership by industry representatives and Flinders alumni. The application process for the Program opens in December 2024 with participants advised of the outcome of their application in May 2025.

How much time will I need to commit?

The 2025 Program launches in May 2025. At this time successful applicants will be notified and matched with their mentees.

From June 2025 to March 2026, you will meet with your mentors at a frequency that suits you both. Meetings should take place monthly at a minimum but can be more often if you and your mentor wish. You will negotiate with your mentor whether these sessions will be held over the phone, face to face, or a combination of both.

Depending on what is discussed and agreed with your mentor, you may also need to review materials prior to meetings, or attend activities and events. Participating in these activities will be at your discretion. Mentees will be required to answer a short survey to complete the Program and receive their certificates.

What are the eligibility criteria?

To be a Nursing Leadership Mentor Program mentee you must have completed the topic NURS 9126: Leadership in Health Studies at Flinders University.

As part of the registration process you will need to submit a detailed application form, which articulates your aspirations as a leader and why you are applying to participate in the Program.

What is the deadline to apply?

Registrations open in December 2024 and close in the last week of March 2025.

How are students matched with mentors?

Students indicate their values and aspirations as a leader at the time of application and mentors are matched with students based on these statements and the mentors experience and leadership style.

I want to be mentored by someone from a particular background/gender/sector. Is this possible?

You may include this request when emailing your application, however, please bear in mind that we may not have mentors who meet your exact requirements.

FAQ's for mentors

The Nursing Leadership Program connects Postgraduate Nursing Leadership Students with mentors who are established leaders in Healthcare and members of the University's alumni community.

Our student mentees tell us what they are looking for in a mentor, what their leadership aspirations are and the qualities they feel make a strong leader. We then match them with a mentor who can provide the student with the right guidance to help them work towards achieving those goals and developing their leadership skills.

Mentors in this Program will predominantly be alumni of Flinders University, be considered a leader in their industry, be currently employed in an aged care, primary or acute setting, and have ten years or more professional work experience.

The Program is facilitated by University staff who will support you and your mentee throughout the process. We'll also provide you with some general guidelines and supporting paperwork.

How much time will I need to commit?

The 2025 Program will be launched in May 2025. At this time successful applicants will be notified and matched with their mentees.

From June 2025 to March 2026, you will meet with your mentees at a frequency that suits you both. Meetings should take place monthly at a minimum but can be more often if you and your mentee wish. You will negotiate with your mentee whether these sessions will be held over the phone, or face to face, or a combination of both.

Depending on what is discussed and agreed with your mentee, you may also need to review materials prior to meetings or attend activities and events. Participating in these activities will be at your discretion.

How are students selected for the program?

The Nursing Leadership Mentoring Program is open to postgraduate students who have completed the topic NURS 9126. Students must apply and be accepted into the Program.

What support is available for mentors?

We provide all new mentors with these guidelines prior to the start of the Program, as well as other supporting paperwork such as mentoring agreements, goal setting templates, coaching and appreciative enquiry tools and suggested topic discussions for meetings. Mentors will be matched with mentees based on leadership style and values, as specified in the application process.

How are mentors matched with students?

Students indicate their values and aspirations as a leader at the time of application and mentors are matched with students based on these statements and the mentors experience and leadership style.

What is the deadline to apply?

Registrations open in December 2024 and close in the last week of March 2025.

Do I need to come on campus?

No, there is no requirement for you to come onto campus. Meetings with your mentee should be scheduled at a location and time which is suitable for you.

