IT Community – Career Development - Policy Document

Purpose

The University of Cambridge aim is to provide world-class information services and systems. The purpose of the IT community is to build a collaborative, federated IT support network across the Collegiate University and affiliated institutions. It will promote opportunities for IT staff across the University; increasing professional development capability, enhancing mobility for all IT practitioners and creating an engaged community of institutional support teams with proactive mechanisms in place to maximise collaboration and help to support optimised IT services.

This policy provides a standard definition for and a consistent approach to mentoring for IT professionals across the University.

Additional Authority

Scope

The IT community introduces 3 different processes to improve career development and job mobility within the IT practitioner community:

1. Mentoring
2. Shadowing
3. Project Placements

This will support IT professionals to:

- Deliver relevant IT services now and for the future
- Actively manage their own career paths; resulting in greater mobility of staff between parts of the University

In turn the University will:

- Have IT professionals able to support its future plans
- Have a clearly understood talent pipeline for IT professionals

Responsible Party
Policy – Mentoring

Policy Statement

The University and the IT community supports and encourages mentoring. Mentoring is a voluntary, confidential relationship. A mentoring relationship is an effective and efficient staff development method that makes use of the University’s wealth of internal capability, benefits both parties involved, and produces a return on the relatively small investment of time and finances involved.

The specific objectives of this policy are to:

- Emphasise that mentoring is a voluntary and confidential relationship;
- Recognise mentoring as a valuable element of staff development;
- Ensure that mentoring is not confused with supervisory responsibilities;
- Establish that mentoring relationship are governed by existing university policies.

Please also visit the University Personal and Professional Development webpages for their Career Development site related to mentoring:
http://www.ppd.admin.cam.ac.uk/career-development/mentoring-university-cambridge

Mentoring Relationship

The University supports a view of mentoring as a confidential and non-reporting relationship that:

- Disturbs none of the organisational structures in place;
- Enables developments in knowledge, work or thinking;
- Involves a non-directive/guiding dialogue rather than instructing;
- Is additional to other forms of staff development and support; and
- Could assist the University’s objectives in equal opportunity.

This organised mentoring will occur as part of a structured program initiated by the IT community and managed by the Career Development Manager.
Mentoring vs Supervising

Heads of institutions and line managers have responsibility for their staff and in addition, are responsible for developing the staff reporting to them. It is appropriate that this includes engaging in activities such as mentoring, coaching, training and guiding.

Key items distinguishing the role of a mentor from that of a supervisor are that:
- the mentor has no supervisory responsibility or authority over the mentee;
- the mentoring relationship provides a confidential, non-judgemental and non-directive environment;
- the parties in the mentoring relationship are equal within the mentoring relationship, share responsibility for the mentoring relationship; and
- the overall developmental needs of the mentee are the main focus within the mentoring relationship.

The role and responsibility of heads of institutions and line managers with respect to staff development and performance management is in no way impacted or diminished by this policy.

Roles

Mentor
Mentoring usually involves a more experienced person guiding and sponsoring a less experienced person to achieve goals in an area in which the mentor has experience, which can involve:
- sharing expertise and experiences;
- suggesting solutions to problems;
- acting as a sounding board and providing alternative perspectives;
- exchanging feedback; and
- introducing the mentee to people and networks to assist them in their career.

Experience does not necessarily equate to pure length of service, but rather to exposure to particular environments, skills or tasks.

The mentor and mentee share the duty to observe the confidential nature of the relationship and the dialogue arising within it.

Mentee
The role of the mentee can vary depending on the context and purpose of the mentoring relationship but will include:
- taking responsibility for achieving own development goals;
- initiating meetings with the mentor, managing meeting dates and times and negotiating the agenda for discussions within the relationship;
- listening, clarifying, reflecting back and discussing;
- sharing expertise and experience; and
- sharing feedback with the mentor about how the relationship is progressing in order to improve the outcomes they are achieving from mentoring meetings.
Heads of institutions and line managers

It is expected that heads of institutions will review the mentoring needs of their staff as part of their annual appraisal process.

In addition, they will be encouraged to support the mentoring process by:

- ensuring that staff who volunteer as mentor, will participate in appropriate training;
- ensuring that staff who volunteer as mentor will receive adequate support as and when required;
- making arrangements for the workload implications when planning for staff to participate in the mentoring process, as a mentor or mentee;
- acknowledging individual contributions and good practice as a mentor as a component in the annual appraisal process.

Mentoring Process

- At the start of each year the University will launch its IT community mentoring programme. At the end of January this campaign will be published on the IT Community Portal as well as an email to all heads of institutions with the request to identify any potential voluntary mentors and mentees.
- The Career Development Manager will be managing the mentoring campaign, collate all received requests/responses and will coordinate the matching of voluntary mentors with mentees to specific subjects.
- The Career Development Manager will be facilitating and running a 1-day workshop for all successfully matched mentors/mentees.
- There will be a 6-month checkpoint during the mentoring programme, ensuring that both parties are benefitting from the relationship, progress made and whether the mentoring will continue up to the end of the year or whether the objectives have been achieved/ one or both parties are requesting to terminate the mentoring.
- The end of the mentoring programme will be marked with a mentoring evaluation which includes both parties to complete a feedback form to the Career Development Manager. The Career Development Manager will review and document all lessons learned and, will make any changes to the mentoring process in preparation for the following year.

Benefits

For the mentee:
- Gain valuable advice;
- Develop your knowledge;
- Change/achieve goals more quickly;
- Build network of expertise to draw on;
- Improve communication skills;
- Learn new perspectives; and
- Advance career prospects.

For the mentor:
- Build your leadership skills;
- Improve communication skills;
- Learn new perspectives;
- Advance career prospects; and
- Gain personal satisfaction.
For the University:

- Self-development of the mentee and often the mentor;
- Share best practice;
- Networking tool and can facilitate the breaking down of internal barriers across the organisation; and
- It allows individuals to view the processes they are involved in from a different angle.

**Policy – Shadowing**

**Policy Statement**

The University and the IT community supports and encourages job shadowing where this is of benefit of the IT Community and satisfying a specific business need. Job shadowing is where an individual from one area of the University has the opportunity to work alongside and gain the experience of the role of another individual, and gain an insight into that particular work area.

The specific objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure job shadowing is of benefit to the wider IT community;
- Establish that job shadowing placements are governed by existing university policies; and
- Ensure that line managers from both involved institutions are involved in the decision making process.

Please also visit the University Personal and Professional Development webpages for their Career Development site related to Job Shadowing:

http://www.ppd.admin.cam.ac.uk/career-development/job-shadowing

**Principles of Job Shadowing**

- The aim of the Scheme is to enable both shadowee and host to reflect and learn from the experience, and should be developmental for both parties, and of benefit to the wider IT community;
- The shadowee will be supervised at all times and must not be given access to any confidential or PID data. Normal access must be supervised and for illustrative purposes only;
- Both parties during the job shadowing process, can terminate the shadowing placement at any stage; and
- The work of the host must be relevant to the shadowee, and will be for the development of the further University succession plans of both parties. Work shadowing is therefore mutually beneficial and is intended to strengthen our links with the wider community.
Roles

Shadowee:

The shadowee is the person visiting the host institution with the unique opportunity to find out how other staff work and what their role involve. Before taking part of the job shadowing, the shadowee needs to:

- Consider why they are doing the shadowing and what they hope to achieve;
- They will need to do some preparation which will involve working with their line manager or the host prior to the shadowing to set objectives for the sessions;
- Show tact, discretion and awareness and if required withdraw from situations when circumstances deem it appropriate; and
- Following the shadowing it’s important to review and discuss outcomes and what happens next.

Host:

- A host is the person who agrees to be shadowed;
- The role does involve some preparation and thought;
- A host needs to consider if the time requested is the best time for shadowing to take place and how long each period of shadowing should be for; and
- They will also need to take into consideration current work obligations.

Heads of institutions and line managers:

- As part of the annual appraisal process or personal development plans, individuals may discuss job shadowing as either a way of developing their current role or as part of their career development into a different role;
- The line manager will agree with them what this will look like and how much time can be allowed for this activity; and
- The line manager may have a view as to who would be the best host for this job shadowing experience or may be able to suggest suitable contacts.

Preparation

Before commencing the job shadowing, both host and shadowee will need to prepare and give the process thought and preparation, as well as ensuring that the job shadowing placement will run smoothly during the process.

Shadowee:

- Provide the host with an outline of what they are expecting from the shadowing prior to the shadowing taking place;
- Maintain confidentiality at all times;
- Ensure that you show good time keeping and inform your host if you are unavailable for any reason;
- Ensure that your colleagues are aware of your absence and what potential cover is required;
- Learn as much as you can prior to the shadowing, for example, reviewing the job description and person specification and talk to others you know who do this role; and
- Whilst on the shadowing take notes, you may come away with a useful list of numbers, emails, facts, thoughts and observations. Reflecting on these notes following the experience will allow you to maximise your learning.
Host:

- Provide the visitor/guest with a timetable for when the shadowing will take place;
- Agree a suitable time dependent on the shadowee’s objectives and the service needs in the host area;
- Prepare an area for the shadowee to be placed;
- Ensure other colleagues are briefed about the shadowing experience;
- Provide time between sessions or prior to sessions for questions and feedback;
- Provide appropriate notice and reasons if the shadowing activity has to be cancelled or changed in any way;
- Discuss any disability requirements and additional support requirements with the shadowee; and
- Consider whether there are any health and safety requirements that you need to address prior to the visit.

Benefits

For the shadowee:

- Gain insights into another person’s role/responsibilities;
- Opportunity to reflect and learn from another’s experiences;
- See how others work (staff and teams);
- Find out more about how the university functions; and
- ‘test out’ possible career options.

For the host:

- Network with colleagues from different areas;
- Share your experiences with others;
- Learn from your shadowee;
- Review and reflect on your own area of work; and
- Develop your coaching/mentoring skills.

For the University and wider IT community:

- Self-development of the shadowee and the host;
- Share best practice;
- Networking tool and can facilitate the breaking down of internal barriers across the organisation;
- Assist in improving communication across departments, faculties and sites; and
- It allows individuals to view the processes they are involved in from a different angle.

Job shadowing process

- Job shadowing can be requested through annual appraisal/personal development plans and require line management approval of both involved institutions;
- When it has been identified that staff development is the only consideration, to identify other options such as mentoring or training courses in order to satisfy the need;
- The home institution may know people within the University IT community with the sought after skills and may contact them directly to arrange a job shadowing placement. The Career Development Manager will need to be informed on this taking place;
- If no successful job shadowing placement can be arranged, the Career Development Manager can be informed to support finding a successful host institution. The request can be published on the IT Community Portal;
• Once a successful host institution has been found, both parties to complete an agreement form on the IT Community Portal in order to ensure that certain decisions have been made;
• Any further arrangements will be made between the two institutions themselves; and
• Once the job shadowing placement has been completed, a local evaluation of the placement will be completed between the two institutions.

Funding

Cost absorption

Policy – Project placements

Policy Statement

The University and the IT community supports and encourages project placements as a way to ensure collaboration within the IT community, enhancing organisational relationships through increased understanding on the part of the staff involved and increasing development opportunities through a flexible approach to resource requirements within the IT community.

This policy specifically covers internal project placements within the IT community, enabling institutions to take full advantage of the wealth of IT skills and experience available within the University.

The specific objectives of this policy are to:
• Distinguish from the University’s Secondment Development Initiative and to focus on project placements to encourage and to benefit the IT community as well as acting as a staff development opportunity;
• Ensure that any potential candidates for project placements will be selected through an application process;
• Ensure that there is access to backfilling for the home institution, providing cover for the IT professional on project placement;
• Establish that project placements will take between four and eight weeks and may be part-time as well as full-time;
• Increase the movement across institutional boundaries of IT professionals within the University; and
• Establish that project placements are governed by existing university policies

Please also visit the University Personal and Professional Development webpages for their Career Development site which is related to staff secondments: [http://www.ppd.admin.cam.ac.uk/career-development/secondment-development-initiative/overview](http://www.ppd.admin.cam.ac.uk/career-development/secondment-development-initiative/overview)

Principles of Project Placements

• Project placements are specifically for projects within the IT community which require a specific IT skill set/ expertise that are not available in that institution;
• Project placements will be advertised for on the IT Community Portal, clearly indicating the nature of the vacancy;
- Project placements will be for a specific work package with the duration of between four and eight weeks, full time as well as part time are options available;
- Project placements required for a period exceeding eight weeks, should not be offered as a project placement within the IT Community. Such vacancies should be advertised in accordance with the university recruitment policy or to consider options, such as consultancy or training of existing staff;
- The project placement period should not exceed beyond the IT professional’s contractual period of employment;
- Institutions are encouraged to release their staff to take up project placement opportunities by providing staff development opportunities for staff involved, as well as providing resourcing solutions for the institutions involved;
- Project placements should not be financially disadvantageous to the home institution releasing staff;
- The University will enable backfilling through setting aside funds to support project placements, providing options for home institutions to find backfilling through the University Institution Support, TES, or another supplier, should this be required; and
- The host institution would, therefore, not be required to pay for the IT professional’s time.

Roles

Host:
- Ensure that the IT professional agrees to compliance with your instructions and policies;
- To protect your confidential information;
- Ensure that requests are dealt with in accordance with University policy and the relevant procedures;
- Clear instructions and expectations in what is expected from the IT professional in the project placement;
- Ensure a brief induction period for the IT professional;
- Allocate a mentor/ buddy to the IT professional to act as a sounding board and to provide informal support throughout the project placement; and
- Ensure there are options available to discuss progress.

IT professional in project placement:
- The IT professional needs to ensure line management approval before applying for the project placement opportunity;
- Ensure compliance with the host institution’s instructions and policies; and
- Keep yourself fully informed on what is expected of you by your new colleagues.

Home Institution:
- To encourage the IT professional to put their new skills and experience to practice, potentially resulting in supporting the IT professional in changing their role;
- The home institutions management will remain responsible and retains control over the IT professional’s employment; and
- The home institution will be responsible for keeping in touch with the IT professional.

Benefits

For the Host:
- Cost-effective acquisition of specific knowledge and skills to the department;
- Opportunity to undertake a particular project or task;
• Develop links with other departments and institutions;
• Get an external perspective and transferable skills from the IT professional in the project placement, which can be beneficial for the project and the host institution

For the IT professional:
• Develop new skills, knowledge and experiences;
• Strengthen current skills by applying them in a new area;
• Develop a greater understanding of the University;
• Gain project management experience;
• Gain up to date knowledge of current working practices in other areas;
• Establish networks with colleagues;
• Create a visible personal profile within the department and University and establish key contacts with senior managers and leaders;
• Achieve development objectives in a time-limited period; and
• Increase your opportunities for career development and progression.

For the University and wider IT Community:
• Giving IT professionals access to experiences and opportunities that they wouldn't get in their current role;
• The IT Professional going for the project placement will allow another IT professional in the home institution to also broaden their experience;
• Enhanced employee skills, improved team working and flexible workforce;
• Retention of talented IT professionals and the skills, knowledge and experiences they possess;
• Enable improved knowledge sharing, communication and understanding between departments across the University;
• Build a reputation as a good employer;
• Enhanced employee morale, motivation and commitment; and
• Promoting equality of opportunity for University staff.

Project Placement Process
• Any project placement opportunities will be advertised on the IT Community Portal;
• All IT professionals interested in applying for the project placement to ensure line management approval before applying;
• All IT professional applicants will go through a brief selection process managed by the host institution, including a short interview meeting;
• Both home institution and host institution to agree on the terms of the project placement;
• Home institution responsible for arranging backfill solution when that is required;
• Funding is provided to allow home institutions to release IT professionals for these opportunities by funding potential backfill through the UIS Institution Support, TES, or any other supplier.
• There will be a brief evaluation of the project placement resulting in feedback to the Career Development Manager.

Funding
The home institution (of the IT professional accepted for the project placement) pays for the individual during the period of project placement with option for backfilling from UIS Institution Services where available.