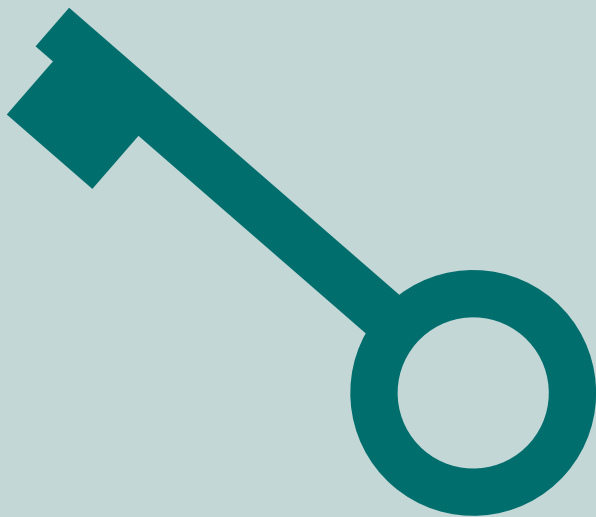




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Support Staff Mentoring Scheme

Handbook



University of
St Andrews

OSDS
Organisational &
Staff Development
Services



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This handbook is intended as an on-going reference for both mentors and mentees



How did this scheme arise?

In 2005 a cross-Institutional mentoring scheme was launched for female academic staff at the Universities of Dundee and St Andrews.

This scheme proved to be successful and was widened out in 2007 to include all research staff.

Evaluation feedback in 2008 and 2009 showed that the research staff scheme was a success – both mentees and mentors had derived benefits from the mentoring relationships, and there was strong support for the scheme to continue. A third cycle was launched in May 2010 and opened to all early career academics.

It was noted that many of the objectives being set by early career academic mentees could be just as relevant to support staff. This led, in the summer of 2010, to a new mentoring scheme being created for support staff in St Andrews.

The mentoring scheme is designed to meet the following four goals:

1. Share knowledge and expertise.
2. Increase cross-School / Unit mentoring and working.
3. Support mentees with goal setting and career management.
4. Support mentees in taking responsibility for their own skills and career development.

As mentoring relationships form and progress, however, it is likely that pairs will formulate additional goals, specific to them.



What does the scheme involve?

We are conscious that each participant has entered the scheme with their own individual objectives, expectations and definition of ‘mentoring.’

Indeed, ‘mentoring’ can describe a number of very different relationships – e.g. from a traditional teacher / learner relationship to more informal peer / peer collaborations.

To this end, we want to keep the scheme flexible and centred on the needs of each individual pair. Pairs will want to establish their own rules around their relationship in terms of commitment, frequency of meetings, methods of communication and roles.

We envisage, however, that for almost everyone the scheme will involve setting objectives and ground-rules with their partner; an initial meeting of around 45 minutes and then on-going meetings as mutually agreed e.g. 1 hour per month.

You might want to keep a written record of your objectives and ground-rules. With this in mind, examples of different mentoring ‘contracts’ can be found at the end of the handbook.



Before the first meeting

Before meeting your mentor/mentee for the first time, it is worth thinking about the underlying principles and models of mentoring.



Underlying Principles of Mentoring

Each individual is responsible for themselves in the mentoring process.

This means setting high expectations of yourself in relation to what you can contribute to the meeting, rather than having such expectations of the other person.

If you create expectations for yourself and work on achieving them, you allow the other person to develop and set their own expectations instead of having to react to yours.

Mentoring is a venture in collaboration.

This means that the mentor and mentee will seek to work together through giving and openly receiving feedback, joint negotiation, decision making and

consistent support. Making changes and moving out of comfort zones will always be stressful, so the supportive yet challenging climate created by the mentor will be crucial in determining the value of the process. Growth and development occurs best within nurturing and supportive conditions and relationships.

The mentoring relationship is confidential

You must be able to trust each other and to develop a safe, non-judgemental relationship where you can both be open. Mentoring relationships have little value if they are not based on truth.

This may be difficult if, for example, you are discussing difficulties with other people at work. But unless you are sure about confidentiality your partner will feel inhibited about explaining all the details of a situation. You should each continue to respect confidential information, even after the mentoring relationship has formally been completed.

Meetings allow time for discussion and reflection.

One of the special benefits of mentoring is the luxury of uninterrupted time to focus on development issues. The meetings provide the opportunity to tease out difficult issues and think creatively about solving

problems. You can focus on the details, reflect on the situation and plan for the future. Criticism must be couched in a constructive manner.

Perhaps the mentee's targets will be clear, but there will be times when neither of you will know the mentee's full potential and will need to be alert to possibilities and opportunities.

An holistic mindset is essential

Progress and development in one area of professional life and work is likely to impact positively on other parts. It is therefore sensible to focus more on areas of potential development and enhancement.

While the mentoring meeting provides an opportunity to air frustrations and positive and negative feelings, it is important also to focus on actions and results.

Underpinning all people development is a supportive approach.

This helps to ensure that individuals are listened to, understood, respected and valued and that interpersonal skills are recognised, used and reviewed as effectively as possible.

We believe that people develop and learn best when consistently offered the core conditions of empathy and respect and when they are related to in warm and genuine ways.

The scheme can benefit both mentees and mentors.

Mentoring is essentially about learning – identifying, facilitating, supporting and celebrating learning.

The roles of both mentor and mentee can benefit from the mentoring process in terms of personal and professional development.





Models of Mentoring

The role of the mentor, and how the mentee, or learner, uses a mentor is complex. Often the role will have many facets – presented below in four clusters:

- Teach, evaluate, demonstrate, act as a role model
- Counsel, advise, empower
- Nurture, encourage growth, challenge
- Protect, support, sponsor, advocate

One way of describing the relationship is to consider how a mentor might assist their mentee with a problem. The mentee begins by identifying and analysing the problem, and the mentor probes the understanding of the complexities involved.

The mentor can then challenge their mentee to use a different perspective and to redefine the problem in a different way, which may make it easier to tackle.

Mentee's task	Mentor's task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the problem • Redefining the problem • Managing the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Challenging • Supporting

Another model shows the mentee expecting the mentor to contribute the expertise of a master craftsman or an experienced professional. However, the relationship is not primarily a showcase for the mentor's abilities. The mentor also has the task of eliciting the best from their mentee. This can be done by giving confidence and encouragement as well as demonstrating practice.

Mentor puts in	Mentor pulls out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Knowledge • Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential • Commitment • Expertise

The interaction between mentor and mentee is rather like a transaction and aspects occur before, during and after the actual meeting.

	Mentee's task	Mentor's task
Before	Submits information by agreed time, asks specific questions	Reads information, makes notes
During	Discuss general points, specific points, necessary changes and areas for development	
After	Revises information, notes general learning points	Asks about progress, responds to queries

Experienced mentors will be available to help support all participants in forming mentoring relationships. Further information can be found in the 'Contacts' section at the end of this handbook.



The first meeting

Arranging a meeting

Consider where and when you want to meet. It is particularly important that you both feel comfortable in the chosen venue. You need to be somewhere where you will not be interrupted and that is conducive to positive discussion.

Most meetings will take about 45 minutes, but some may be more, others less. You may plan to meet every month, but again, this is likely to vary. A casual meeting may lead to a quick chat that can be helpful. A phone call asking for timely advice can work well. A discussion by e-mail can be quick and productive. Be creative and responsive to need.

The mentoring relationship is progressive and developmental so each meeting builds on the previous ones. At the first meeting you should discuss and agree your contract and you may want to write this down. Always allow some time to review the process and discuss the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.

You may also want to maintain a record of your meetings. You may decide that one or both of you will keep a record of key points, plans for the mentee, and

for the mentor. This can provide a useful starting point for the next meeting. These records are private and remain confidential to the two of you.

Sample forms for the mentoring contract are given in the appendix to this booklet, but they are optional. Mentoring is about providing support and facilitating professional development, not about filling in forms.

The Introductory Stage

This should include any necessary explanations, the checking out of expectations and setting clear time boundaries.

In addition you will want to clarify the purpose of the meeting, explain the stages you will go through, and to outline the anticipated value of the process to both of you. Remind each other that the concluding stage will involve reviewing and if necessary updating targets and action plans.

It is also important to set the tone of your relationship. Spend time clarifying the agenda and the time you will take.

Spend some time getting to know each other at a personal level. Ask about hobbies and interests, but do not pry into sensitive areas. Then progress onto the

work related or course related issues.

Use each other's first name.

Normally the mentee should do most of the talking. The discussions should be deep and challenging but must remain focused.

Create a friendly supportive climate but the exchange must be more than a cosy chat.

Body language

Body language is an important communicator. Read the signals but be aware of the messages you are sending.

But above all be honest and natural in your communication and do not spend all your energy trying to "look interested" or use the "correct" expression.

The Main Stage

This could include the mentee outlining their current and future objectives in relation to their work and/or personal lives.

In relation to each of these you should both review what is going well and to plan and discuss what the mentee is pleased and satisfied with so far.

You should then do the same for any areas which are not going to plan and are causing frustration, concern or lack of progress. Explore these areas of concern and look at ways of improving the situation.

The mentor should then offer constructive as well as challenging feedback to their mentee and check to see how this feedback is being received.

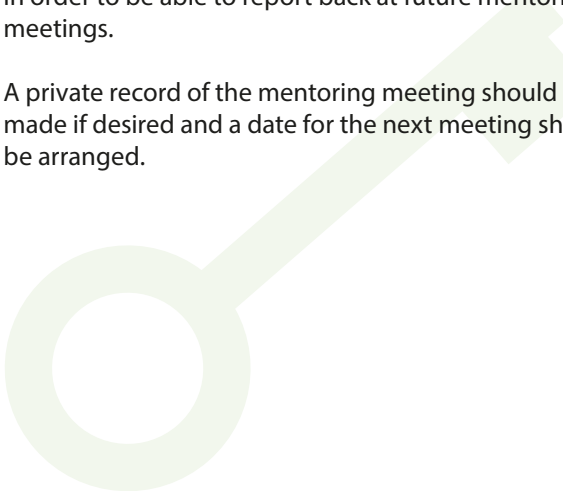
The mentor should then ask whether there are any other issues the mentee would like to raise at this point, and decide whether these should be worked on now or at a later meeting.

Concluding Stage

Any adjusted or confirmed plans should be summarised and agreed.

This stage should also include a brief review of key learning from the meeting in relation to both process and product, and agreement to act on this learning, in order to be able to report back at future mentoring meetings.

A private record of the mentoring meeting should be made if desired and a date for the next meeting should be arranged.





The on-going relationship

Changes over time

The mentor-mentee relationship develops over time and often goes through several stages. Together you will need to consider how best to initiate and establish the relationship, then consolidate and maintain it, then when it has run its course, withdraw from it. You will also find it valuable to discuss and analyse these change processes.

Transitions

At the start, you may be highly motivated and excited but also anxious and uncertain. Once into the relationship, the mentee usually gains confidence but may also experience “mid-term blues” or frustration. Towards the end, the mentee may feel relief, a sense of achievement, and concern about what happens next.

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback will probably be one of the most important parts of mentoring. Remember to:

- Give positive feedback before negative comments
- Give feedback as soon as possible after the event
- Build on your partner's strengths
- Be specific and detailed
- Focus on things that can be changed
- Help your partner accept the feedback
- Find constructive ways to tackle problems
- Suggest ways to improve
- Use words, tone of voice and body language sensitively

Receiving Feedback

Talk to your partner about how to receive and use your feedback, regardless of your role. Consider trying the following:

- Ask for feedback about specific points
- Clarify the details to ensure you understand
- Look for specific ways to improve
- Listen to feedback without being defensive
- Ask for advice and support

Listening

You should aim to develop the skills of active listening.

Concentrate

Hear what they say; watch what they do; think about what is happening

Use your body language effectively

Smile or nod to encourage; do not fidget; maintain eye contact but do not stare

Use questions

To check your understanding; to explore options; to clarify the communication

Consider

The content of what is being discussed; the process of the interaction; the structure (scene-setting, exploring issues, summarising, concluding)

Avoid

Imposing your values; blocking emotions; making decisions for your partner; trying to find a quick and easy solution.

Setting Goals

Between mentoring meetings, mentees may wish to set goals to work towards. Goal setting can be a great way to keep you motivated and moving in the right direction.

Goals can be either task-related (e.g. update my CV) or developmental (e.g. improve my assertiveness skills). The key is to set goals that are sensible and setting goals and objectives using the acronym '**SMART**' can help.

- S** Goals should be **specific**. What exactly is to be done: what to reduce, increase, begin, cease?
- M** Goals should be **measurable**. How is the change or improvement to be measured (time, quality, ability, money, a product etc.) If it can't be measured can it be described? – now v future
- A** Goals should be **achievable**. Can the thing be done – with ease? With difficulty?
- R** Goals should be **relevant**. Is it definitely worth doing – does it improve your performance, add value, reduce problems?
- T** Goals should be **timed**. By when is it to be achieved?



Important vs Urgent

Support staff are busy people. There will always be issues with mentees and mentors making time to meet, and to progress objectives.

S. Covey, a time management writer, sets out an interesting matrix by which to classify tasks:

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Must do I Crises Deadline driven projects Immediate issues Meetings & appointments Resolving problems	Should do II Relationship building Strategic planning Personal development
UN-IMPORTANT	Told to do III Interruptions Some mail / e-mails Some calls and reports Other peoples' crises	Shouldn't do IV Trivia Some mails/calls Work avoidance Excessive net surfing

Covey (1990) argues that much of our time is spent in quadrants I, III and IV at the expense of quadrant II. He argues that focusing on quadrant II tasks (including mentoring and networking!) can pay dividends in terms of improving our effectiveness. Whilst these activities may not be urgent, they are certainly important and worth making (and protecting) time for.





Frequently Asked Questions

I wanted a mentee and I haven't been assigned one – why?

There is usually a higher number of applicants wishing to be mentors. In these circumstances, we are unfortunately unable to allocate a mentee to everyone who wanted one.

We will keep all unmatched mentors on file, and try to recruit more mentees throughout the year, so there may be a chance of being matched in coming months.

How was my partner allocated to me?

We gathered some basic information via a written form about each of the scheme participants, whether they would prefer a male or female mentoring partner, and what their objectives were for the scheme.

After a lot of discussion we then suggested potential matches for each of the mentors.

We did our very best to ensure that those people who wished to have a partner received one, and looked closely at people's objectives from the scheme when matching them.

However, we accept that this process is far from perfect. There will be some pairs who don't get on together or who discover that they want different things from the scheme. When this happens, we will support both participants as much as we can, and do our best to provide another match if desired.

How much of my time will this take?

This very much depends on the individual pairs. It is entirely your choice how frequently you meet and for how often. We recommend that you discuss this and set down some guidelines at your first meeting. However, as a rough guide we'd predict that pairs may want to meet for around 45 mins every month or so,

What happens if we don't get on?

There is a chance that some of the suggested pairings will not work in practice, and this will probably be apparent quite quickly. We expect this, and will do our very best to provide an alternative partner when this happens.

It is worth bearing in mind that a mentoring relationship is designed to challenge you and make you think differently about yourself and your approach to things. As a result there could well be points during your meetings where you feel moved outside your comfort zone. In retrospect, this could well be when you gain the most from the scheme.

However, if there is a more permanent and fundamental 'mis-match' please let the scheme co-ordinator know.

How confidential is all this?

What you discuss with your mentor / mentee is strictly confidential between the two of you, and you must maintain this confidentiality even after your relationship has ended. You will never be asked for details of what you discuss at your meetings.

The information you submitted in your application form is stored securely by the scheme administrator. It will only be used in the matching process and for communicating with you about the scheme.

I missed the training sessions, can I still take part in the scheme?

Absolutely. A mentoring co-ordinator will contact you and take you through the material 1:1

My mentor is from a different School / Unit to me.

This can bring both challenges and unexpected advantages. As your mentor is not directly working in the same School / Unit as you they may not be familiar with specific processes, role-demands, people etc.

However, a fresh perspective from someone outside of your working environment can be illuminating.

Sometimes they can get you thinking about things in a whole new way. Furthermore, often mentees need help with more generic issues (e.g. career management, setting goals, personal development, etc.) on which School/Unit has little relevance.

My mentor is from the same School/Unit as me.

Again, this can have both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side your mentor will be familiar with the processes, people and politics in your environment and may have valuable advice to share. On the downside you may feel more inhibited in what you talk about. It's important to raise these issues when you draft your mentoring contract (see page 38) and agree confidentiality.

My mentor / mentee does a very different role to me.

Due to the nature of support staff roles, it is likely that your mentoring partner will have a role that is quite unrelated to yours. Whilst this may mean that you have to take time to explain the nature of your role to your mentoring partner, it can also prove an excellent way to learn more about how the wider University works and gain an insight into another role.

I want to talk about work issues, but I don't want to talk about personal issues.

Often the two are closely linked – what happens at work can affect your personal life and vice versa. However, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to. You should discuss your boundaries with your partner at the first meeting when you both draw up your mentoring contract (see page 38).

I want to withdraw from the scheme.

Ok. This isn't a problem. However, we do ask that you let the scheme co-ordinator know why you want to withdraw. If you've run into problems can we help you overcome them? Sometimes mentoring relationships aren't easy, you may be pushed beyond your 'comfort zone', but often this can lead to real insights and gains being made.

It's 6 weeks in and I've heard nothing from my mentor / mentee, what should I do?

We ask that mentees take responsibility for making the first contact with their mentor and arranging a meeting. If you have made initial contact but then hear nothing let one of the scheme co-ordinators know and we can do some investigating.

I've lost touch with my mentor and I feel awkward about getting in touch after so long.

These things happen, although we do ask that you are committed to the mentoring scheme. You will have to make time for mentoring meetings otherwise other activities will take over. Your mentor will most likely understand about time pressures and your lack of contact – they've very likely been in your shoes before! If you'd rather have a scheme coordinator break the ice on your behalf, just let us know.

How long will this scheme last for?

This cycle of the scheme is expected to run until October / November 2013. We will be evaluating the success of the scheme at regular points between now and then.

Mentoring relationships aren't open-ended. If you set some key objectives when you first meet, you should be working towards them over the course of the scheme. We anticipate that most relationships will run for about 12 months.

Some pairs may wish to continue their relationship beyond this time if it is mutually desired. Alternatively, some pairings may wish to terminate their relationship sooner if both parties have achieved their objectives from the scheme.

Who's in control here?

Our mentoring scheme is driven by the mentee. It is up to them to arrange the mentoring meetings, prepare the meeting agenda and take responsibility for completing any actions between meetings. Mentees may want to think about where the meetings are held. Using a mentor or mentee's office could create an unbalanced atmosphere or lead to phone calls and interruptions. It may be that using a neutral space works best.

Shouldn't my mentee be talking about these things to their line manager?

The mentee may have already discussed many of their objectives from the scheme with their line manager (e.g. some may have been set at a Q6 meeting or discussed at 1:1s) and the mentee should keep their line manager informed of how their work-related objectives are progressing. However, there may be issues that the mentee prefers only to talk to their mentor about e.g. their relationship with their line manager or team, non-work related goals etc.

I'm a mentor and feel like I'm out of my depth.

Being a mentor is not about solving problems for other people, but to act as listener and offer insight to your partner, or to challenge them to think about issues in a different way.

If you are in a position where you feel that you are not equipped to deal with the topics your mentee is raising, please seek help. You can either contact the scheme co-ordinator, or contact the University's Occupational Health or Counselling service if this is more appropriate. The Occupational Health and Counselling professionals at St Andrews are aware of the scheme and can offer support.

If you find that you don't have the necessary experience to act as a mentor, it could be that a peer-mentoring relationship could be more fruitful for you. Again, please contact the scheme co-ordinator to discuss.

I have a suggestion to improve the scheme.

We would love to hear any suggestions for improvements or changes! Send them directly to the scheme co-ordinator.

Will I be asked to be involved in the evaluation of the scheme?

We will use a variety of methods to evaluate the scheme including questionnaires and some interviews. However, the evaluation will focus on the process and outcome of the scheme itself, and at no point will you be asked about what you have discussed in your mentoring relationship.



Mentoring Dilemmas

Here are some common mentoring dilemmas, with suggested responses.

The mentee or mentor uses the sessions to talk about personal problems.

The personal problems may be so overwhelming that they will inhibit any meaningful discussion about work issues.

A mentor is not a trained counsellor. It may be appropriate to suggest that they refer themselves to Occupational Health, counselling service, GP etc.

The mentor or mentee does not complete the agreed action plans.

Explore if the plans were unrealistic.

Identify the reasons why the plans have not been completed.

If this recurs, does it indicate a lack of commitment from either / both of the parties?

The mentee and mentor have very different styles of working.

Recognise that different approaches may be equally valid. Mentors should not impose, and mentees should not copy, work styles.

The mentor is aware of problems that the mentee has not mentioned.

It's ok for the mentor to raise the issue, but they must allow the mentee the right not to talk about it. The mentee may wish to return to the issue in the future.

The mentee/mentor thinks their partner has breached confidentiality.

Perhaps this should be raised, but there may be implications for trust to be damaged in the relationship. If the relationship has broken down, contact a scheme co-ordinator.

The mentor is supportive but not challenging so the relationship is too cosy.

Mentoring is meant to be developmental and to encourage growth, so challenge within a supportive environment is good. The onus here is on the mentor to ensure an appropriate balance of challenge and support.

The mentee keeps asking for support outwith the agreed mentoring meetings.

Revisit the mentoring contract and clarify your expectations. The mentor can encourage the mentee to develop a wide support network and to use different sources of support.

The mentor is too keen to offer solutions and advice.

Encouraging mentees to work out their own solutions will prove a better long-term strategy. If you feel tempted to offer advice, why not offer a range of solutions and discuss the consequences of each?

One partner suggests a joint work project.

Would this enhance or damage the mentoring relationship? What happens to the project if the relationship falters? What happens to the relationship if the project goes badly?

The mentee or mentor gives their partner a small gift.

This might depend on the nature and value of the gift and the stage in the relationship. Would refusing a gift make you feel comfortable and uncompromised? Or would it seem to your partner like rejection?



Mentoring Contracts

One of the first things we recommend you do when you meet your partner is to set down a mentoring 'contract'. This basically clarifies what each of you hopes to gain from the relationship, how much time and effort you are prepared to invest and the logistics of how your relationship will work.

We are keen that the scheme does not involve form-filling, but as an exception would encourage you to put your 'contract' down in writing so that you can refer to it over the course of your relationship.

When designing your mentoring contract it is important to think about what you want to gain from the scheme. Some people may be seeking help with very specific goals (improve a particular skill, manage a work project, plan the next stage in their career), others may have a particular issue they'd like help working through (handling a difficult colleague or boss), others may have less specific goals (thinking about moving away from their current role, not sure what to do next).

Making time to formulate these objectives at the beginning of the relationship is very important.

A template of such a contract is provided below:

Mentoring Contract

Purpose

(Expectations, roles, anticipated tasks)

Meetings

(Duration, frequency, venue)

Contact

(Emails, telephone, text message)

Ground Rules

(Confidentiality, 'No go' areas, Responsibilities, Record keeping)

Criteria for Success

(Monitoring progress, Relationship, Communication, Feelings, Achievement)

Other Points

Signed:

Signed:

Date:



Further Reading & Resources

Clutterbuck, D. & Lane, G. (eds)(2004) The Situational Mentor. Aldershot. Gower
A number of perspectives explored by different authors.

Covey, S (1990) The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Simon and Schuster.
Bestselling guide to time management and personal development.

Herman, L & Mandell, A. (2004) From Teaching to Mentoring. London. RoutledgeFalmer
Discussion rooted in 'real life' situations.

Johnson, W.B. & Ridley, C.R. (2004) The Elements of Mentoring. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan

Provides examples, discussion and key components relevant to 57 aspects of mentoring. Easy to dip into.

Megginson, D & Clutterbuck, D. (1995) Mentoring in Action: A practical guide for managers. London. Kogan Page.

Zachary, L.J. (2000) The Mentor's Guide. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco
Very practical and user-friendly text.

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/osds/
Personal development assistance for St Andrews mentees / mentors



Contacts

Mentoring Scheme Co-ordinators

For all general queries about the scheme:

Lynn Neville, OSDS

e: lmn@st-andrews.ac.uk

t: 01334 462561

Occupational Health & Counselling Services

Back-up for any personal issues that the mentoring scheme may raise:

Environmental, Health & Safety Services

e: ehss@st-andrews.ac.uk

t: 01334 462750

Authorship

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