

Queen's Gender Initiative

Evaluation of the Queen's Gender Initiative
Mentoring Scheme Progression
2001/2002 – 2013/2014

SUMMARY REPORT

Mentoring Report Foreword

Mentoring unlocks potential, and this report evidences the success of the Queen's Gender Initiative mentoring scheme in unlocking the potential of the 238 women who have taken part in it to date. Initiated as a pilot project in 2001 led by Professor Madeline Ennis, the QGI mentoring programme soon took on a life of its own. It is now an embedded part of QGI activities designed to foster gender equality in the University.



No one is pressured to be involved. Mentors give of their time voluntarily. Mentees benefit from an experienced view of their professional and personal lives. It is independent of School-based appraisal and mentoring programmes. In the QGI mentoring programme, women can explore the next career steps, discuss work-life balance and raise matters of long and short-term significance for their lives. In all, the mentoring programme gives women the space to think about unlocking their potential and developing their full capacities to contribute to the University, and to their world beyond work.

Running the mentoring programme requires interest and dedication by a core group of people, and many have assisted in that work over the years. At present it is led by Ms. Linda Carey, Dr. Maria Lohan and Mrs. Jill Lyttle, with office support from Ms. Cathy Tolan of QGI. To these, and the many others who through the years have helped with interviewing and matching mentors and mentees, we owe deep thanks for their commitment to fostering women's potential. In all, 238 academic and research staff partook of the scheme up to 2014, of which 152 were from STEMM Schools, and 86 from Arts, Humanities and Social Science Schools.

This report provides evidence for the benefits of the QGI mentoring scheme on women's working lives: two-thirds of mentees had made a positive career move as a result of being mentored. Participation in the mentoring helped mentees to clarify their career path and increased their confidence in following this through. Those volunteering their time as mentors also gained: their networking opportunities increased, and many were prompted to re-evaluate their own career path, with over half making a positive career move since being involved in the scheme.

Mentoring Report Foreword

Researching the evidence for impact of the mentoring scheme was challenging. It required extensive matching of data held across a number of databases, revisiting paper-based material, and checking with key people in the programme. The author of this report, Jane Garvey of the University's Equal Opportunities Unit has our grateful appreciation for undertaking this time-consuming, detailed work. Her analysis shows, in robust data form, that the QGI mentoring scheme really does unlock the potential of women in Queen's University.



Yvonne Galligan, Director QGI

1. Background

- 1.1 Arising out of the a series of listening exercises¹, held by the Women's Forum at Queen's University Belfast in 2000, to identify actions aimed at increasing the representation of women across the University, a pilot female mentoring scheme was established. The pilot ran in the academic year 2001/02.
- 1.2 The aims of the scheme were to encourage senior academic women to provide advice and support to earlier career colleagues on issues related to career management and planning, to help women take responsibility for their careers, and to increase confidence.
- 1.3 An evaluation² of the mentoring pilot, carried out in 2002, highlighted the benefits of the scheme and recommended that the scheme be continued and extended.
- 1.4 In 2007 a further evaluation, which included an appraisal of the extent to which the mentoring scheme had impacted on the careers of participants, was undertaken. In response to a questionnaire 83% of mentees rated their mentoring relationship as very positive / positive, 62% stated they had made a positive career move as a result and close to 75% viewed the fact that the scheme was open to women only as very important / important. The long-term benefits identified by mentees included helping to clarify their career path and an increase in confidence.
- 1.5 All mentors, who responded to a questionnaire, rated the mentoring relationship as very positive / positive. Long-term benefits identified by mentors included increased networking opportunities and a re-evaluation of their own career path. Over half (53%) indicated they had made a positive career move since participating in the scheme.
- 1.6 In response to feedback, a 'virtual drop-in mentoring' facility was set up to allow women who were unable to commit to a year-long mentoring partnership to benefit from a one-off session and to be afforded personal guidance and support on range of topics including: applying for promotion; grant applications; managing staff and research students; chairing meetings; moving from contract researcher to academia and juggling career and family responsibilities.

¹ Report on Gender Imbalance at Queen's (2000): Professor Margaret Mullett et al.

² Evaluation of a Pilot Mentoring Programme for Women at Queen's University Belfast (2002): Linda Carey, STDU and Carol McGuinness, School of Psychology.

- 1.7 The success of the mentoring scheme led to the co-ordinator being invited to talk at a variety of events and to providing advice on setting up similar schemes in other universities and institutions. The scheme has also been an intrinsic part of many awards gained by the University, including a Silver Athena SWAN institutional award, Opportunity Now Platinum benchmarking award, Opportunity Now education sector award and The Times Top 50 Employers for Women in 2011.
- 1.8 Arising from a commitment in the University's Athena SWAN 2011-2014 action plan, an evaluation of the career progression of academic and research participants was undertaken by the Equal Opportunities Unit and QGI.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The evaluation focused on academic and research members of staff who had participated in the QGI mentoring scheme between 2001 and 2013/2014.
- 2.2 The analysis concentrated on whether or not academic³ and research⁴ participants progressed, following involvement in the scheme. It was confined to 87% (206) of participants, that is, those for whom information was available⁵, and who had been in a position to avail of progression opportunities⁶. The findings are based on the status of participants as at August 2014.

³ Progression of academic participants includes promotion within Queen's i.e. via the annual promotions round, movement to a higher range or point on range via the professorial salary review, progression for retention and exceptional achievement, and progression external to the University.

⁴ Progression of research mentees includes attaining in Queen's or externally: a research post at a higher grade; a permanent or further contract; an academic post. There is no internal promotion process in respect of research staff.

⁵ No information was available in respect of progression of 10 participants who subsequently left Queen's.

⁶ 22 participants had not been a position to apply for promotion due to a variety of reasons including not yet having completed the probationary period and there not having been a promotions round subsequent to participation in the mentoring scheme.

3. Findings

- 3.1 Between 2001 and 2014, 238 academic and research staff participated in the mentoring scheme, 38 of whom were both mentee and mentor.
- 3.2 Eighty seven academic members of staff mentored 188 academic and research staff, with 33 mentors having mentored on more than 1 occasion. Ten mentees availed of mentoring on more than 1 occasions, 2 of whom were mentored while researchers and subsequently when they acquired an academic post.

Participants

- 3.3 Seventy seven per cent (184) of participants were academic members of staff and 23% (54) were research staff. Sixty four per cent (152) of the participants were from STEMM schools and 36% (86) were from AHSS schools.
- 3.4 The analysis of participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 76% (157) progressed, 73% (114) within Queen's and 27% (43) externally;
 - 75% (121) of mentees, 84% (68) of mentors and 91% (32) of those who had been both mentor and mentee progressed.

Academic Participants

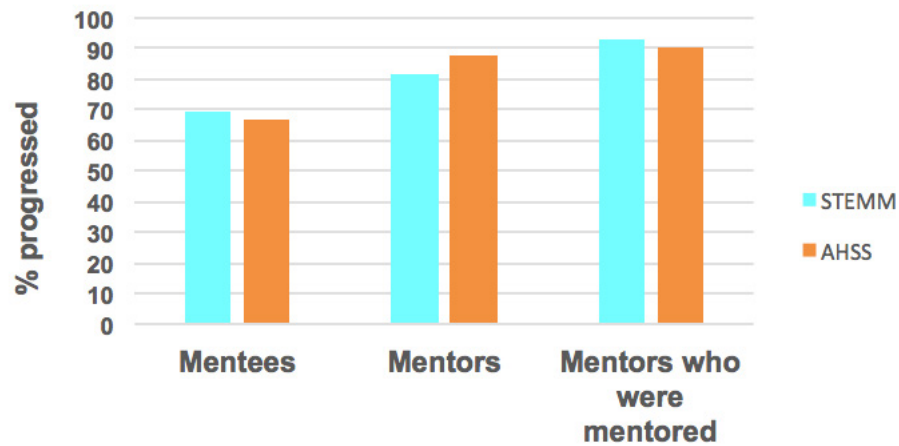
- 3.5 All mentors and 71% of the mentees were academic members of staff. Sixty three per cent of the mentors and 59% of academic mentees were from the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) schools and 37% of mentors and 41% of academic mentees were from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) schools.
- 3.6 The analysis of academic participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 68% (75) of mentees and 84% (68) of mentors progressed;
 - 92% (35) who had been mentee and mentor progressed (Table 1 refers); and
 - Of those participants who progressed, 73% (55) of the mentees, 85% (58) of the mentors and 91% (32) of those who had been mentee and mentor, progressed within Queen's.

Table 1: Progression of academic staff following participation in the mentoring scheme



- 3.7 The analysis of academic participants from STEMM schools showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 69% (46) of mentees and 82% (40) of mentors progressed (Table 2 refers);
 - 93% (26) who had been both mentee and mentor progressed; and
 - Of those participants from STEMM schools that progressed, 89% (41) of the mentees, 90% (36) of the mentors and all of those who had been mentee and mentor, progressed within Queen's.
- 3.8 The analysis of academic participants from AHSS schools showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 67% (29) of mentees and 87.5% (28) of mentors progressed (Table 2 refers);
 - 90% (9) who had been mentee and mentor progressed; and
 - Of those participants from the AHSS schools that progressed, 48% (14) of the mentees, 79% (22) of the mentors and 67% (6) of those who had been mentee and mentor, progressed within

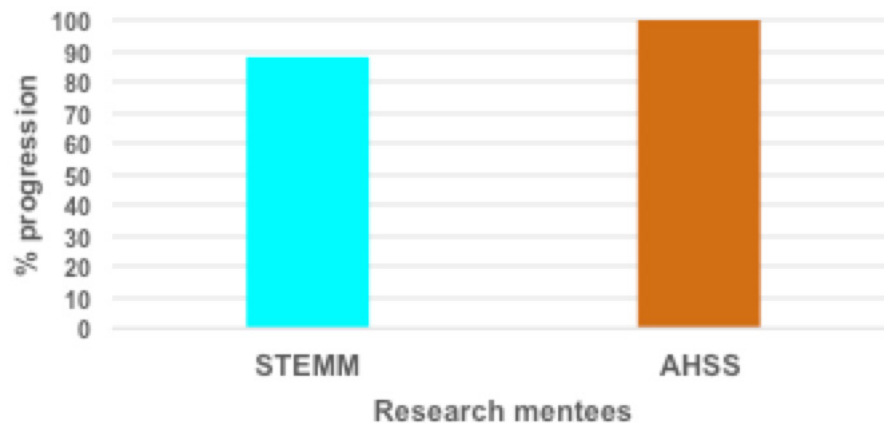
Table 2: Progression of STEMM and AHSS academic staff following participation in the mentoring scheme



Research Participants

- 3.9 Research staff accounted for 29% of the mentees who participated in the mentoring scheme between 2001 and 2014. Seventy eight per cent of the research mentees were from the STEMM schools and 22% were from the AHSS schools, representative of the distribution of the research staff over the period under review.
- 3.10 The analysis of research mentees showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 90% (46) progressed;
 - 88% (36) of STEMM mentees and all of the 10 AHSS mentees progressed (Table 3 refers); and
 - Of those research mentees who progressed, 72% (26) of the STEMM mentees and 40% (4) of the AHSS mentees, progressed within Queen's.

Table 3: Progression of STEMM and AHSS Research mentees following participation in mentoring scheme



Academic Mentors who were mentored

- 3.11 Forty six per cent of mentors were also mentored within the QGI mentoring scheme.
- 3.12 A comparison between, mentors who had been mentored and those who had not been mentored, showed a difference in the percentage who progressed subsequent to involvement in the scheme.
- 3.13 Ninety two per cent of mentors who had been mentored progressed compared to 77% of those who had not been mentored. 100% of the mentors, from the STEMM schools, who had been mentored had progressed compared to 67% of those who had not been mentored. A smaller difference emerged in respect of mentors from the AHSS schools with 90% of the mentors who had been mentored having progressed compared to 86% of those who had not been mentored.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Participation in the mentoring scheme appears to have had a positive influence on the career progression of both mentees and mentors.
- 4.2 The findings show that, of those participants included in the analysis, 75% of mentees, 84% of mentors and 91% of those who were both mentors and mentees, progressed subsequent to their involvement in the scheme.
- 4.3 The feedback from mentees and mentors has been overwhelmingly positive and many respondents made reference to having gained in confidence to apply for promotion opportunities.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The benefits of the mentoring scheme should be more widely disseminated across the University to encourage an increase in participation both as mentees and mentors.
- 5.2 Consideration should be given to targeting specific groups of academic staff, for example those who have just completed probation.
- 5.3 Consideration should be given to running a pilot scheme for female professors. As part of the pilot thought should be given to providing professors with the opportunity to indicate whether they had a preference for a female or a male mentor.
- 5.4 A review of the evaluation process of the mentoring scheme should be carried out to include the identification of qualitative and quantitative measures and the collection of the relevant data to support future analysis.
- 5.5 Areas of learning and potential collaboration between the Queen's Gender Initiative mentoring scheme and the University's Staff Training and Development Unit mentoring scheme should be explored.

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