

# Queen's Gender Initiative

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

REPORT

## Mentoring Report Foreword

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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.

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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

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- 1.1 In 2000 the Women's Forum at Queen's University Belfast held a series of listening exercises<sup>1</sup>, encouraging women to express their views on actions which could be taken to increase the representation of women at Queen's. Feedback from the listening exercises shaped the recommendations which were subsequently approved by the University Senate and the Queen's Gender Initiative (QGI) was set up to implement the recommendations.
- 1.2 The single most frequent action requested during the listening exercises was the setting up of a female mentoring scheme.
- 1.3 A working party examined national and international models of mentoring and developed a pilot scheme which ran in the academic year 2001/02. The pilot focussed on academic women at a certain stage in their careers as the disparity in numbers between men and women in senior academic positions at Queen's was substantial. The success of the pilot would determine whether the scheme would be extended further.
- 1.4 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 and be more self-reliant about their careers, and to provide support and increase confidence.

### **Setting up of the mentoring scheme and initial evaluation**

- 1.5 The mentoring programme was administered by a subgroup of QGI led by Professor Madeleine Ennis, the mentoring co-ordinator and driving force behind the project.
- 1.6 The pilot programme comprised 12 mentoring pairs of early career and senior academic women. As part of the matching process, participants completed a short questionnaire to establish what mentees wanted and what mentors could offer, followed by a brief informal discussion. A half-day briefing was provided to prepare participants for their respective roles, with a further half-day training session facilitated by Mentoring UK.

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

## **Pilot scheme evaluation and findings**

- 1.7 The pilot was evaluated<sup>2</sup> from information gathered through focus groups and questionnaires.
- 1.8 Mentees commented on the benefits of the mentoring relationship in terms of: increased levels of confidence and assertiveness; usefulness in terms of career planning; and increased awareness of other schools, structures, and the management of the university. Mentees also gave examples of positive career moves they had made, including applying for a more senior post, submitting funding applications and altering proposed career pathways.
- 1.9 Mentors remarked that they had also benefited from the programme in terms of re-evaluating their own careers and feeling valued professionally. Many expressed an interest in being mentored in the following year.
- 1.10 Networking emerged as an important theme with positive benefits for both mentees and mentors.
- 1.11 From the findings it was clear that the pilot programme was viewed as successful by both mentees and mentors and that it had met goals beyond those initially envisaged. The overwhelming opinion was that the programme should continue and be extended.
- 1.12 The main strengths identified of the programme were that: it was voluntary; it was outside of the normal line management and appraisal process; and careful attention had been given to the matching of mentors and the mentees.

## **An evaluation of QGI Mentoring Programme, 2001-2006**

- 1.13 In 2007, the mentoring co-ordinator produced an evaluation report on the mentoring programme from 2001 to 2006, at which point 60 academic and 18 research staff had been mentored by 46 academic members of staff. As part of the evaluation process questionnaires were sent all mentors and mentees asking each to evaluate the programme and its impact on their career within the University. There was a 40% response rate

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

- 1.14 Findings from mentees included, 83% rating their mentoring relationship as 'very positive' or 'positive' and 62% having made positive career moves. The long-term benefits identified by mentees included helping them to clarify their career path, increasing self-confidence, and benefiting from someone else's experience. Almost three quarters of mentees deemed the fact that the scheme was open to women only to be 'very important' or 'important'
- 1.15 All mentors, who responded to the questionnaire, rated the mentoring relationship as 'very positive' or 'positive'. Long-term benefits identified included increasing networking opportunities and re-evaluating their own career paths. Over half of the mentors (53%) indicated that they had made positive career moves since participating in the programme.

### **Mentoring virtual drop-in centre**

- 1.16 In 2007, following feedback from mentees, a 'virtual drop-in' facility was set up for women who felt they did not have the time to commit to a year-long mentoring partnership. Women were able to seek advice from the scheme's co-ordinator by email and be matched with an appropriate partner for a one-off session. In this more informal setting, personal guidance and support has been given to women on a wide range of topics including; applying for promotion; CVs; grant applications; managing staff and research students; chairing meetings and being heard; being a Head of School; teaching / research balance; moving from contract researcher to academic and juggling career and family responsibilities

### **Recognition of the Mentoring Scheme**

- 1.17 In recognition of the success of the University's mentoring scheme the mentoring co-ordinator has been invited to talk about the scheme at a variety of events within and external to the University. She has provided advice on setting up similar schemes in other institutions, including Dundee University; Kings College London; Limerick University; St Andrews University; and Trinity College Dublin, as well as the Irish Civil Service Women Managers Network and the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment (Dublin).

- 1.18 The mentoring scheme has been an intrinsic part of the submissions for the many awards gained by the University, including a Silver Athena SWAN institutional award; 2 Gold and 9 Silver Athena SWAN schools awards, Opportunity Now Platinum benchmarking award; Opportunity Now education sector award; and The Times Top 50 Employers for Women in 2011.

## 2. Progression of mentoring participants, 2001/2002 – 2013/2014

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- 2.1 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.

## 3. Methodology

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- 3.1 The evaluation, undertaken in 2014, focuses academic and research members of staff, who had participated in the QGI mentoring scheme between 2001 and 2013/2014.
- 3.2 The analysis concentrated on whether or not academic<sup>3</sup> and research<sup>4</sup> participants progressed following involvement in the scheme. The analysis comprised 87% (206) of participants, that is, those for whom information was available<sup>5</sup>, and who had been in a position to avail of progression opportunities<sup>6</sup>. The findings are based on the status of participants as at August 2014.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

<sup>6</sup> 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.

## 4. Findings

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- 4.1 Between 2001 and 2013/2014, 238 academic and research members of staff participated in the mentoring scheme, 38 of whom participated as both mentee and mentor.
- 4.2 Eighty seven academic members of staff mentored 188 academic and research staff, with 33 of the mentors having mentored on more than 1 occasion. Two of the mentors each mentored on 10 occasions.
- 4.3 Ten of the 188 mentees have been mentored on more than 1 occasion, that is at different stages in their careers, 2 of whom were mentored while researchers and then availed of a further mentoring having acquired an academic post.

## 5. Progression of Participants

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- 5.1 Seventy seven per cent (184) of the participants were members of academic staff and 23% (54) were research staff.
- 5.2 Sixty four per cent (152) of participants were members of staff from the STEMM schools and 36% (86) were from the AHSS schools.
- 5.3 The analysis of the progression of participants was confined to 87% (206) of the 238 participants, as 22 participants had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and there was inadequate information available in respect of 10 participants.
- 5.4 The analysis of participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 76% (157) progressed, 114 (73%) within Queen's and 43 (27%) external to the University; and
  - 75% (121) of mentees, 84% (68) of mentors and 91% (32) of those who had been both mentor and mentee progressed.

### **Academic Participants**

- 5.5 All mentors and 71% of the mentees were academic members of staff.



- 5.6 Sixty per cent (110) of the 184 academic participants were members of staff from the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) schools and 40% (74) were from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) schools.
- 5.7 Sixty three per cent of the mentors and 59% of academic mentees were from the STEMM schools and 37% of mentors and 41% of academic mentees were from the AHSS schools.
- 5.8 The analysis of the progression of academic participants was confined to 156 of the 184 participants, as 21 participants had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 7 participants.
- 5.9 The analysis of academic participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 72% (112) of the 156 academic participants had progressed, of which 85 (76%) had progressed within Queen's and 27 (24%) external to the University

### **Participants from STEMM Schools**

- 5.10 Seventy two per cent (110) of the participants from the STEMM schools were members of academic staff and 28% (42) were research staff.
- 5.11 The analysis of the progression of participants from STEMM schools was confined to 131 of the 152 participants, as 18 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 3 participants.
- 5.12 The analysis of the STEMM participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 76% (99) of the 131 participants from STEMM schools had progressed, 80 (81%) within Queen's and 19 (19%) external to the University
- 5.13 The analysis of the progression of STEMM academic participants was confined to 91 of the 110 participants, as 17 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 2 participants

- 5.14 The analysis of the STEMM academic participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 70% (64) of the 91 academic participants from STEMM schools had progressed, 55 (86%) within Queen's and 9 (14%) external to the University

### **AHSS Participants**

- 5.15 Eighty six per cent (74) of the participants from the AHSS schools were members of academic staff and 14% (12) were research staff.
- 5.16 The analysis of the progression of participants from AHSS schools was confined to 75 of the 86 participants, as 4 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 7 participants.
- 5.17 The analysis of the AHSS participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 77% (58) of the 75 participants from AHSS schools had progressed, 34 (59%) within Queen's and 24 (41%) external to the University
- 5.18 The analysis of the progression of academic participants from AHSS schools was confined to 65 of the 74 participants, as 4 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 5 participants.
- 5.19 The analysis of the AHSS academic participants showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 74% (48) of the 65 academic participants from AHSS schools had progressed, 30 (62.5%) within Queen's and 18 (37.5%) external to the University

### **MENTEES**

- 5.20 Sixty eight per cent (127) of the mentees were members of staff from the STEMM schools and 32% (61) were from the AHSS schools. Seventy one per cent (133) of the mentees were members of academic staff and 29% (55) were research staff.
- 5.21 The analysis of the progression of mentees was confined to 161 of the 188 mentees, as 19 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 8 mentees.

- 5.22 The analysis showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 75% (121) of the 161 mentees had progressed, 85 (70%) within Queen's and 36 (30%) external to the University

### **Academic Mentees**

- 5.23 Sixty three per cent (84) of the 133 academic mentees were members of staff from the STEMM schools and 37% (49) were from the AHSS schools.
- 5.24 The analysis of the progression of academic mentees was confined to 110 of the 133 mentees, as 18 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 5 mentees.
- 5.25 The analysis showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 68% (75) of the 110 academic mentees had progressed, 55 (73%) within Queen's and 20 (27%) external to the University

### **Research Mentees**

- 5.26 Seventy eight per cent (43) of the 55 research mentees were members of staff from the STEMM schools and 22% (12) were from the AHSS schools.
- 5.27 The analysis of the progression of research mentees was confined to 51 of the 55 mentees, as 1 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 3 mentees.
- 5.28 The analysis showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 90% (46) of the 51 research mentees had progressed, 30 (65%) within Queen's and 16 (35%) external to the University

### **Mentees from STEMM Schools**

- 5.29 Sixty six per cent (84) of the mentees from the STEMM schools were members of academic staff and 34% (43) were research staff.

- 5.31 The analysis showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 76% (82) of the 108 mentees from STEMM schools had progressed, 67 (82%) within Queen's and 15 (18%) external to the University
- 5.32 The analysis of the progression of academic mentees from STEMM schools was confined to 67 of the 84 mentees, as 15 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 2 mentees.
- 5.33 The analysis of the STEMM academic mentees showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 69% (46) of the 67 academic mentees from STEMM schools had progressed, 41 (89%) within Queen's and 5 (11%) external to the University.
- 5.34 The analysis of the progression of research mentees from STEMM schools was confined to 41 of the 43 mentees, as 1 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 1 mentee.
- 5.35 The analysis of the STEMM research mentees showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 88% (36) of the 41 research mentees from STEMM schools had progressed, 26 (72%) within Queen's and 10 (28%) external to the University

### **AHSS Mentees**

- 5.36 Eighty per cent (49) of the mentees from the AHSS schools were members of academic staff and 20% (12) were research staff.
- 5.37 The analysis of the progression of mentees from AHSS schools was confined to 53 of the 61 AHSS mentees, as 3 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 5 mentees.
- 5.38 The analysis of the AHSS mentees showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 74% (39) of the 53 mentees from AHSS schools had progressed, 18 (46%) within Queen's and 21 (54%) external to the University

- 5.39 The analysis of the progression of academic mentees from AHSS schools was confined to 43 of the 49 mentees, as 3 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 3 mentees.
- 5.40 The analysis of the AHSS academic mentees showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 67% (29) of the 43 academic mentees from AHSS schools had progressed, 14 (48%) within Queen's and 15 (52%) external to the University.
- 5.41 The analysis of the progression of research mentees from AHSS schools was confined to 10 of the 12 mentees as inadequate information was available in respect of 2 mentees.
- 5.42 The analysis of the AHSS research mentees showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- All of the 10 research mentees from AHSS schools had progressed, 4 (40%) within Queen's and 6 (60%) external to the University.

## **MENTORS**

- 5.43 Fifty nine per cent (51) of the mentors were members of staff from the STEMM schools and 41% (36) from the AHSS schools. All mentors were academic members of staff.
- 5.44 The analysis of the progression of mentors was confined to 81 of the 87 mentors, as 3 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 3 mentees.
- 5.45 The analysis showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 84% (68) of the 81 mentors had progressed, 58 (85%) within Queen's and 10 (15%) external to the University

### **Mentors from STEMM Schools**

- 5.46 The analysis of the progression of mentors from STEMM schools was confined to 49 of the 51 mentors, as 2 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities.

- 5.47 The analysis of the STEMM mentors showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 82% (40) of the 49 mentors from STEMM schools had progressed, 36 (90%) within Queen's and 4 (10%) external to the University.

### **Mentors from AHSS Schools**

- 5.48 The analysis of the progression of mentors from AHSS schools was confined to 32 of the 36 mentors, as 1 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 3 mentors.
- 5.49 The analysis of the AHSS mentors showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 87.5% (28) of the 32 mentors from AHSS schools had progressed, 22 (79%) within Queen's and 6 (21%) external to the University.

### **ACADEMIC MENTORS WHO ALSO PARTICIPATED AS MENTEES**

- 5.50 Forty six per cent (40) of the 87 academic mentors also participated as mentees.
- 5.51 72.5% (29) of the academic mentors, who also been mentees, were members of staff from the STEMM schools and 27.5% (11) were from the AHSS schools.
- 5.52 The analysis of the progression of mentors, who also participated as mentees, was confined to 38 of the 40 mentors, as 1 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and inadequate information was available in respect of 1 other mentor.
- 5.53 The analysis of the mentors, who had participated as mentees, showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 92% (35) of the 38 academic mentors, who had also been mentees, had progressed, 32 (91%) within Queen's and 3 (9%) external to the University.

### **Academic Mentors who also participated as Mentees from STEMM Schools**

- 5.54 The analysis of the progression of mentors from STEMM schools, who also participated as mentees, was confined to 28 of the 29 mentors, as 1 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities.
- 5.55 The analysis of the STEMM mentors, who also participated as mentees, showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 93% (26) of the 28 mentors had progressed, all progressed within Queen's.

### **Academic Mentors who also participated as Mentees from AHSS Schools**

- 5.56 The analysis of the progression of mentors from AHSS schools, who also participated as mentees, was confined to 10 of the 11 mentors, as inadequate information was available in respect of 1 mentor.
- 5.57 The analysis of the AHSS mentors, who also participated as mentees, showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 90% (9) of the 10 mentors from AHSS schools had progressed, 6 (67%) within Queen's and 3 (33%) external to the University.

### **ACADEMIC MENTORS WHO HAD NOT PARTICIPATED AS MENTEES**

- 5.58 Forty seven per cent (22) of the academic mentors, who had not been mentees, were members of staff from the STEMM schools and 53% (25) from the AHSS schools.
- 5.59 The analysis of the progression of mentors, who had not participated as mentees, was confined to 43 of the 47 mentors, as 2 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and no information was available in respect of another 2 mentors.
- 5.60 The analysis of the mentors, who had not participated as mentees, showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 77% (33) of the 43 academic mentors, who had not been mentees, had progressed, 26 (79%) within Queen's and 7 (21%) external to the University.

### **Academic Mentors from STEMM Schools who had NOT participated as Mentees**

- 5.61 The analysis of the progression of mentors from STEMM schools, who had not participated as mentees, was confined to 21 of the 22 mentors, as 1 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities.
- 5.62 The analysis of the STEMM mentors, who had not participated as mentees, showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 67% (14) of the 21 mentors from STEMM schools had progressed, 10 (71%) within Queen's and 4 (29%) external to the University.

### **Academic Mentors from AHSS Schools who had NOT participated as Mentees**

- 5.63 The analysis of the progression of mentors from AHSS schools, who had not participated as mentees was confined to 22 of the 25 mentors, as 1 had not been in a position to avail of progression opportunities and no information was available in respect of 2 mentors.
- 5.64 The analysis of the AHSS mentors, who had not participated as mentees, showed that, subsequent to involvement in the mentoring scheme:
- 86% (19) of the 22 mentors from AHSS schools had progressed, 16 (84%) within Queen's and 3 (16%) external to the University.

## 6. Conclusions

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- 6.1 Participation in the mentoring scheme appears to have had a positive influence on the career progression of both mentees and mentors.
- 6.2 The findings showed 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.
- 6.3 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.



## 7. Recommendations

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- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Consideration should be given to targeting specific groups of academic staff, for example those who have just completed probation.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 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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