

National Mentoring Program for editors

Initiated by Canberra Society of Editors

Guidance Notes

Participating states/territory at 17 April 2015:

ACT, Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales

These notes apply to all mentorships arranged anywhere in Australia under the national coordination of the Canberra Society of Editors, no matter what the location of the mentor or the mentee. They, and associated mentor and mentee application forms, will remain in force until reviewed during 2015.

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General guidelines

Overview

The National Mentoring Program for editors, originally piloted by Canberra Society of Editors, offers the opportunity for members of any societies of editors to improve their editing skills with professional oversight and feedback from experienced editors.

Mentoring is where one individual provides support, encouragement and advice to another, based on their knowledge and life and experience relative to the mentoring theme. It provides a two-way learning experience for both mentor and mentee, which can encourage deep satisfaction and numerous benefits in many personal, career, organisational and developmental areas.

The Mentoring Program is aimed at editors at all levels, for example:

- editors entering the profession
- editors preparing for accreditation
- people returning to the profession after time off
- editors with any level of experience who want to brush up their skills or move into a new area of editing
- editors who have accepted a job which is outside their usual area of expertise.

The program brings benefits to the editing profession by increasing members' skills. This, in turn, helps safeguard the reputation of the profession as a whole.

Mentoring, coaching, and teaching

In the context of this program, we are talking about one aspect of professional development, namely mentoring. A *mentor* is in a two-way mutually beneficial relationship with a mentee. A mentor aims to help the mentee to develop personally, provides advice, shares experiences and wisdom, guides the mentee to make his or her own decisions, but never does work for the mentee. A *coach* is engaged to provide strategies and to help the coachee to learn and develop skills for a very specific goal. A *teacher* imparts knowledge and skills to a student and sees that the student does the practice to develop those skills and assesses the results of the teaching at all stages.

In this program, we have used the words mentor and mentee. There may indeed be some specific goals set by the mentee and there may indeed be a need for the mentor to teach the mentee some new skills. Mentoring is often long-term, but can be arranged for short, very specific needs. There are some aspects of teaching, coaching and counselling in mentoring. However, the relationship is more that of a trusted friend and driven by the personal needs of the mentee—not imposed on the mentee.

At the end of a mentorship, we ask the mentor to assess the mentee's progress and make any necessary recommendations for further mentoring, training, or anything else that may be of benefit to the mentee. Editing is largely a skills-based activity, so some teaching or guidance in the development of advanced editing skills and subsequent assessment of personal development in these skills is inevitable in this mentoring program.

If you would like to read more about mentoring in general, please ask us. You could start by reading from Elizabeth Manning Murphy's book, *Working words*, published by the Canberra Society of Editors, 2011, Canberra (see page 8).

Cost

A mentorship costs \$200, payable by the mentee, comprising administration fee of \$50 and an honorarium for the mentor of \$150, for approximately 8 hours of mentoring, exclusive of travelling time if required. This honorarium is not seen as ‘payment’ but as a token of the commitment the mentee makes to the mentorship. Mentoring is seen as a way of giving something back to the profession. The fee applies to ‘a mentorship’ no matter how long or short it is; a mentorship of 2 hours may well be just as valuable as one of 8 hours.

Any travelling to meet each other is at the discretion of the mentor and mentee, and costs involved do not enter into the mentorship costing. If distance is a real problem, the partners should consider using Skype for personal contact.

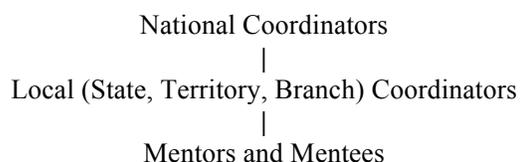
How it works

Experienced members act as mentors in one of three ways:

1. They will provide a mentee with a copy of a longish document for them to copy-edit and a shorter document for proofreading. The documents are preferably real examples that the mentor has previously worked on. The mentor reviews the mentee’s work and provides feedback and advice.
2. They will provide informal ad hoc advice, support, encouragement without it being based on a specific document, or on any document—perhaps advice on the business aspects of freelance editing.
3. They will provide a combination of the types of support described in points 1 and 2; for example, general advice and encouragement combined with shorter documents to work on. Documents may also be provided by the mentee; in this case, the mentee should obtain any necessary permissions to use a document in this way, and guarantee confidentiality.

Under the program, certain rules and conditions apply to mentors and mentees, while others govern the mentoring relationship. These are set out in broad terms on the following pages.

The structure of the program looks like this:



For now, the Canberra Society of Editors will remain the central administrative location, existing joint national coordinators liaising with local coordinators. The role of local coordinators is:

- to form mentoring partnerships (sometimes with help from the national database or support from the national coordinators)
 - to get feedback during and at the end of mentorships
 - to report to the national coordinators
 - to report regularly to their respective editing societies.
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Length of mentorship

The mentorship covers approximately 8 hours of face-to face (or equivalent) contact. It is recommended that this be spread out over several months (perhaps three). However, there is no set length—but a mentorship of more than about 8 hours may require re-negotiation.

Guidelines for mentees

Eligibility	You must be a financial member of a society of editors at any level of membership. (In Canberra, this means full/professional, associate or student. Other societies may have other hierarchies of membership—all are acceptable.)
Prior training	Before becoming a mentee, you must have had some exposure to editing—the program is not designed to teach you the basics of editing. You are normally expected to have done some work (either voluntary or paid) and have completed at least one training course or workshop that has covered the basics of copy-editing and proofreading. This training may be attendance in person or online at a workshop with your own society or another, on-the-job training in an in-house position, or any other means of learning the basics of copy-editing and proofreading, including private study. We recognise that some societies do not have facilities for training frequently—please contact the national coordinators for further advice on training that might be available and suitable.
Application form	<p>Download an application form from your local society/branch website, in Australia, email an enquiry on the Canberra Society of Editors website-- www.editorscanberra.org, or, if neither of these sources is available, write to one of the Joint National Coordinators: tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au.</p> <p>When you have completed the form, send it to tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au as well as to the local coordinator named on the form or on a covering email. You will be asked to list your specific goals, experience and training, to help the mentoring coordinator make a suitable match with a mentor.</p>
Payment	You will not be required to pay the fee (\$200) until a mentor has been appointed, and you have had one ‘getting to know you’ brief session with your appointed mentor. The local or national coordinator will send you instructions for paying once a mentor has been appointed. For now, all payments will be made to the Canberra Society of Editors where the funds will be held for disbursement as required.
Assigning a mentor	Your local coordinator will contact you as soon as a suitable mentor is available who has a working knowledge of your subject specialisation. As mentors are editing professionals in their own right, it should be understood that it may take time for a mentor to become available.

Communicating with your mentor	<p>Upon receiving your mentor’s contact details, make contact with him or her as soon as possible to set up an initial meeting to negotiate the process for your mentorship. As noted above, you do not pay the fee until after this first meeting.</p> <p>Although face-to-face sessions are the most effective means of knowledge and skills transfer, they are not necessarily the most efficient, so mentoring may comprise a combination of emailing of MS Word documents showing changes tracked, telephone or Skype conversations and, where necessary, face-to-face sessions. You will be responsible for printing out texts from the electronic documents supplied to you.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>By signing the application form to be a mentee you are agreeing to treat any text you will be working on as confidential, as well as any aspect of the relationship between you and your mentor.</p>
Mentor’s role	<p>Mentors are working people and often have several projects on the go. Allow for this if mentors cannot always get back to you in good time. Your mentor is your guide and adviser, but not your teacher. Your mentor will give you feedback on practice copyediting and other tasks you agree to undertake, but will not do work for you. Your mentor will listen and help you to work out a pathway to achieving your editing goals—as the mentee, you drive the mentorship.</p>
Honouring deadlines	<p>You will agree on a deadline for any work to be submitted to your mentor. Please treat your mentor as if they were a friendly client—be considerate, and return the job on time.</p>
Extended mentoring	<p>If you feel you need more than the agreed time allocated to your mentorship, you should consult with your mentor about extra time and any additional fee. Your local coordinator must approve any changes and inform the national coordinators.</p>
If the relationship is not working	<p>If a relationship does not work out, you or your mentor should contact your local coordinator to discuss a possible re-matching.</p>
Assessment	<p>At the end of the mentoring project your mentor will issue you with a detailed assessment of your performance, highlighting your strengths and weaknesses and indicating possible areas for further development.</p>
Continuing training	<p>If you wish, you and your mentor can make private arrangements to enter into a training or coaching relationship at the end of the mentoring project.</p>

Feedback forms Your local coordinator will ask you and your mentor to submit written feedback on the mentorship and the mentoring program at the end of the mentorship. Likewise, your mentor will be asked to evaluate your progress in a document addressed primarily to you (see Assessment above), but copied also to the local and national coordinators. Responses, in both cases, will be kept confidential to those concerned and the coordinators, and will be used to assess and improve the effectiveness of the program.

Paid work Completing a mentorship is not a guarantee of receiving paid assignments. Your marketing skills and, eventually, reputation will determine how successful you will be in contracting for work.

Further study We recommend continuing with workshops, mentorship programs, private study or courses as far as possible as part of your professional development.

Some frequently asked questions for mentees

Do I have to be a member of a society of editors?

Yes.

Do I have to be a full member?

No.

Why do I have to pay a fee?

Research in similar organisations, including the Society for Editors and Proofreaders SfEP (UK), Editors Association of Canada (EAC) and Professional Editors Group (South Africa) has shown that charging a small fee is more likely to produce a commitment to the mentoring on the part of the mentee.

Can I use a real job as the basis of my mentorship?

It depends on the nature of your mentorship program.

One thing to be aware of with using a real job is that you may be subject to deadlines or security strictures that make it impractical to get the most out of your mentor. It is preferable to treat your mentorship as a professional development exercise. Also it is possible that your mentor will select a text that covers a wider range of issues than a real job.

Will I be eligible for full membership after being a mentee?

You will still have to show that you satisfy the requirements for full membership.

I live outside an Australian capital city. Can I have a mentor?

We don't see distance as a problem if you can use Skype, a phone and email—and if you're comfortable receiving guidance through Track Changes comment notes. Some face-to-face contact is desirable in such a partnership, so either at least one personal visit or the use of Skype would cover that.

Will being a mentee count towards accreditation?

Not directly—you will still have to pass the exam to become accredited. However, being a mentee could be part of your preparation for the exam.

Guidelines for mentors

Who can be a mentor?

The program needs editors who are members of an editing society, at any level of membership, prepared to share their knowledge and skills, to become mentors to other members. Mentors do not have to be AEs or DEs—just members who feel passionate about helping other editors achieve their full potential. You can be a member of any recognised editing society, preferably but not necessarily restricted to member societies of the Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd), Australia. Mentors who are members of non-Australian editing societies are allocated to an appropriate Australian local coordinator, depending on personal choice, as far as practicable.

Mentors' workshops

Mentoring means different things to different people. Our program is based on the classic meaning of 'mentor', so mentors and prospective mentors are asked to attend at least one Mentors' Workshop before beginning their first matching with a mentee, or as soon as possible after the start of that matching. The workshop is free and workshops are arranged in Canberra and all state capitals as required. Attendance in person is ideal, but attendance by Skype can often be arranged. The workshop lasts for approximately two hours, including refreshments for those attending in person. It is designed to clarify the difference between mentoring and other forms of professional development. It helps to build communication strategies for guiding and encouraging mentees so that they are helped to achieve their goals. It includes open discussion of aspects of mentoring, and a variety of illustrative case studies.

How to register

To register as a mentor, you will need to complete a registration form on which you provide details of your work experience, training and qualifications. You will also be asked to list your areas of specialisation to help the local coordinator make suitable matches with mentees.

Download an application form from your local society/branch website, in Australia, email an enquiry on the Canberra Society of Editors website – www.editorscanberra.org, or, if neither of these sources is available, write to one of the Joint National Coordinators: tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au.

When you have completed the form, send it to tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au as well as to the local coordinator named on the form or on a covering email. You will be asked to list your specific goals, experience and training, to help the mentoring coordinator make a suitable match with a mentor.

Register of mentors

Once you have registered, your name will go on a database of mentors from which recommendations will be submitted to potential mentees.

You may ask to be removed from the database at any time.

Availability

You may determine your availability according to your workload.

Selecting texts for mentoring

Since one of the key ways in which mentees can have their knowledge and skills assessed is by working on a document you have already edited, you should retain a selection of manuscripts you have worked on as model exercises, as well as unedited originals for mentees to work on. You should provide a detailed brief and indicate whether an existing style sheet and the track changes function should be used.

Note that you should get permission from your original client to use the text in this way. Please remind mentees to treat the text they will be working on as confidential.

Not every mentoring project will involve working on a document—some mentorships may be more about general advice, encouragement and support, or about making the move to freelancing. Some mentorships may involve working on a document provided by the mentee; in this case, the mentee should obtain any necessary permissions to use the document in this way, and guarantee confidentiality.

Assessment

At the end of a mentoring project, you are required to issue your mentee with a detailed assessment of their performance, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, and indicating possible areas for further development.

The mentee is free to discuss this evaluation with the local coordinator who may also discuss it with the national coordinators—in confidence.

Further development

Having assessed your mentees, you may recommend that mentees undertake further supervised work, based on an objective assessment that mentees are not ready to take on professional work independently. The further project may be supervised by you or by a new mentor.

From mentorship to training

If you wish, you and your mentee can make private arrangements to enter into a training or coaching relationship at the end of the mentoring project.

Feedback forms

Your local coordinator will issue both you and your mentee with a feedback form at the end of their mentorships. Responses will be kept confidential and will be used to assess and improve the effectiveness of the program.

Are there any limits to what the mentor and mentee can discuss?

No. Often the mentee just wants encouragement, so a prime qualification for being a mentor would be the ability to listen.

If the relationship is not working

If a relationship does not work out, you or your mentee should contact the local coordinator to discuss a possible re-matching.



Some frequently asked questions for mentors

Do I have to be a senior member to be a mentor? Not necessarily. You do have to be a member, at any level, of your own society of editors, and the better your qualifications and experience, the more you will probably be able to give to the program and your mentees. Most mentors will probably be more experienced than their mentees, but younger and newer members may have skills they are willing to share in areas that older members don't, such as technology.

Can I mentor more than one mentee at the same time? Yes, if you can keep them apart in your mind. Actually, in some programs where such an arrangement has occurred, the two mentees sometimes glean a lot from each other as well as from the mentor.

I don't live in an Australian city. Can I be a mentor? We don't see distance as a problem if you can use Skype, a phone and email—and if you're comfortable giving guidance through Track Changes comment notes. Some face-to-face contact is desirable in such a partnership, so either at least one personal visit or the use of Skype would cover that.

Possible topics for mentoring

The national coordinators have been asked what topics can be covered in a mentoring program. As indicated earlier in these guidance notes, no topic is out of bounds—it is a matter for agreement between the mentee and the mentor. The local coordinator needs to know from the mentee what topic he or she wishes to be mentored in, and a suitable and willing mentor will then be sought. However, below is a list of topics that have been covered in our pilot program and suggested in discussions. It is not exhaustive, and mentees are free to seek mentoring in any area of practical editing or related topics.

- Copy-editing using Track Changes
- Proofreading using manually inserted standard proofreading marks
- Substantive editing
- Specific fiction or non-fiction editing
- Specialist editing, for example: academic (theses and journal articles), scientific, legal, music, non-native English, children's literature, material for websites
- Guidance in aspects of English grammar
- Developing an entry for an editing society's freelance register
- Aspects of running a freelance editing business: reference library; office equipment; documentation—quoting for jobs, invoicing; client relations; ethical considerations; insurance including professional indemnity
- Returning to editing after a long break
- Guidance in editing in an area new to you