

# TAI Extended Studies Mentoring Orientation Booklet

All you need to know about the Trojan Academic Initiative  
Student Peer Mentoring Programme



2021

*A question of balance*

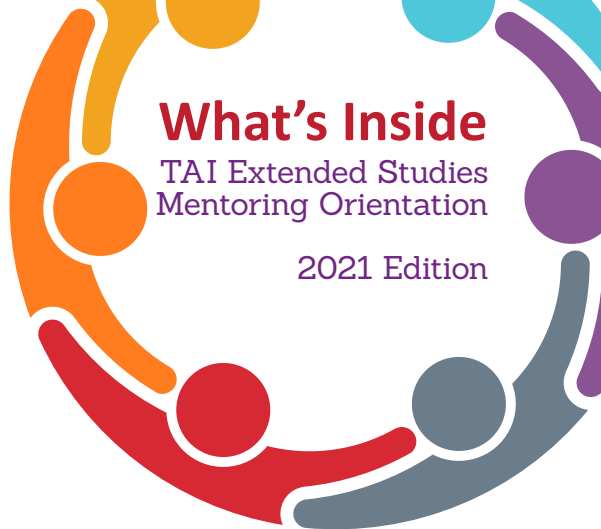


**Student Peer  
Mentoring Programme**  
TROJAN ACADEMIC INITIATIVE



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*



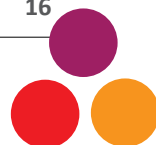


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TAI Extended Studies  
Mentoring Orientation

2021 Edition

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Greetings first year Extended Studies students,

## **The Extended Studies Student Peer Mentoring Programme: Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI)**

Congratulations on being accepted to study at Rhodes University, and a warm welcome to the Extended Studies (ES) TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme.

At the moment and in the time to come you will probably have more questions than answers - this is completely understandable. You might wonder, for instance...

*What's it like being a student at Rhodes?  
How could it be different from school?  
How will I find my place in the community?  
Where do I begin?  
What is a faculty, and how does it work?  
How do I balance my academics with my social life?  
How will I cope with the volume of work?  
What if there are problems at home?  
How will I manage my time well?  
Could I improve my study skills?  
How do I manage my finances?  
What about peer pressure?  
How can I succeed academically?  
What will be expected of me?  
What's on offer at Rhodes?  
How can I get involved?  
What might my future look like?*

The TAI student peer mentoring programme aims to offer you ways of figuring out the answers to these and any other questions, with the guidance and support of your own senior student mentor. Your mentor is a former Extended Studies student, someone in the same faculty as you, who has already 'been there' and succeeded.

You'll get together (online) with your mentor and a few other Extended Studies first years once a week in a relaxed and confidential setting, to talk about whatever's on your mind. These meetings form part of your Extended Studies coursework this year, and need to be approached seriously. In addition to your mentoring sessions, you will of course have the regular support and guidance of your Extended Studies lecturers, who will walk with you through your studies.

## **ALL you need to know about the TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme**

### **How much time will mentoring take?**

You'll get together online once a week for about 45 minutes with your mentor and a few other ES first years in your faculty i.e. Science group, Humanities group, Commerce group.

### **How long does the mentoring programme run for?**

The first semester i.e. terms 1 & 2, but not during the mid-semester vacation.

### **Will mentoring COST me anything?**

No - not a cent. It's included in your RU tuition fees.

### **What is MENTORING?**

Mentoring is a sustained often formalised relationship, in which a more experienced member of a community of practice assists with the development of a less experienced person to enable her/him/them to become a fully-fledged member of the community. The community of practice in this instance could be Rhodes University, the Extended Studies Programme or your Faculty, among other things.

In closing then, students, I hope that your experiences and interactions in the Extended Studies TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme will be enriching and valuable.

All the best for the year ahead!

Best regards,

**Nichola**

Nichola van der Poel  
TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme  
Course co-ordinator and lecturer  
Extended Studies Unit  
Rhodes University, Makhanda  
Email: n.vanderpoel@ru.ac.za



### Who is a MENTEE?

A mentee is the person being mentored or a person entering into a mentoring relationship with her/his/their mentor. In this case, mentees are first year Extended Studies Programme students at Rhodes University...in other words – **YOU!** Mentees also include all first year RU Pharmacy students, who partner with a mentor through the TAI programme.

### Who is a MENTOR?

“A Mentor is a personal facilitator who **listens, encourages, challenges and questions** in such a way that the other person - the mentee - is **empowered** to achieve certain goals” Oltmann (2009: 29).

## Quiz 1

Circle TRUE/FALSE in response to the statements below:

1. A mentor is someone who will do my assignments with me. TRUE FALSE
2. A mentor is someone who has all the answers. TRUE FALSE
3. A mentor helps me learn to become independent. TRUE FALSE
4. A mentor is not a parent. TRUE FALSE
5. A mentor makes a good romantic partner. TRUE FALSE
6. A good mentor is someone old, with grey hair. TRUE FALSE
7. A mentor keeps things confidential, unless my health/safety or the health/safety of someone else is at risk. TRUE FALSE
8. A mentor is not someone I can approach for a financial loan. TRUE FALSE
9. A mentor can help with general academic guidance. TRUE FALSE
10. A mentor can direct me to specialists in the university when needed. TRUE FALSE
11. Belonging to a mentoring group could help me to grow academically, socially and/or personally. TRUE FALSE
12. Belonging to a TAI mentoring group is part of being an Extended Studies student – everyone participates. TRUE FALSE

**First years:** One of the things you will learn about university, is that definite answers are not always possible or preferred. As such, TAI suggests the following responses to the quiz be considered, perhaps even debated, in your mentoring groups and beyond. Response 12, however, is an exception – it is definitely true!

*Suggested responses: 1 false, 2 false, 3 true, 4 true, 5 false, 6 false, 7 true, 8 true, 9 true, 10 true, 11 true, 12 true*

## How can I make the MOST of my mentoring group?

### Quiz 2

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. I should arrive on time for my weekly mentoring meetings. AGREE DISAGREE
2. I should try to show interest in what other people have to say. AGREE DISAGREE
3. I should do my best to join in the discussions. AGREE DISAGREE
4. I can email or see my mentor after the session, if I need to raise something which I wasn't comfortable raising in the group. AGREE DISAGREE
5. I must remember to let my mentor know if I have a good reason to miss a meeting e.g. I am unwell. AGREE DISAGREE
6. I should pretend I know everything, even when I don't. AGREE DISAGREE
7. I can just miss mentoring sessions when I'm too busy or tired. AGREE DISAGREE
8. It is okay for me to tell anyone the personal stories which people in my mentoring group have shared. AGREE DISAGREE
9. I should try to keep an open mind and not be judgemental of what other first years say. AGREE DISAGREE
10. The more I put in to my group, the more I'll get out. AGREE DISAGREE

**Students:** As previously mentioned, TAI suggests the following responses to this quiz be considered and discussed in your mentoring group: 1 agree, 2 agree, 3 agree, 4 agree, 5 agree, 6 disagree, 7 disagree, disagree, 8 disagree, 9 agree, 10 agree.





## Who is a FACILITATOR?

TAI facilitators are academic members of staff who meet with mentors each week to guide them through issues which they, and/or their mentees, may be dealing with. At no point are names or specific identifying details mentioned, so anonymity is assured. All information is strictly confidential unless there is risk to the health/safety of a mentee and/or another person. With facilitators supporting mentors and mentors supporting other mentors, your mentor will be very well placed to help you as you navigate your studies at Rhodes.

Please note that while your central relationship will be with your mentor, should you have a recurring issue/concern with your mentor and/or your group which you have not been able to resolve by first talking with your mentor and/or your group, then you may email the relevant facilitator for assistance.

Please see 'Meet the Staff' to find your faculty's facilitator's email address: Mr Amon Magadza (Commerce), Ms Judith Reynolds (Humanities), Ms Aviwe Matiwane (Science).



## Meet the TAI Staff

### **Prof Jo-Anne Vorster**

#### **TAI PROGRAMME LEADER**



PROFESSOR JO-ANNE VORSTER is head of the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning. She is interested in how the curriculum, including teaching and learning practices and assessment can contribute to success for the majority of university students. To this end she has contributed to the design and facilitation of postgraduate diploma courses for university lecturers as well as for practitioners in the field of academic development. Academic development is concerned with the advancement of teaching and learning in universities. Her research interests include academic staff development, curriculum development practices, and student learning. Jo-Anne has worked in higher education for more than twenty-five years and is passionate about the role that mentors and tutors can play in supporting undergraduate student learning.

### **Ms Denise Jeggels**

#### **TAI & ESU SECRETARY**



Dip. Secretarial certificate (GADRA Commercial Centre); Office Administration Certificate (Rhodes University); Supervisor Certificate (Rhodes University)

[d.jeggels@ru.ac.za](mailto:d.jeggels@ru.ac.za)

DENISE joined Rhodes University in 2006 as a clerical intern at the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership. She joined CHERTL/ Extended Studies Unit in 2009 as data capturer and secretary, where she works as a data capturer at CHERTL in the mornings and as a secretary at ESU in the afternoons. At CHERTL Denise is responsible for capturing student responses onto the Evaluation Assistant for lecturers from the various departments when teaching and/or courses are evaluated. She oversees the scanning of test and exam-related multiple choice response sheets. In

addition, Denise is responsible for all administrative duties and financial services for ESU/TAI, and she assists with student queries.



**Mr Amon Magadza**

**TAI COMMERCE FACILITATOR**

a.magadza@ru.ac.za

MR AMON MAGADZA is currently a Computer Literacies Coordinator for CHERTL - Extended Studies Unit and teaching the Science Computer Skills course. He has taught in all the three computer literacy programmes offered at Rhodes University. He strongly believes in mentoring as it empowers both the mentor and mentee relationships, and enhances sense of belonging. Amon grew up and studies in Zimbabwe Computer Studies at, KPTC. He has been teaching Computer Science in the tertiary education environment for the many years. He is interested in exploring ICT curriculum development and Student Support.



**Ms Judith Reynolds**

**ACTING TAI HUMANITIES FACILITATOR**

BA Hons (Rhodes), MA (Rhodes), PGDHE (Rhodes), DELTA (RSA/Cambridge)

j.reynolds@ru.ac.za

Judith Reynolds completed an MA in Linguistics and English Language at Rhodes in 1997. She then taught English as a Foreign Language in Poland for 6 years. In the summers she taught English and then Academic Literacy in the UK. While she was teaching EFL she completed the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults. In 2005 she returned to Rhodes to teach on the new Humanities Extended Studies programme. In 2007 she completed the Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education. Her favourite thing about teaching in the ES programme is meeting so many amazing and resilient young people. In her years of teaching she has realised that you can't treat students as brains or intellects. They bring their whole selves into the classroom, including their personal histories and their emotions. Judith tries to acknowledge and work with the 'whole student' in her teaching. Her interests are reading, ballet, yoga and she runs health workshops.



**Ms Aviwe Matiwane**  
**TAI SCIENCE FACILITATOR**

BSc (Hons) (Rhodes); MSc (Rhodes)

[a.matiwane@ru.ac.za](mailto:a.matiwane@ru.ac.za)

Aviwe Matiwane is currently the Science Language and Literacies Lecturer at CHERTL in the Extended Studies Unit. She is a Palaeobotanist by profession and is currently finishing her PhD at Rhodes University. Her research interests include teaching and learning in science, science communication, palaeobotany, evolution, and ecology. Ms Matiwane is currently the Science Facilitator and once served as a student mentor at Rhodes.



**Ms Nichola van der Poel**  
**TAI CO-ORDINATOR**

B.A. HDE. PG Dip (HE) Rhodes

[n.vanderpoel@ru.ac.za](mailto:n.vanderpoel@ru.ac.za)

Nichola's interest and experience lies in enhancing learning and teaching spaces through student development work. Her focus is on mentor and tutor development, with a view to enabling students' wellbeing and potential. Nichola developed and initiated CHERTL's Engage short course in small group facilitation for Rhodes University tutors, which continues into its fourth year in 2021. She worked as a TAI Humanities mentor facilitator for several years, since which time she has co-ordinated the TAI student peer mentoring programme and facilitated its short course for mentors. Nichola believes in the power of mentoring, and welcomes all first years to the University.



*Students note, this is an example of the contract which will be signed by your mentor and the relevant faculty facilitator.*



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## **Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) MENTOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

As a Mentor in the Trojan Academic Initiative Peer Mentoring Programme at Rhodes University, I commit myself to conduct which:

- respects the dignity and right to confidentiality of my mentees;
- is directed toward the growth and personal development of my mentees;
- honours the contracts established between myself, my mentees and the TAI Mentor Programme;
- recognises the need for balance between my own academic and social commitments and the needs of my mentees.

As part of this commitment, I will:

- seek to identify the needs of my mentees
- enter into a written contract between myself and my mentees
- meet with my mentees at least once a week during term time
- meet with my facilitator at least once a week during term time
- contact my mentees and facilitator if I am unable to keep an appointment
- attend all development sessions and faculty-based mentor meetings
- maintain a regular journal where I record the date, attendance, topics and other items to be discussed with mentees
- keep the boundaries of my relationship with my mentees appropriate
- submit my journal to my facilitator when requested to do so
- inform my facilitator or a responsible university authority should I be concerned for the safety or health of my mentees
- support my mentees in obtaining professional assistance where necessary
- inform my facilitator immediately should any issue impact on my continued participation in the TAI programme

Signed by.....(Mentor's name and signature) and

.....(Facilitator's name and signature)

on this.....day of.....(month & year), in Makhanda.

*Note: this is an example of the document which you and your mentor will work through and sign early in the new term.*



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## **Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) TERMS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN MENTORS AND MENTEES**

Both mentor and the mentees must agree on how they will work together. These forms must be finalised by the end of the first session and both parties must keep a copy in their journals.

As the TAI Mentor for this group I agree to:

- ☐ Attend all scheduled meetings
- ☐ Contact my mentees if I am unable to keep an appointment
- ☐ Maintain a professional attitude and keep information confidential
- ☐ Listen without judging
- ☐ Arrange a one-on-one session if a mentee needs to discuss something outside of the group
- ☐

As a TAI Mentee I agree to:

- ☐ Attend all scheduled meetings
- ☐ Contact my mentor if I am unable to keep an appointment
- ☐ Keep information given in the group confidential
- ☐ Listen without judging
- ☐ Be an active participant in the meetings
- ☐ Let my mentor know if I need to discuss something outside of the group
- ☐

Are there any initial concerns which need to be discussed?

How do you intend to resolve problems if they arise?

*Note: Copies of this form must be made for every group member*

Mentee's Name: ..... Mentor's Name: .....

Mentee's Signature: ..... Mentor's Signature: .....

Date: ..... Date: .....



*"I learnt how to manage stress and deal with university pressure."*

*"She encouraged me to attend all lectures and be active in class so that it would be easy for me to ask questions if I encountered a problem."*

*"I have learnt how to communicate with other people about my concerns, difficulties and ideas."*

**In their course evaluations, first year Extended Studies first year students explained what most valuable to them about working with a senior student mentor:**

*"Not knowing how to handle the pressure from practicals, tutorials and tests while attending lectures was beginning to get to me. She helped me handle it and I learnt how to cope."*

*"I learnt about my Faculty from my mentor."*

*"I found out from my mentor about how to study and that is better to start studying early for exams than during Swot Week."*

*"I learnt from my mentor that you should not be discouraged because you are in the Extended Studies programme. You should see that as a blessing in disguise."*

*"I learnt how to believe in myself. She always said if she can do it, so can I."*







*"The most valuable thing about having a mentor is that I learnt how to 'fit' into university."*

*"The most valuable thing I learnt from my mentor was balancing my social life as well as my academics."*

*"I found out that this degree gets even harder and that I will need to manage my time wisely."*

*"I discovered that the world, Rhodes University to be particular, is my oyster. Therefore I can do anything I put my mind to."*

*"I've learnt not to lose hope, even when the workload piles up."*

*"My mentor helped me to overcome the challenges I faced."*

*"I learnt how to spend money wisely and manage it in a responsible way."*









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Learning Guidance Commitment Collaboration Accomplishment Responsibility  
Fulfilment Honesty Tolerance Challenge Resilience Tenacity  
Balance Trust Thought Action Growth Inspiration

**Celebrating 18 Years Of Mentoring Excellence at Rhodes**

**2003 – 2021**