

Ncedana Student Peer Mentoring Programme

First Year Mentoring Orientation Booklet



Ncedana
means
“help each
other”



Ncedana
Student Peer Mentoring Programme



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

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Dear First Year Rhodes Student,

Re: The Ncedana Student Peer Mentoring Programme

Congratulations on being accepted to study at Rhodes University and welcome to the Ncedana Student Peer Mentoring Programme. At the moment, and in the time to come, you will probably have more questions than answers.

The Ncedana Programme aims to offer you ways of figuring out the answers to these, and other questions, with the guidance and support of your own senior student mentor. This is someone in the same faculty as you, who has already 'been there' and succeeded. You'll get together with your mentor and a few other first years once a week in a relaxed setting, to talk about whatever's on your mind. In addition to this, you will of course have the regular support of your warden, house committees, your lecturers and tutors - as well as the many other support systems in place at Rhodes.

ALL you need to know about the Mentoring Programme

How much time will mentoring take?

You'll get together once a week for about 45 minutes with your mentor and a few other first years in your faculty.

How long does the mentoring programme run for?

The first semester i.e. terms 1 & 2, but not during the mid-semester vacation. And then there's the option of 2-3 sessions with your mentor in term 3, after the mid-year exams.

*Will it **cost** me anything?*

No.

*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 so as to enable her/him to become a fully-fledged member of the community. The "community of practice" in this instance could be Rhodes University, the residence or oppie community and/or the Faculty, among other things.

Concerns?

Please note that while your central relationship will be with your mentor and your group, should you have a recurring issue 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 me, or the Ncedana administrator Ms Varaidzo Paradza (mentoring@ru.ac.za) and we will gladly assist you.

In closing then, I hope that your experiences and interactions on the Ncedana Peer Mentoring Programme will be enriching and valuable. All the best for the year ahead!

Kind Regards,

Nichola

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Who is a **mentee**?

A mentee is the person being mentored or a person entering into a mentoring relationship with her/his mentor. In this case, mentees are first year students at Rhodes University...in other words – YOU!

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).

Who is a **facilitator**?

Ncedana facilitators are Rhodes 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 first year student and/or another person. *With facilitators supporting mentors and mentors supporting other mentors, your mentor should be very well placed to help you as you navigate your studies at Rhodes!*

Quiz 1

Answer TRUE/FALSE to the following statements:

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 Ncedana mentoring group is voluntary but if I want to opt out, I need to tell my mentor. TRUE FALSE

Some questions drawn from: Omatsu, G. Date Unknown. The Power of Peer Mentoring: Peer Mentoring Resource Booklet. University Hall: Educational Opportunity Programme.

First years: One of the things you will learn about university, is that definite answers are not always possible, or preferred. As such, Ncedana 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 ok 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*

Some questions drawn from: Omatsu, G. Date Unknown. *The Power of Peer Mentoring: Peer Mentoring Resource Booklet*. University Hall: Educational Opportunity Programme.


Students: As previously mentioned, Ncedana suggests that the following responses to this quiz be considered and debated.

Suggested responses: 1 agree, 2 agree, 3 agree, 4 agree, 5 agree, 6 disagree, 7 disagree, 8 disagree, 9 agree, 10 agree.



In their mentoring programme evaluations, previous first year students explained what was **most valuable** to them about **partnering with a mentor...**

- “I found out that this degree gets even harder and that I will need to manage my time wisely.”
- “I’ve learnt not to lose hope, even when the workload piles up.”
- “The most valuable thing about having a mentor is that I learnt how to ‘fit’ into university.”
- “My mentor helped me to overcome the challenges I faced.”
- “I learnt how to spend money wisely and manage it in a responsible way.”
- “I discovered that the world, Rhodes University to be particular, is my oyster. Therefore I can do anything I put my mind to.”
- “The most valuable thing I learnt from my mentor was balancing my social life as well as my academics.”
- “Adjusting to the environment was becoming a problem for me. It was taking me longer than I thought it would, and being part of a mentor group helped me in that regard.”
- “My first semester was not easy at all, at times I just wanted to go back home. My mentor motivated me to try hard and succeed.”
- “Our mentor could tell us from his own personal experience what to do, and also inspire us with his own story of overcoming difficulties.”
- “Since we were all doing the same degree, my mentor was very knowledgeable about the first year courses we were doing and she gave us plenty of advice on how to do well in our courses.”
- “You know that you can talk freely and that you are not alone in the first year ‘roller coaster’.”
- “Spending time with the group laughing, sharing experiences and building one another was the best.”
- “Not feeling hopeless and alone - having someone to confide in and a group who is willing to listen- this definitely gives emotional reassurance.”
- “My mentor explained so many things to us and made us enjoy the journey here at Rhodes.”
- “You get different perspectives in the group, helping to solve issues.”
- “The best part about having a mentor is knowing that you are never alone and there is someone who has been in your situation, and that someone is willing to help and make your life easier at Rhodes.”



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

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

"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."

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

I found that being in my mentor group helped me feel like I belonged to Rhodes as a first year.

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

In their mentoring programme evaluations, previous first year students explained what was **most valuable** to them about **partnering with a mentor...**