

## **Examples of practice - Mentoring scheme University of Leeds Faculty of Engineering**

The University of Leeds has also taken on board feedback received from Postdoctoral staff who indicated that they didn't feel they were getting enough help to develop their careers and, in particular, that they wanted to talk to people with different career aspirations. This feedback suggested that they might want an independent way of talking about their career development.

Accordingly, a mentoring scheme was established which aims to match research staff with a member of academic staff or, if appropriate, someone from the community. The scheme is purely relevant to career development and allows mentees to tap into the experience of their mentor. It was established two years ago and three tranches of people have signed up and gone through the mentoring training programme, which is a rigorous process run by an external trainer from Vitae. Back-to-back training sessions are run for both mentees and mentors where they are encouraged to talk about their expectations of the scheme and how to conduct meetings to make sure the relationship is professionally approached. This training ensures the quality and professionalism of the scheme and that everyone benefits from the relationship. The Dean and Pro Vice Chancellor in Engineering are both signed up as mentors in the scheme, which shows their commitment to the project and in making it work.

As part of the matching process, mentees can specify their requirements of a mentor including, for example, gender or race if they would prefer to speak with someone who understands their culture. This is particularly important if they want help to address some of the cultural issues they might have. In one of the mentoring relationships, a postgraduate wishing to acquire Chartership status was matched with a mentor who already has Chartership status to help in guiding her through the process. A member of research staff wanted business counselling as he was considering setting up a consulting business. Accordingly, he was matched with a business mentor from the community and he has now been successful in securing a grant for his business.

The mentoring relationships generally last for 12 to 18 months and come to an end by mutual consent. The scheme has had 25 mentoring pairs in 18 months who will shortly be surveyed for their feedback of the scheme.

### **Learning points/evaluation**

- The key to the success is in getting Senior Management to support it.