

# Out for MENTORING

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The Out for Australia Mentoring Manual

Out For  
AUSTRALIA



# Who are we?

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**Out for Australia (OFA)** is an independent volunteer organisation that exists to foster greater inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in Australian workplaces.

**Our mission** is to provide visible role models, mentors, thought leadership and targeted support to aspiring LGBTQIA+ professionals and to strengthen the sense of community among professionals and students.

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01

# Learn about the OFA mentoring program

Learn more about the OFA mentoring program

Out for Australia's mentoring program is Australia's largest independent LGBTQIA+ mentoring program. Since 2013, we have had over 2,000 people participate in our mentoring program.

Learn more about the OFA mentoring program

## What is mentoring?

Don't let the word 'mentoring' scare you. Mentoring is flexible and fun and looks different for every pairing.

**Mentoring** is a professional relationship between a mentee and a mentor who talk in person or virtually to discuss career goals.

While some people prefer to meet up with their mentor/mentee in person, many people conduct very successful virtual mentorships entirely over Zoom, Skype, Hangouts or Facetime or email.

### **What mentoring can look like for you:**

- A structured, goal-driven journey with monthly catch ups
- 1 or 2 casual coffee catchups
- A one-off call, Zoom catch-up or an exchange of emails

## Why mentoring?

At Out for Australia, we believe passionately in mentoring.

This is because mentoring is a proven way to fix the underrepresentation of LGBTQIA+ people in many workplaces, and as importantly, to allow those people to feel comfortable and safe at work.

### **3 reasons we love mentoring are that it provides...**

1

#### **Visibility**

You can't be what you can't see. Mentoring gives young LGBTQIA+ people to look up to, to emulate, and to inspire them.

2

#### **Relationships and community**

Many LGBTQIA+ people are denied the opportunity to form strong relationships. Mentoring allows people to form connections inside an accepting community.

3

#### **Professional growth**

Employment is the key aspect of most people's well-being and livelihood. Helping LGBTQIA+ people do well - and feel well - at work, helps them live a happy life.

Learn more about the OFA mentoring program

## How our program works

### Virtual/ online format



Since 2018, the OFA mentoring program has been run digitally through an online portal called Mentorloop.

**Mentorloop** is an online mentoring platform. Think of it like Facebook, but for mentoring! Out for Australia uses Mentorloop to run our mentoring program. This means that when signing up and looking for a match, you will do so through the Mentorloop website. More information on how sign up through Mentorloop can be found on [page 17](#).

This means you can sign up for the program from the comfort of your living room and it only takes about 10 minutes!

### Getting matched



In the OFA mentoring program, participants usually match themselves.

Once you have created a profile on Mentorloop, you can scroll from hundreds of other profiles of mentees/mentors to find your match.

We strongly encourage our participants to match themselves because in our experience, you are the best judge of what you are looking for in a mentee/mentor. However, we are available to help you find a match if you would like our assistance.

More information on the matching process is found from [page 20](#).

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### Cost



The OFA mentoring program is 100% free. There are no costs at any stage of the OFA mentoring program. You can have as many matches as you want.

Learn more about the OFA mentoring program

## How our program works

### Eligibility

The Out for Australia mentoring program is open to any one:

- Over the age of 18
- Located within Australia

Our program is a LGBTQIA+ mentoring program, however allies are welcome to act as mentors.

There are also no restrictions to do with professional experience. We welcome anyone to the program who is ready to commit to a mentorship.

### Mentor or mentee?

In your sign up to the program, you will need to choose whether you would like to act as a mentor, mentee, or both.

Whether you opt in to become a mentor, mentee or both is completely up to you, however you should reflect deeply on what you are looking to get out of the program and where you are in your career.

In our program, you can have more than one mentoring relationship. This means you can be both a mentor (in one mentoring relationship) and a mentee (in a different mentoring relationship). As an example, someone mid-career may act as a mentor for a student, and simultaneously be receiving mentorship from a senior person in their industry.

### An OFA mentor is

A more established professional that identifies as LGBTQIA+ or as an ally. Mentors are committed to our mentees to help them achieve short-term goals, and help them to set long-term goals in the workplace.



### An OFA mentee is

Someone in need of career advice and/or to talk about being LGBTQIA+ in the workplace. Our mentees come from a wide range of industries, and OFA welcomes applications from all academic backgrounds. Mentees often include:

- current students
- recent graduates who are entering the workplace for the first time
- young professionals during the early stages of their careers
- Someone changing career paths





Learn more about the OFA mentoring program

## Benefits for mentees

Our mentees tell us they get...

### Career development/ progression

"Out for Australia's mentoring program has supported me throughout my early years of my career. I am incredibly grateful for the network and assistance being a part of the mentoring program provides."

### Advice on thriving in the workplace

The mentoring relationships help clarify questions about the future, and how to position oneself as an LGBTQ+ identifying person in the workplace"

### Networking

"For mentees, you have the potential to access an amazing sounding board, and access a network of people you'd have not otherwise been able to access."

## Benefits for mentors

Our mentors tell us they get...

### Sense of giving back

"I am really enjoying my mentorship... We meet every quarter and each time I see that she has made progress. I really feel that she's taking on what I'm saying and growing from it."

### Opportunity to connect with younger people

"One unexpected benefit of my mentorship is connecting with a younger generation and learning new ideas. My mentee has challenged my thinking on the LGBT community, as well as many other topics!"

Unlike some mentoring programs, the OFA mentoring program is not just for finance or legal professionals. The OFA program caters for all professions and invites LGBTQIA+ people with all kinds of lived experiences and identities.

Learn more about the OFA mentoring program

## Diversity in the program

Ensuring diversity in our program is imperative because it helps our mentors and mentees find people who inspire them and who they can learn from. Currently in our program:



We have participants from every Australian state and territory

33%

Of our participants identify as culturally or linguistically diverse

31%

Of our participants identify as women and 5% as non-binary

7%

Of our participants come from rural and regional Australia

5%

Identify as having a disability

1%

As an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

85

Our mentees are studying at over 85 different academic institutions

# 125

## Career paths represented

Our pool of mentors is ever expanding with mentors from over 125 different sectors across professional services, including:

- Accounting/finance
- Consulting
- Business
- Government
- NFP
- Law
- Health
- Travel
- Small business/startups
- Technology
- IT
- Construction
- Education
- Defence
- Science
- Retail
- Mining

## Expectations

The OFA mentoring program is easy, fun and flexible, and is designed to allow mentors and mentees to have a relationship which suits their individual needs and time constraints.

This said, whether you're a mentor or a mentee, opting in to the program comes with a minimum level of commitment. We ask both mentees and mentors to:



### **Have time to commit**

Both parties should have the time and mental space to commit to a new relationship and discuss time commitment early.



### **Be open-minded**

We ask all our mentees to be open-minded about who they could learn from (in terms of age, experience level, and identity) and all our mentors to consider a broad range of people they could help.



### **Be willing to communicate openly**

While the structure of your mentorship relationship should be flexible, mentors and mentees should speak explicitly about what you want to get out of this experience so that you can work towards a common goal.

While OFA events are designed to help you get the most out of your mentorship, **there is no expectation** to attend the events and you are more than welcome just to participate in the mentoring program.

# Our code of conduct

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Out for Australia also has a mentoring **code of conduct**, which you will **need to read and accept** in order to join the program.

In particular, **all participants must avoid any inappropriate and unprofessional conduct**, which includes, but is not limited to, sexual or romantic involvement between mentors and mentees.

## Your privacy

A full explanation of how your personal information is dealt with in the mentoring program is available within our [Privacy Policy](#).

However, here are answers to some of the questions you may have.



### What information do I need to give you?

During the sign up process, you will be asked for personal details about yourself including:

- Contact details such as your email address and phone number
- Career information such as your industry and level of experience
- Geographic information such as which state you come from
- Other information such as your goals for the mentorship

Some of this information will be optional, such as providing your social media handles and telling us about your gender and sexuality.



### What information will be visible in my profile?

Once you finish the sign up process, this creates a profile in the Mentorloop platform. This is visible only to other mentors/mentees in the program who have Mentorloop profiles and the OFA team running the program.

Your profile will not contain all the information from your sign up form. It will only contain certain basic details about you, your career and what you're looking for, such as:

- Your name
- Organisation and role
- Gender (if you disclose it)
- Mentor/mentee preferences
- Your bio (which you write)

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**What information do you hide from my profile?**

Whenever you see this icon in the sign up form, this means that the information will not be visible in your form. Specifically, your responses to diversity questions such as whether you identify as trans, intersex, CALD or Aboriginal or what your sexuality is will not be included in your profile.



**Why do you ask for information if it won't be visible in my profile?**

Understanding who is taking part in our program is important. It helps us report on our impact, and more importantly, it helps us find under-represented groups and design programs to specifically help those groups.

If you do not feel comfortable disclosing this kind of information, you can often select the option 'Prefer not to disclose' on the sign up form.

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Join the OFA  
mentoring program




## How to join the OFA mentoring program

**Step 1** Head to our [mentoring program sign up page](#).


**Step 2** Read the Terms and Conditions on this page. Once you are done, choose to register with your email, LinkedIn or Google account.


**Step 3** Now it's time to complete your registration. The sign-up form will prompt you for all the required information over a few web pages, but there's an idea of what you'll need.

 Around 10 minutes to complete the form.

 An idea of what you hope to get out of the program, including:

- Do you want to be a mentor, mentee or both?
- What are your professional goals or milestones?
- What kind of mentor or mentee would be ideal for you?

 A short bio of roughly 150 words introducing yourself. This is what your prospective mentors/mentees will see when they come across your profile. Remember, you can edit this at any time after completing the process

 **Optional:** You could add your CV (but don't worry, if you don't have one prepared you just choose not to upload when the option appears!

**Step 4** Once your application is submitted, you'll get an email from Mentorloop asking you to verify your email.

Once your email is verified, your Mentorloop profile is now all ready to go! If you aren't automatically redirected at the last step, you can log in at [www.mentorloop.com](http://www.mentorloop.com) or through our site [www.outforaustralia.org/mentoring-programming-signup](http://www.outforaustralia.org/mentoring-programming-signup).

## Sign up process

### Sign Up



Signing up via our portal is free, fast and easy

### Browse



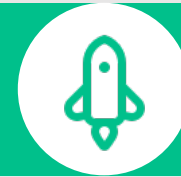
Browse through hundreds of other profiles to find your idea mentor or mentee

### Find a match



Once you've spotted a match you can send a match a request or you can reach out to us to find a match for you

### Start Mentoring



From this point you and your mentor/mentee can meet up – in person or virtually – to “blast” off your mentoring relationship

### Ongoing Support



We're here to support you every step of the way – just reach out to the Mentoring Program Coordinator for help at any time

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Find your perfect  
mentoring match

Find your perfect mentoring match

## Search for a match

Unlike some other mentoring programs, in the OFA mentoring program participants are encouraged to match themselves.

The reason we encourage people to match themselves is that you are the best judge of what you are looking for. In the more than 5 years we've been running our program, we've seen that the **best matches are made when people select their own mentor/mentee.**

### Unable to find a match

If you cannot see a potential match immediately, this is perfectly normal. Our community of mentors/mentees is constantly changing as peoples' lives and time constraints change, and you may need to log in a few times before you find a match.

This said, you **should not waste too much time waiting around for the 'perfect' mentor.** Even if you can't see the profile you were looking for, you might be surprised what you can learn from someone who you never thought you would be a good match with.

## Mentorloop makes it easy to search for a match in the following ways:



Once you login, you will be able to scroll through **hundreds of other profiles** of people in the OFA mentoring program by clicking 'Find new matches' from the left hand side menu.



Using the **search function**, you can narrow down your search (for example, by looking for particular workplaces or years of professional experience).



You can learn more about how to find your match by reading the **Mentorloop User Guide** sent upon sign up or watching this [video guide on self-matching](#).

## Find your perfect mentoring match

# Send a match request

Once you find a potential mentor or mentee match, it's time to send a match request.

Both mentors and mentees can send match requests, and we encourage both types of participants to do so if they find someone suitable.

To send a match request, all you need to do is:

- 1 Click on their profile
- 2 Click on 'connect'
- 3 Choose whether you would like to be the mentor/mentee and include an optional message to the person

## What to remember?

You are able to have more than one mentoring relationship at any one time. In fact, this is encouraged, so that you can hear more than one perspective.

However, you are **limited to 5 match requests at once**, so do not get too trigger happy! The purpose of this cap to ensure that you have adequate time for all your mentorships.

You will likely need to wait a couple of days for their response.

If they respond positively, then...**congratulations!** You are now in a new OFA mentorship.

### Receiving a negative response

If they respond negatively, then do not take it to heart. All mentors and mentees have demands on their time and are also looking for specific things within the program. You should congratulate yourself for putting the offer to them, and now try and find someone else who might fit the bill!

## Respond to a match request

When/if you receive a match request on Mentorloop, you should start by taking a look at this person's profile and asking yourself:



If they are asking you to be a mentor, do you have the right skills and experience to help them meet their goals (which you can find in their bio and/or the message they sent you)?



If they are asking you to be a mentee, does this person have skills, experience or other life experience that could help you meet your mentoring goals or which you could otherwise learn from?



**Remember:** Keep an open mind about who you can learn from and what life experience that person needs to hold. In particular, your mentor/mentee does not need to come from the same industry as you. Some of the most impactful mentorships that we have seen are between people with vastly different walks of life.

Once you have made up your mind, you have two options:



**Accept the request:** if the match is right for you, then simply click accept.



**Decline the request:** if the match is not right for you, then you should never hesitate to decline the connection. However, you should always:

- Explain why you are declining the request (e.g. perhaps you don't have the skills to help them) and
- Thank them for reaching out - remember, it takes courage to send a match request.

If you no longer wish to receive match requests, then you can turn your profile to invisible. You will need to:

Log in to your Mentorloop profile



Click 'settings' in the top left hand corner



Switch your profile to 'unavailable' by toggling the pink switch in the middle of the screen.

Find your perfect mentoring match

## Seek our assistance

Of course, if you would like our assistance at any stage of the matching process, including searching for a potential match, we are here to help. You can tell us you'd like our help finding a match by:



Indicating it in your sign up form (you will be asked whether you would like OFA to help you find a match)



Reaching out to us at any stage through Mentorloop using the chat function.

”My mentor has been great. He has provided great support during the search for my first job. He is patient, understanding, organised and a great role model”

OFA Mentee

04

Get the most out of  
your OFA mentorship



“I have an amazing mentor, and despite being in the early phases of the mentoring programme, I feel as though I have already improved my motivation levels and goal setting skills.”

Out for Australia  
Mentee

## Get the most out of your OFA mentorship

# Where to talk

The first thing you will need to do with your new mentor or mentee is agree where and how you will communicate.

The best format for you will depend on where you are based, your time restrictions and how comfortable you are meeting new people. Over the longer term, you'll need to decide where you'll meet (whether in person or virtual) and how frequently. The different ways your first conversation could occur are:



### Coffee Catch Up

This is the business standard and a great way to break the ice in a non-threatening environment.



### Office Chat

This is not only convenient for you, but your mentee may enjoy seeing where you work and being introduced to a few people.



### Phone Call or Skype

Using a virtual chat platform to meet up is a great alternative if you and your mentor/mentee cannot meet in person.



### Networking event

Many mentors have invited their mentees to company events where they can meet like minded people and ask questions



### Email or Text

Informal texting or emailing is a great way to commence your mentorship if you are still developing your confidence to meet new people.



**Remember:** the most important thing is that you will be able to explain what you would like to achieve through the relationship, so make sure you give them some thought in advance.

## Topics for your first chat

The first conversation with your mentor/mentee is like taking a car for a test-drive! It's a chance to chat to your mentor/mentee about their goals and aims, set parameters, and just generally get to know each other.

The following are a list of topics you may like to discuss during your first conversation and subsequent conversations.



**Remember:** The most important thing is that you will be able to explain what you would like to achieve through the relationship, so make sure you give them some thought in advance.



### Goals & Expectation

- What am I looking to get out of the mentoring relationship?
- What are the key skills and insights I can bring?
- What's important for my mentee to know about



### Logistics

- How often will we meet?
- Where/how will we conduct most meetings?
- How will we schedule and confirm meet ups?



### Confidentiality

- What topics are off limits?
- Do I identify as LGBTQIA+ ally, questioning, or something else?
- To whom and in what contexts am I comfortable being 'out' as LGBTQIA?



### Opt out

- What would it look like if this relationship was not working?
- How will we communicate this?
- Do we schedule a check in to let each other know how we're going?

## How to be an effective mentor or mentee

While mentorships should be fun and easy, they also take commitment and work from both parties to keep them going.

The following 5 tips are designed to help you keep a mentorship healthy and fruitful for the duration of its life.



### **Commitment to the relationship**

Ensuring you make enough time for your mentee/mentor is extremely important! Trust and respect are key elements to a strong mentoring relationship. This requires time to build, and having open and regular communication helps to ensure this is being achieved.



### **A personal connection**

As a guide, you should meet with your mentee/mentor every 4-6 weeks. Schedule a time in both your diaries so that time doesn't slip away. Remember, you can always reschedule for exams, busy periods at work etc.

Mentoring is unlikely to work if you cannot find common ground with your mentee/mentor. This should be one of the first things to consider upon entering a mentoring relationship: do we have similar professional aspirations, goals or achievements? Are our personalities compatible?

Rapport is built over time, and the best way to start is to find common ground with your mentee/mentor. Both parties should feel empowered by the relationship, and comfortable enough to ask questions or provide feedback.



### **Have a mutual end goal in mind**

Creating an end goal with your mentee early on allows you to both slowly work up to it and gives you a guide on how to structure your meetings/activities. An end goal might be a job application, end of year exams, or the end of a grad program.

Get the most out of your OFA mentorship

## How to be an effective mentor or mentee

While mentorships should be fun and easy, they also take commitment and work from both parties to keep them going.

The following 5 tips are designed to help you keep a mentorship healthy and fruitful for the duration of its life.



### **Keep the lines of communication open**

There is nothing worse than entering a mentoring relationship with both parties getting nothing valuable out of it. We all lead busy lives, but it's important to keep the lines of communication open with your mentee. Even sending an email touching base with your mentee shows them that you value your relationship with your mentee, and as such they will respond accordingly.



### **Make every moment count**

While it may be nice to simply catch up for coffee with your mentee for fun, it's better to have a purpose to your meetings. If you are stuck for ideas, check out our sample activities for inspiration.

“Great relationship with my mentor. He helped me with my journey coming out to my parents and has greatly supported my academic and career pursuits. He regularly checks up on me and finds time to catch up. Grateful to him and the OFA team for providing this platform.”

OFA Mentee

## Closing a mentorship

You will not always be a perfect match with your chosen mentor/mentee. This is perfectly normal and it is no reason to feel embarrassed. Sometimes needs change, or the match simply does not satisfy one or both parties.

We encourage all mentors and mentees to be upfront with what they are looking for and to opt out of a relationship if they are no longer getting anything out of it.

There's an example of a message on the right that you can send to someone when closing out the mentorship.



**Remember:** If you need any help opting out of a mentorship, or would like to close your Mentorloop account completely, please don't hesitate to contact us at [askmentoring@outforaustralia.org](mailto:askmentoring@outforaustralia.org).

### Example:

Hi Sam,

Thanks so much for your time a few weeks ago. I really enjoyed chatting about your experiences in the engineering industry as a gay man.

Since our chat, I've reflected further on what I'm trying to get out of a mentorship and I've realised that I would be best served by finding a mentor with professional experience in a construction firm.

I'll close off our loop in a few days, but wanted to say thanks again for your time - our chat helped me get clarity on what I'm looking for, so really appreciate your time.

Teddy

05

# Testimonials

## Mentee story

# NERIDA BOURNE

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## Out for Australia Mentee

Operations Manager at Comply Flow



### How did you feel about mentoring before this program?

Going in I was a bit unsure what my goals were. I hoped to meet inspiring people and develop ongoing genuine relationships. So far so good!

### What do you think the 'secret' is to a good mentoring relationship?

Active listening, appreciation and mutual respect. Just like any relationship the energy put in will impact the outcome.

### Can you tell us about your mentor?

My mentor shared real life advice that was learnt through years of trial, error and reflection. I was able to apply those to my current professional challenges and feel confident doing so.

### Do you have any tips or advice for those new to mentoring?

Figure out what you want then put yourself out there. You aren't going to get anywhere waiting for the connections to come to you.



# ELEANOR HAWKSWORTH

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## Out for Australia Mentee

English Language Teacher/Postgraduate Student



**Going into the program, what did you hope to get out of it?  
Are you on track to accomplish your goals?**

I wanted to explore my potential in a marketing career, as well as develop soft skills such as networking and resume writing. I made a goal to land my first internship (which I did!) and my first marketing job by the end of 2020. Shortly afterwards the COVID-19 pandemic hit Australia. I'm not sure if I'll get a marketing job this year, but thanks to Sam's help I feel confident that I will find a career that allows me to thrive creatively.

**What do you think the 'secret' is to a good mentoring relationship?**

Respect and curiosity. It doesn't matter how wide the experience gap is between two people. They can always learn something from each other.

**What is one way that mentoring has changed your professional or personal life?**

As naff as it sounds, it has genuinely changed my whole worldview for the better. Sam has not only helped me develop crucial business skills, but he's given me something much more important - self belief. I used to be too afraid of failure to share my ideas, but now I'm throwing out creative projects willy nilly.

**Do you have any tips or advice for those new to mentoring?**

Keep knocking down doors. You might not get a match for a couple of weeks, and finding someone who will continually respond and connect with you is harder and can get discouraging. But don't stop looking for a mentor. They really transform your life.

# Contact

Any other questions about our mentoring program?

We would love to hear from you at  
[askmentoring@outforaustralia.org](mailto:askmentoring@outforaustralia.org)

