

Leadership and Management Development through Mentoring: A Case Study of the UNNC Learning Academy Mentoring Programme

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Abstract

The University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) has been running a Mentoring Programme since 2016 to foster staff professional development and career advancement. The programme aims to enhance leadership and management skills by pairing experienced mentors with motivated mentees. It focuses on four key pillars, namely Knowledge Transfer, Skills Development, Career Guidance, and Personal Development. Training sessions on goal setting, action planning, and relationship management are also provided to support mentors and mentees. This study evaluates the AY2023-25 programme, which saw significant increases in staff participation. Year-end feedback from the programme showed a high satisfaction rate of 4.57/5, with participants stressing the value of guidance from experienced colleagues and gaining new perspectives. Challenges such as time constraints and setting clear goals were identified, with suggestions for more detailed guidelines and a wider selection of mentors. This study draws attention to the importance of a mentoring programme being well structured so that it can significantly contribute to the development of leadership and management skills, and hence help to foster a culture of continuous learning and professional growth within higher education. It also highlights the need for increased involvement from senior management and academic staff, as well as a more balanced participation across different areas of the university. The future programme for AY2025-26 aims to address these issues through enhanced training and a more diverse mentor pool and will be discussed. Future feedback and research could additionally focus on the long-term impact of mentoring on career progression and organisational performance and will be discussed.

Keywords

Mentoring, Leadership Development, Management Skills, Professional Development, University Mentoring Programme.

