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RBMS Mentoring Program Guidelines

Guide to Mentoring for RBMS members

River Basin Management Society



Welcome to the RBMS Mentoring Program

Welcome to the RBMS Mentoring Program! Thank you for expressing your interest in joining the program. We hope you find this a valuable way to connect with other like-minded professionals within the integrated catchment management industry and are able to take-away some key learnings whilst expanding your network and having FUN.

Below is an outline of how the program is expected to run and takes you through some essential elements to support each mentoring pair with their arrangements and guide conversations to enable the most from each encounter.

RBMS Mentoring Program Guide

Most people throughout the course of their life and career can reflect upon and note the various individuals along the way that were important to their growth and development, personally and professionally. These mentoring relationships have helped that person to find a purpose, define a goal, shape their thinking, or enact a plan and establish an outcome (if project related).

Mentoring can serve many purposes by helping an individual develop a new skill, assist with problem solving, boost confidence in communications and engagement, widen a network or provide some direction. Mentoring is not solely there to support a mentee but can also be a two-way street, ensuring those involved both give and receive and help the other grow.

There are many benefits to engaging in a mentoring relationship. The RBMS Mentoring Program provides a flexible and semi-formal approach to enable members to better connect.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring can:

- Provide an opportunity to exchange and enhance knowledge, feedback or advice in a supportive environment,
- Create a trusted forum to brainstorm and refine ideas and explore challenges,
- Enable open communication in a safe environment to increase confidence and self-esteem, and
- Provide personal satisfaction and strengthen interpersonal skills whilst building networks.

Participant Eligibility

To participate in the RBMS Mentoring Program as a mentor or mentee, you must be a registered member of the River Basin Management Society.

Mentors will ideally have at least 5-10 or more years of experience in a related field of integrated catchment management. Mentors will need to have strong communication skills and be able to commit to at least three meetings (online or in person-pending location) per year of at least 30 minutes. The mentor can help guide each meeting as they see fit but can include reflecting upon at least one key issue, concern or idea or take-away, and aim to incorporate a wellbeing check.

Mentees can range from undergraduate or entry level professional with less than 5 years' experience. However, a mentee may also be someone who is changing into a new field or discipline.

Responsibilities of Mentoring Pairs

It is the responsibility of each mentor and mentee to:

- Ensure their actions and language are both ethical and respectful
- Ensure appropriate professional boundaries are maintained
- Maintain a commitment to the agreed meeting arrangements in place
- Discuss and review meeting progress and expectations/goals

Pairing Mentors with Mentees

To participate in the RBMS Mentoring Program you will need to submit an **Expression of Interest** form. Pairing for the program duration will last 12 months and require at least four meetings (online or in person) over the course of the year. You can select to participate in an assigned pairing or a flash mentoring group.

It will be the responsibility of the Mentors to communicate with their mentee and determine availability for and commitment to the quarterly meet ups, style of preferred communication (whatsapp, email, text) and any goals or topics the pair would like to cover during their sessions.

Assigned Pairs - The RBMS Committee will review the Expression of Interest by each applicant who select to participate in an assigned pair, to determine and assign a suitable partner with similar fields of interest to maximise benefit. The assigned pair can arrange their own times to meet online or in person. The pairing for the purposes of the program will last for a 12- month duration. If mentoring pairs find their mentor or mentee is not suitable or they fulfil their arrangement (i.e., 12 months), they can be re-assigned OR join a flash mentoring group.

A **flash mentoring group** will host a series of mentoring pairs that will rotate mentor with mentees over the course of the year. There will be 4 pairs (depending on participants) to a group to rotate each quarter session. This will allow pairs to expand their network whilst finding a suitable longer-term arrangement OR maintain their flash status to ensure a regular exchange of diverse knowledge groups and perspectives.

Mentoring Agreement

Participants in the RBMS Mentoring Program will need to review, agree and sign a mentoring agreement, ensuring discussions, topics, timeframes and meetings that they participate in over the course of the year is in line with responsibilities outlined above.

Welcome Meeting – Introduction to the RBMS Mentoring Program

A Zoom invite will be sent out to all RBMS mentoring participants to attend the Introductory Welcome meeting. This is an opportunity to meet the other mentoring participants, discuss the program parameters and welcome you.

An email post the workshop will introduce the **Assigned Pairs** for the year and the first round of **Flash Pairs**. Mid-way through the program we will send a **Program Check-In** which will be in the

form of a short email survey to see how you are going. After 12 months we will send an **End of Program Feedback** form (see at the end of this Guide) to assist in enhancing the program and encouraging new intakes and determine if you are interested in remaining on board.

Mentoring Meetups

Whether you are part of an assigned pairing or flash pairing, it is up to the mentor to arrange the initial meeting to discuss setting up a regular date and time to catch up with their mentee.

Mentoring meet ups are required to occur quarterly (at a minimum), but we would encourage you to explore how often suits you and adapt your meet ups as needed.

Initial meet up

The initial meet up should provide an opportunity for both the mentor and mentee to get to know one another. Allow sufficient time to:

- introduce yourself (who you are, what you do, where you're from, why you are in this field),
- mention your career experience and interests/goals, and
- discuss what you both want from this mentoring program (the purpose), how often you can meet and at what time.

The mentor needs to send out the **Mentoring Meet up calendar invites** in advance to ensure time is scheduled and not forgotten about, that works for both participants.

For **Flash mentoring pairs**, each pairing is unique and you may require more time after getting to know each other to discuss anything currently on your mind that you may want guidance on. You can also reach out to any of the flash mentors post your meeting to follow up with them about anything.

Subsequent meet ups

Once you have had an opportunity to get to know one another, use each subsequent meet up as a chance to:

- check-in with one another (how are you feeling – stressed, high workload, unmotivated, excited and WHY),
- what sort of things do you have going on, what work are you involved in currently?
- what have you found challenging since your last meet up and what have you found beneficial? Any new opportunities/issues you need guidance on? Discuss these and explore any ideas or suggestions on how to move past the challenges (support, strategize, set goals) or what can be learnt from the opportunities that have arisen?
- Check in on your purpose for mentoring, if anything in the big picture has shifted since you began, how the mentoring structure is working, and if anything needs adjustment.

Preparation/Reflection

In between each **Mentoring Meet up**, it is recommended that both the mentor and mentee take notes on things that are happening around them and what they want to share or reflect on, to bring to the next meet up.

Flash Mentoring Pairs may want to reach out to their mentors/mentee's post their catch up after having some time to reflect and can organise a follow up session if they wish, before they are paired with a new mentee/mentor. It is up to each pair to decide the arrangements they are happy with.

Don't forget we encourage this as a two-way street and we encourage mentees to share any advice/thoughts or ask questions their mentors may find of benefit.

Getting to know you!

As a way of getting to know you, below are a few questions you can fill out and we can send to your mentor/mentee as part of the introductory email.

When did you first realize you were interested in integrated catchment management and why?	
Have you lived and worked overseas or interstate? What did you do?	
What do you find motivates you?	
Who is your nature-loving hero and why? (Professor? Parent? Friend?)	
What other hobbies or interests do you have?	
If we had to know one thing about you, what would it be?	
If you weren't in integrated catchment management...what would you do as an alternative career?	
#fieldworkfail Have you or when have you experienced a failed fieldwork or work trip? What happened?	
If you won the lottery tomorrow, what would you do?	

Stay in touch

Communication is key! We have created an RBMS Mentoring Program Group on LinkedIn which you will receive an invitation to join. If you are not currently on LinkedIn, it is a great space that enables greater connection with your industry, you can create your career profile, follow the latest news, research and stories from people within integrated catchment management and associated disciplines. The group will be a shared space for participants to post questions for feedback/advice, share their own news, stories, articles and general conversation.

How to Apply: Expression of Interest

To participate in the RBMS Mentoring Program, please submit an expression of interest form as a mentor or mentee via the application below.

The RBMS will organise and host an initial online meet and greet for all mentors and mentees to discuss the program. Once a participant is provided their assigned pairing or flash groups, mentors and mentees will be introduced and contact details exchanged for the pairs (led by the mentor) to set up a one on one (in person or online) meeting to discuss their arrangement.

The RBMS will organise a twice-yearly check in for all mentors and mentees to provide feedback over the first year of the program and once a year thereafter.

After the first year of mentoring has passed, assigned pairs can review their arrangements in place and determine if they would like to maintain their relationship or rotate and be re-paired to continue the exchange on knowledge and feedback from furthering these opportunities with others. Flash groups will be reset each year but pending participant numbers may include some overlap of individuals who may have already been involved in the same flash group.

Application instructions and key dates

- Fill in the EOI application form and mentoring agreement on the RBMS website.
- Email your application form to info@rbms.org.au with subject heading: “RBMS mentoring program” and cc president@rbms.org.au by the deadline on the website
- Mentoring Pairs will be contacted via direct email to notify of pairing arrangements and to attend the initial Mentoring Program Online - Introductory Meeting before the end of the year
- Commence Mentorship from January-December each calendar year. This is to be arranged by the mentor.
- At the end of the year, mentorship pairs can determine if they want to remain as is in their mentor/mentee pairing, change to another assigned pair or flash group or leave the program.
- A Program check in will be conducted mid-year and **feedback** will be collected at the end of the year (see below).

End of Program Feedback

Full name:	
Mentor or Mentee	
Were you in an assigned pairing or flash pairing arrangement?	
How did you find your mentoring relationship/s?	

<p>Was it beneficial to your personal and professional development?</p>	
<p>How did this mentoring program benefit you the most?</p>	
<p>How did this mentoring program benefit you the least? What did you find challenging?</p>	
<p>Overall – how would rate the RBMS Mentoring Program?</p>	<p>1- OK – somewhat met my needs but see my feedback below for how you might improve it <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2- Good – It was well run and I enjoyed the program. I have a few ideas about how to improve the program. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3- Great. No improvements needed. Looking forward to staying in the program. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>4- Fantastic. Can't wait to tell others about this and encourage them to join <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Feedback – where do you think we could improve?</p>	
<p>Do you have any suggestions/ideas for inclusion in future programs?</p>	
<p>Are you interested in staying on in the program?</p> <p>If yes, do you want to stay with your current mentor/mentee, or shuffle?</p>	