



Professional Mentor Guidance

EARMA Professional Development Group

Professional Mentor Guidance

Role and Responsibilities

The role of the Professional Mentor is to support students on the EARMA Certificate in Research Management or/and Certificate in Research Administration:

1. Helping them to decide which units they would like to study and when and how they might support their study with formal and informal learning, as appropriate, so that they can complete their Study Work Plan;
2. Act as a sounding board for their thoughts, questions and ideas; and
3. Provide support and encouragement as the student progresses through the qualification, including reading and commenting on draft assignments.

The Professional Mentor is expected to meet with the student for 2-3 hour per unit.

- Students on the Certificate in Research Management study six units, so the expectation is that you will meet them for a total of 18 hours, or around one hour per month for the one and a half years of their enrolment.
- Students on the Certificate in Research Administration study eight units, so the expectation is that you will meet them for a total of 24 hours, or around one hour per month for the two years of their enrolment.

It is recommended that a Professional Mentor do not act for more than two students at any one time.

Completion of the Study Work Plan

There are several sections of the Study Work Plan that students might require the Professional Mentor's help in completing.

a) Help students to choose their optional units

Before selecting optional units, students should be encouraged to read the unit learning outcomes, assessment criteria and assessment methods and consider the following questions:

- Does the unit interest them?
- Does it fit in with their current job role or future career plans?
- What resources/ information/ support will they need in order to complete the unit assignment?

Professional Mentors encourage the student to think about what order to complete the units:

- Is there a better time of year for them to tackle a particular unit, e.g. is production of material for the assignment contingent on other business cycles or project outcomes?

- Do units flow better in a particular order?
- b) Help them to plan their formal and self-guided learning
Once the student has a clear idea of their units, they need to be encouraged to plan the formal and self-guided learning for each unit.

Formal learning is defined as organised learning activities such as workshops, mentoring, work shadowing, Professional Mentor meetings etc.

Self-guided learning is defined as informal, self-study activities such as reading, preparing assignments, discussions with colleagues etc.

There will be some units which relate to the student's 'day job' and for which they require little or no formal learning and other units which represent relatively new areas of learning. Hence the Professional Mentor should encourage the student to focus their formal learning activity in the areas where it is most needed. As long as the formal learning hours average around the requirement, no checks on the number of learning hours for each individual unit will be made.

Planning the formal and self-guided learning for each unit will probably be an ongoing feature of the Professional Mentor meetings. It is not expected that the Study Work Plan will be filled in in detail at the first Professional Mentor meeting, although every effort should be made to plan the completion deadline for each unit at the first meeting. Completing the formal and self-guided learning and the Professional Mentor meeting dates should be viewed as a 'work in progress'.

Professional Mentor role boundaries

The Professional Mentor has no responsibility for, or involvement in, the assessment of their student mentees written assignments (a Professional Mentor can serve as an Qualification Assessor but they must not assess their mentee's work and a declaration of a conflict of interest must be made). From time to time the mentee may ask the Professional Mentor to read or review drafts of their assignment. The Professional Mentor must make it clear to the student that they are reading the draft as a 'critical friend' and that their comments and feedback should not be taken as an indication that the assignment will necessarily pass, or be referred, when it is formally submitted for assessment.

Glossary of Terms

Study Work Plan – this is the document that students will use to plan their formal learning for each unit, including workshop attendance and Professional Mentor meeting dates.

Formal Learning Record – this is the document that students will use to record their formal learning for each unit.

Unit Learning Outcomes – these detail what students will know and be able to do, when they have successfully achieved the unit.

Assessment Criteria – these provide a clear definition of what the successful student will need to do to demonstrate their learning on a unit.

Assessment Methods – these are the written assignments that students are required to undertake to demonstrate their learning on a unit.

Authenticity of Work Statement – this is the declaration that students need to sign and return with each unit assignment, to confirm that the work is their own.

Credit Rating – this is the number of credits that students will gain from the successful completion of each unit. Each credit requires 10 hours work from the average student.

Indicative Learning Hours – this is the number of hours that an average student will require to undertake all of the work required for the unit.

Formal Learning – this is organised learning activities such as workshops, mentoring, work shadowing, Professional Mentor meetings etc.

Self-guided Learning – this is informal, self-study and activities such as reading, preparing assignments, discussions with colleagues etc.

Professional Mentor – this is the colleague that you select to support and encourage you through the qualification. You should go to this person for help with the institution-specific questions and queries relating to the Certificate in Research Administration.

Rue Joseph II, 36-39
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
earma@earma.org
www.earma.org

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