SHORT COURSE: MENTORING FOR GRADUATE SUCCESS

Institution: NWU | OPTENTIA — North-West University

Campus: Vanderbijlpark Campus

Type of Offering: Short Course

Duration: 40 hours over 5 weeks (Hybrid: Contact & Online)

Language: English

Pass Requirement: 50% — Sub-minimum of 40% for re-examination

Cover Description

Your career journey is more than a success story — it is a roadmap someone else needs. This short course equips NWU alumni with the knowledge, skills, and frameworks to become effective mentors who help the next generation of graduates navigate the transition from higher education to professional life with confidence and purpose.

About This Short Course

No short course specifically designed to prepare alumni mentors to support graduate attribute development within higher education institutions in developing countries could be found — and yet the need has never been greater. Graduate attributes such as critical thinking, communication, ethical reasoning, and adaptability are not automatically consolidated through academic study alone. They require reflection, practice, and guided development.

Alumni mentors are uniquely positioned to bridge this gap. They carry both the memory of their own graduate experience and the perspective of someone who has successfully navigated the transition from student to professional — making them exceptionally well placed to offer timely advice, encouragement, and authentic role modelling.

This short course transforms that lived experience into intentional, skilled mentoring practice. While some mentoring qualities may come naturally, effective mentorship does not happen by chance — it is a skill that requires structured development. Through training, alumni mentors gain clarity on their role: listening actively, supporting growth, encouraging reflection, and facilitating development — without over-assuming responsibility for their mentees' journey.

By providing all mentors — whether new to mentoring or building on existing experience — with equal access to evidence-based frameworks, practical tools, and a shared language, this course fosters consistency, fairness, and genuine impact across mentoring relationships. It is the only structured short course identified that specifically prepares alumni mentors to support graduate attribute development in a South African higher education context.

Purpose of the Course

This short course is designed to transform your professional experience into intentional, skilled mentoring practice. Here is what you will gain:

Knowledge

- A clear understanding of the alumni mentor role, its purpose, boundaries, and ethical responsibilities.
- Insight into graduate attributes and how these develop through mentoring relationships.
- Awareness of the challenges graduates face in the South African transition from higher education to professional life.
- Grounding in evidence-based frameworks, including Boyatzis's Intentional Change Theory and the Carkhuff Model of Helping and Facilitation.

Skills

- Practical mentoring conversation skills — active listening, empathic responding, reflective questioning, and constructive feedback.
- The ability to develop your own change facilitation approach applicable to mentee development.
- Goal-setting and development planning skills applicable across eight faculty contexts.
- Graduate needs assessment skills to map a mentee's developmental needs effectively.

Values

- A commitment to empowering mentees to take ownership of their own growth journey.
- Sensitivity to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the South African professional context.
- A reflective orientation toward your own ongoing development as a mentor.

What Makes This Course Unique

- This is the only structured short course identified that specifically prepares alumni mentors to support graduate attribute development in a South African higher education context.
- It bridges your lived professional experience with evidence-based mentoring practice.
- It includes faculty-specific case scenarios drawn from all eight faculties at NWU, ensuring direct relevance across disciplines.
- It is offered in a hybrid format, combining contact sessions and online learning for accessibility and flexibility.
- It equips mentors with two internationally recognised frameworks: the Carkhuff Model of Helping and Facilitation, and Boyatzis's Intentional Change Theory.

Who Should Attend

This short course is aimed at alumni of the North-West University who volunteer for the mentor role of graduates. It is open to NWU alumni at any stage of their career who are committed to guiding the next generation of graduates — whether they are new to mentoring or deepening an existing practice.

If you have navigated the transition from student to professional and want to use that experience to make a meaningful difference in someone else's journey, this course is for you.

Admission Requirements

Minimum Qualification: Diploma or Certificate at NQF Level 5 or 6, or equivalent.

Work Experience: At least four years of experience as a professional, manager, or employee in any organisation, including businesses.

Other Prerequisites: None — this course is open to all NWU alumni who meet the minimum qualification and experience requirements.

Required Facilitator Qualifications: Master's degree in Psychology, Educational Psychology, or Industrial Psychology.

Skills You Will Develop

Participants will develop the following five key mentoring competencies:

- Empathic Listening and Helping — Engaging fully and sensitively with mentees to understand their needs and support their growth.
- Mentoring Conversation Facilitation — Planning and conducting purposeful, structured mentoring conversations that lead to meaningful outcomes.
- Graduate Needs Assessment — Identifying and mapping a mentee's developmental needs across graduate attributes, transitions, and career goals.
- Developmental Goal-Setting — Co-creating clear, achievable development plans with mentees that support their professional growth and employability.
- Reflective Mentoring Practice — Developing and sustaining an ongoing reflective practice to continually improve as a mentor.

Course Structure

The short course is structured across four study units, delivered over 5 weeks in a hybrid format combining contact sessions and online learning. Case scenarios from all eight NWU faculties are integrated throughout to ensure direct relevance across disciplines.

Study Unit 1: Understanding the Alumni Mentor Role (8 hours)

Introduces participants to the alumni mentor role within the context of graduate development in South Africa. Participants explore the purpose, boundaries, and ethical responsibilities of mentoring, and

reflect critically on their own professional narrative, values, and identity as resources for mentoring practice. This foundational unit establishes the mindset and orientation needed to engage as an intentional, effective mentor.

Study Unit 2: Understanding Graduates as Developing Professionals (10 hours)

Explores the developmental landscape of early career graduates — including the graduate attributes they bring from their studies, the psychological and structural dimensions of the student-to-professional transition, and the well-being challenges they commonly face. Using faculty-specific case scenarios across all eight faculties, participants learn to contextualise graduate development needs and apply a practical needs-assessment framework to map where a mentee is on their developmental journey.

Study Unit 3: Capabilities and Well-being of Early Career Professionals (10 hours)

Equips participants with positive psychology, capability, and career development frameworks to understand and respond appropriately to the holistic needs of graduates in the South African professional context. Participants develop an informed and empathic approach to mentee support, learning to recognise the factors that affect a graduate's agency, well-being, and career readiness — and to respond in ways that foster growth rather than dependency.

Study Unit 4: Facilitating Growth, Change, and Career Navigation (12 hours)

Develops the practical mentoring competencies needed to facilitate purposeful conversations that support graduate growth, career navigation, and employability. Participants apply two internationally recognised frameworks — the Carkhuff Model of Helping and Facilitation, and Boyatzis's Intentional Change Theory — to plan and conduct structured mentoring conversations. The unit culminates in the development of a personal mentoring plan that integrates learning across all four study units and demonstrates readiness for mentoring practice.

Assessment

Formative Assessment: Short-answer questions and assignments throughout the course, including knowledge checks, reflection activities, and peer and facilitator feedback. Case scenarios from across all eight NWU faculties are used throughout to ensure practical relevance.

Summative Assessment: Completed approximately one month after the programme, the summative assessment requires participants to demonstrate their competence through a structured mentoring conversation and the submission of a personal mentoring plan that integrates learning across all four study units.

Pass Requirement: 50% — Sub-minimum of 40% for re-examination.

Contact Details

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