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# UQ Alumni-to-Alumni (A2A)

## User guidelines

[alumni.uq.edu.au/mentoring](https://alumni.uq.edu.au/mentoring)

Welcome to UQ Alumni-to-Alumni.

We believe in the limitless potential of fostering relationships between UQ alumni.

So we created **UQ A2A**.

**Build connections. Ask questions. Get advice.**

You're in charge.





## Leverage the power of the UQ alumni network

The UQ Alumni network is made up of a diverse body of 290,000+ professionals working across different roles, industries, organisations and cities, who collectively hold a wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom.

To enable alumni to tap into this, we've created an exclusive-to-UQ mentoring and peer coaching platform, UQ A2A.

This handbook is designed to be your guide on how to use and get the most out of A2A, whether you are looking for mentoring, offering mentoring, or seeking a peer-coaching experience.

## Share knowledge and build your network with UQ A2A

Connect with other alumni on UQ A2A for short, sharp, knowledge-sharing conversations. Get your questions answered by someone who has been there and done that, or share your own story, ideas and advice.

## Your network is your net-worth

With UQ A2A you can build that all-important professional network – because it's not what you know, it's who you know. This circle of allies and advocates could result in a recommendation for your next role, valuable advice during a career transition or an introduction to thought leaders in your field.



## What is UQ A2A?

**UQ A2A is an online alumni-to-alumni flash mentoring platform that helps alumni build connections, ask questions and get advice by leveraging the UQ alumni network. The platform lets alumni search and, with permission, swap contact information with other alumni for the purpose of having short, sharp, tactical conversations focused on knowledge exchange.**

Conversations focus on topics that are applicable to any UQ graduate:

- leadership and management
- professional networking
- transferable/soft skills
- career progression
- changing careers
- entrepreneurship
- being a working parent
- relocating interstate/overseas.

UQ A2A is designed for flash mentoring and therefore is not suitable for:

- job hunting
- internships or graduate placements
- reviewing resumes and CVs.

Recent graduates can access the services of the UQ Careers Services Team for six months after graduation. Visit [UQ Student Hub](#) to book your one-on-one session with one of our career advisors, and check the current work opportunities on offer. Be sure to visit the careers page on the [UQ Life website](#) to take advantage of all the resources available to help you land a job!

## Who is it for?

**UQ A2A is open to all UQ alumni who wish to opt in, regardless of where you live or what you do. It's a way to connect into your global alumni network.**

### Recent graduates

- Learn what to do (and not to do) in your new job.
- Connect with others in the same field, roles or industry of interest.
- Build a professional network.

### Career professionals

- Discuss career options and promotion pathways.
- Understand how others have pivoted in their careers.
- Build leadership skills through mentoring.

### Experienced managers

- Workshop challenges and ideas.
- Learn how others have successfully transitioned to senior executive level.
- Share knowledge and experience with other alumni.

### Senior executives

- Connect with similarly qualified alumni.
- Share knowledge with developing talent across the UQ network.
- Learn about new technologies.

When you join UQ A2A you choose whether you want to be a mentee, mentor, peer coach or a combination of all three. And, if you change your mind at any stage, no problem, it's easy to change the preferences in your individual profile.

### Mentee

Learning is a lifelong endeavour and experience is often a great teacher. Request a conversation to put yourself in the best position to develop your skills and grow professionally.

*"I want to connect and learn from someone who is an insightful leader in their field."*

### Peer

Talking it out with someone who has or is doing the leg work can be particularly useful. Find someone who is on a similar trajectory as you for a mutually beneficial conversation.

*"I want to share learnings and challenges in a conversation where there is give and take."*

### Mentor

After years of experience, you might want to offer insight or act as a sounding board for others on a similar path. Or, you might look to mentoring to help build leadership skills.

*"I imagine that some younger alumni may seek advice from me."*

## Why join?

**UQ A2A makes it possible to leverage the power of the UQ alumni network – better yet, it's really easy.**

**High-calibre:** The UQ alumni network holds a wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom. Only alumni of UQ are approved to join the A2A program.

**Connected:** Often it's not what you know, it's who you know. UQ A2A makes it easy for you to connect with other alumni, tap into this valuable resource and build a professional network.

**Flexible:** Whether you are in London, Melbourne or Mackay, you can connect with other alumni anywhere in the world, at any time through UQ A2A's convenient, online portal. You choose whether you want to be a mentee, mentor, peer coach or a combination of all three, how often and how long you want to meet for, and whether you connect via email, Skype/Zoom or over coffee.

**Self-directed:** Connections are 100 per cent alumni driven, and can be made when and how you want. There's no formal structure of a traditional mentoring program and no added bureaucracy.



## How does it work?

**Getting onto UQ A2A is easy. It only takes five minutes to build a profile.**

→ Start by creating your A2A profile in the online portal [mentoring.app.uq.edu.au/p/p21/about](https://mentoring.app.uq.edu.au/p/p21/about)

Once your profile is approved, you'll have immediate access to the A2A portal\*. Every profile you see represents an alumnus who has opted in as an active participant. You can search these profiles using keywords and filters to find interesting people who you think might have experience that would benefit you.

This community acts on an implicit value of integrity. Should you reach out to connect, you should expect a timely response and vice versa should someone reach out to you.

Once you connect, it is up to both of you to schedule a time and meet up (phone, Skype/Zoom or face-to-face).

In the background, we continue to reach out to a diverse set of alumni to ensure we have the right mix of people signed up and review every application to ensure that only UQ alumni join.

\* In order to maintain the integrity of the platform and to ensure that all users are UQ alumni, new profiles are subject to authentication by UQ within 3 business days.

## Choosing your role on A2A

**After years of hard work, you might be in the fortunate position to be able to offer insight and advice or act as a sounding board for those who may aspire to take a similar path as you.**

Working at the coal face, you might be in the midst of your career and are looking for the benefit of hindsight to support your progression or improve your performance at work.

Or you might be a bit of column A and a bit of column B...

The flexibility of UQ A2A means you get the best of both worlds – the space to offer your experience and to learn from others. And because UQ A2A is entirely alumni driven, you make the final decision about who you'd like to meet, how often and where.

# Top tips on making the most of A2A

## Tips for being a great mentor:

- Be responsive. Remember that it takes courage to reach out to a peer for advice; don't leave your potential mentee hanging.
- Be a good listener; this will create an environment where your mentee feels comfortable to speak openly, and will help you to provide the answers they are really looking for.
- Remember your role is to offer advice, encouragement, provide constructive guidance and help your mentee develop ideas. You are not expected to assist a mentee to find employment opportunities.
- Even though you may be very busy, try to honour scheduled appointments with your mentee and let them know in advance if you need to reschedule.
- Maintain confidentiality; do not disclose details you learn about your mentee without their consent.



You might like to read this article:

**Five Things Great Mentors Do**, *Forbes.com*

## Tips for being a great mentee:

- Preparation is key. Have a clear idea of your goals for meeting and prepare your questions in advance.
- Explain your career background and goals to your mentor in the initial meeting.
- Respect your mentor's time. Keep to your scheduled appointments and notify them in advance if the meeting needs to be rescheduled.
- Be a good listener; make sure you take in the advice your mentor is sharing and avoid interruptions and tangents in the conversation.
- Focus on the relationship rather than the outcome.

- Maintain confidentiality; do not disclose details you learn about your mentor without their consent.
- Don't forget to say thank you. Your mentor is offering their time and advice free of charge and on a volunteer basis, be sure to show your appreciation.



You might like to read this article:

**The Art of Being Mentored**, *OnBeing.org*

## Tips for peer coaching:

Peer coaching is a process involving two or more people of equal status – peers – where the objective is professional and leadership development of both/all parties. It takes a holistic approach, by increasing both professional and personal self-awareness to reach the goal. Peer coaching involves self-directed and reciprocal learning where the roles of coach and client alternate between each person. It is a very powerful tool for career and personal development, and more so with adequate preparation, practise and the right attitude.

- Take the time to make sure you've selected an appropriate partner who is ideally at a similar career stage to you and has a similar attitude to peer coaching.
- Have an initial conversation to clarify each person's objective – the ability to respond to the other's needs is critical for success.
- Remember that peer coaching is in itself a learning process for both parties; the idea is not to arrive with all the answers but rather learn to ask good questions to navigate a way through a problem.
- Take the time to establish a sense of trust so that support is mutual and reciprocal.
- Speak less and listen more when in the coach role (30/70 rule as a guide).

- Rather than giving advice, ask thoughtful questions, for example:
  - *What are your expectations?*
  - *What's stopping you from doing XYZ?*
  - *How could you approach that differently?*
  - *What might your motivations be?*
  - *What are you trying to achieve?*
  - *What's the worst that could happen?*
  - *What's most important to you?*
  - *When presented with the answer "I don't know", a helpful follow-up question is "What if you did"?*
- Start with a short session, say 20-30 minutes, and build from there as you establish rapport.



You might like to read this article:

**Peer coaching: An untapped resource for development**

Polly Parker, Kathy E. Kram and Douglas T. Hall (2014) Peer coaching: an untapped resource for development. *Organizational Dynamics* vol. 8, issue 2



**How to get your team to coach each other**

Stewart D Friedman (2015) How to get your team to coach each other. *Harvard Business Review*



**Helpful guides on how to use Chronus**

Chronus is the platform that we are using to host A2A. We've put together some easy-to-follow technical guides to help get you up and running in no time. These are available in the "Resources" section of the A2A portal so you'll be able to access them once you've created your profile.

# Alumni2Alumni

For more information, please contact

## Alumni Relations & Engagement

**E:** [uqalumni@uq.edu.au](mailto:uqalumni@uq.edu.au)

**W:** [alumni.uq.edu.au](http://alumni.uq.edu.au)