



# Mentor Policy

## SELECTION CRITERIA

### Pathways to Mentoring in the ATDP

The following are the requirements to be recognised as an approved ATDP Mentor.

- To qualify as an approved ATDP Mentor:
  - A part-time volunteer Advocate is to have:
    - at least 1 year of practical experience as an Advocate after gaining a Level 2 qualification via the learning pathway; or
    - gained a Level 2 qualification via the RPL pathway and be able to produce evidence of current Advocacy experience (evidence to be no older than one year).
  - A full-time remunerated Advocate is to have completed at least 16 primary claims with at least 3 claims under each Act in the case of a Compensation Advocate or 16 client cases for a Wellbeing Advocate.
  - Must have completed the ATDP non-accredited Mentoring program.
- Special consideration to relax the above experience requirements may be given on a case-by-case basis where an urgent need can be demonstrated.
- To qualify as an ATDP Regional Mentor, the advocate must:
  - be appointed by the Regional Support Group (RsG) and DVA to undertake the role; and
  - have at least 2 years' experience as an ATDP Mentor;
  - demonstrate a sound knowledge of the:
    - ATDP training and assessment paradigm: and
    - content of all relevant ATDP formal learning units.

### Mentor Training

When ATDP commenced in 2016, the training of Mentors to undertake workplace training of new Advocates was conducted as part of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Workshops. RPL Workshops were being conducted regularly to allow practicing Advocates trained under the TIP program to gain ATDP Statements of Attainment. Those assessed at Level 2 or above were also trained as Mentors at the conclusion of the RPL process.

As the need for RPL Workshops reduced (concurrent with the outbreak of COVID), the process for RPL assessments was changed to individual presentations of evidence via the Zoom platform. This meant that training of Mentors also had to change.

From mid-2020, two types of Mentor training were introduced:

- **Basics in Mentoring.** Designed for all ATDP Mentors, this half-day program was designed to introduce the concepts of mentoring and provide information of the specific requirements for mentoring in the context of the Course in Military Advocacy.
- **Mentoring in the ATDP.** Designed for Regional Mentors and experienced Advocates managing multiple mentors, this two-day assessed program expanded on the content of the Basics course and provided a nationally accredited Statement of Attainment.

When first introduced, the Mentoring in the ATDP program was based on TAEDEL404 Mentor in the workplace, a unit from the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. From April 2022, when MTS dropped this qualification from its scope, the unit was replaced with PSPGEN035 Provide workplace mentoring from the Certificate IV in Government. Due to a restructure of that qualification, MTS becomes unable to issue Statements of Attainment for that unit after April 2023.

Options for adding a stand-alone Mentoring unit of competency from another Training Package to MTS's scope were discussed. A decision was made that instead, the Basics in Mentoring program would be increased to a full day and would be attended by all Advocates conducting workplace mentoring of trainees in the Course in Military Advocacy.

The available program is now titled Mentoring Workshop. It is a full day of training conducted via Zoom, contextualised specifically for Advocates providing workplace mentoring to trainees undertaking any level of the Course in Military Advocacy. It must be undertaken before an Advocate is appointed as a trainee's mentor. Advocates who were trained as mentors via an RPL Workshop are strongly encouraged to attend to refresh and update their knowledge and skills.

## ATDP Mentoring Workshop

The ATDP one-day Mentoring Workshop replaces the previous two-day Mentoring in the ATDP and half-day Basics in Mentoring programs.

The program content consists of the following:

- How mentoring can help the professional development of Advocates
- Roles and responsibilities of a mentor in the ATDP context
- Diversity in individual learning approaches
- Developing a mentoring relationship
- Supporting a mentoring relationship
- Methods to improve mentoring skills.

## Limits on number of active mentees

As a general rule the number of mentees at one time should be limited to:

- Workplace mentors – 5 active mentees in the training pathway;

- Regional Mentors – 3 active mentees plus oversight of other workplace mentors in their region.

## Currency Requirement

ATDP reserves the right to cancel the mentor status of any Advocate found to have wilfully breached ATDP protocols or to have failed to maintain their CPD status 'CURRENT'.

# CONTEXT OF MENTORING IN THE ATDP

## Background

As a result of the *Review into Veterans' Advocacy* undertaken by the late Brig. Rolfe AO (Retd), a working party was formed from ESO, TIP and DVA nominations to progress the development and implementation of a veterans' advocacy training model. The outcome of this working party was the development and implementation of an *Advocacy Training and Development Program* (ATDP).

*'The vision of the Advocacy Training and Development Programme is to train and develop selected practitioners to provide high quality advocacy services to current and former ADF members and their dependants, where advocacy services cover rehabilitation, compensation, appeals and welfare.'*

A vital factor in the success of the ATDP is the mentors who are selected at the regional level to assist with the training and ongoing development of Wellbeing and Compensation Advocates (practitioners).

## Why have mentors?

It is a fact that formal classroom teaching, or e-learning, give only about 20% of the knowledge effective practitioners need. The rest of the skills necessary for effective practice have to be gained outside the classroom through experience and on-the-job learning.

Whether they are just out of training or experienced campaigners, a good practitioner never truly stops learning. The environment in which they work evolves continuously over time. Practitioners need someone who can guide and encourage them through this ongoing developmental process. That someone is their mentor.

The mentor is there to ensure that practitioners develop and maintain the knowledge and skills required to effectively meet their client's needs.

## What is 'Mentoring'?

'Mentoring' is a training system under which a senior or more experienced practitioner (the mentor) is assigned to act as an advisor, counsellor, or guide to a more junior practitioner (mentee). The mentor is responsible for providing support to, and feedback on, the individual in his or her charge. It is a relationship between two individuals based on a mutual desire for development towards goals and objectives to achieve the best possible outcomes for client's needs.

## Where do the ADTP mentors come from?

Mentors are nominated by ESOs from their experienced Level 2, 3 and 4 Advocates. Mentoring is a very responsible job: one which is both challenging yet very rewarding.

While mentors will normally be tasked to mentor trainee Advocates in the ESO, that nominated them, this may not always be the case. Mentors may be required to operate on a regional level if ESOs in their region experience a lack of experienced Advocates to take on a mentoring role.

Effective mentors have a strong commitment to ethics, embrace workplace diversity and vigorously pursue their own professional development.

## The Mentoring relationship

If the terms of the relationship, including limits on confidentiality, are clear at the start there will be fewer problems later. Mentoring goes up as well as down, so Mentors need access to a sounding board with whom to discuss any difficult issues in the mentoring relationship. Experienced mentors in an ESO, as well as Regional Mentors, will normally fill this role (a mentor for mentors).

Although Mentor and Mentee need to agree how they're going to work together, it is usually the Mentor who takes responsibility for ensuring the process has been discussed and agreed. This will include setting out a 'contract' and agreeing a process for review. A standard ESO outline is appropriate for this purpose.

The contract between mentor and learner may be more or less formal within the ESO requirements with flexibility for mentor/practitioner to agree. Regardless of format, the following points should be included in discussion;

- How long they will work together (whether a time period, or until a goal is achieved).
- Initial goals, which may include the development of long-term goals for the relationship.
- The practical arrangements such as how often to meet, where to meet (in the office or elsewhere, for example), as well as whether cancelling meetings is acceptable and, if so, under what circumstances.
- The process for reviewing the relationship. This should include end-of-session reviews to discuss the process and learning from each session, and periodic reviews of progress towards goals.

Part of this contracting is clarifying the objectives and goals of the mentoring in the early stage and helping the mentee to identify their own learning goals. Learning goals and progress towards them are recorded in a Workplace Experience Logbook which is maintained by both mentor and mentee.

All mentoring relationships will change over time and different skills are important at different stages in order to retain the viability of the relationship. The basic requirement of a good mentor is a belief in the potential of the learner.

## What are some of the attributes of a successful Mentor?

Characteristics and skills needed in the mentor role include;

- Sound knowledge of the role of a mentor,
- Specific and extensive experience in the role being mentored,
- The ability to impart knowledge utilizing good communication skills,
- Capacity to develop a suitable rapport with the mentee,
- A realistic understanding of the demands being placed on the mentee,
- A commitment to the development of the mentee,
- Realistic understanding of the essential time commitment to the mentee,

- The ability not to overwhelm the mentee with information beyond his/her capability,
- An ability to delegate duties in accordance with the mentee's displayed development,
- An awareness of the mentee's capacity to absorb and retain the knowledge being imparted and to adjust advancement accordingly,
- An ability to provide a graduated learning environment relative to ESO needs,
- An ability to produce an atmosphere conducive to the passage of knowledge,
- An ability to share experience and personal learning to assist the mentee to develop confidence in their ability to succeed,
- An ability to provide professional friendship,
- An ability to build rapport with less experienced mentees,
- An ability to be a sounding board for the mentee,
- A capability to provide insight through reflection,
- An interest in developing the mentee to a high level of expertise,
- A willingness to display professionalism at all times, and
- Have the time available to undertake the mentoring role and to provide workplace training in the normal course of duties

### Eligibility for a Mentor

A mentor is required to have a Level 2 Unit of Competency in the chosen stream (Compensation or Wellbeing). It is recommended that the advocate gains at least 12 months' of experience before enrolling on the ATDP Mentoring Program. When the mentor has successfully completed the Mentor program they are eligible to mentor Level 1 and Level 2 candidates in their chosen stream.

A similar process is recommended for Level 3 mentors. They are required to have a Level 3 Compensation Unit of Competency and at least a year's worth of experience as well as having attended the ATDP Mentor program. After which, they can mentor Level 3 candidates.

There may be instances where exceptions to the above process is warranted. This is at the National Training Manager's discretion.

### Conclusion

Providing effective Wellbeing and Compensation Advocacy services to serving and former ADF members and their families can only be achieved through a strong cooperative effort between ESOs, VSCs, DVA, and the ATDP.

The lynchpin in this matrix will be the mentors. It is they who will ultimately ensure that Advocates provide the best possible service to those who seek their assistance.