

Melbourne Medical School EMCA Mentoring Program 2024

Impact Report



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

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Overview of the Program

Introduction

The pilot EMCA Mentoring Program was introduced by the Melbourne Medical School (MMS) in 2024 and ran from July to December. This informal program aimed to support EMCAs in advancing their academic careers and developing leadership skills. The unique features of the Program included:

- **Broad Eligibility** – Open to all academic staff across the School, including clinician researchers, staff based outside of Parkville, and honorary staff.
- **Cross-departmental matching** – Mentor and Mentee were matched across different MMS departments to foster collaboration opportunities.
- **Group mentoring** – Some matches were arranged as group mentoring to provide peer mentoring opportunities as well, facilitating peer learning and shared experiences.

Group Mentoring Matches

The Program consisted of 24 matches, with 24 Mentors and 42 Mentees. A summary of the match types is provided below.

Match Type	Number of matches
One to one mentoring (One Mentor and one Mentee)	13
One to two mentoring (One Mentor and two Mentees)	6
One to three mentoring (One Mentor and three Mentees)	3
One to four mentoring (One Mentor and four Mentees)	2

Department Participation

A breakdown of the Mentor applications received is provided below.

Academic Level	Number of Applications
Academic Staff Level D	11
Academic Staff Level E	13

Department	Number of Applications
Department of Medicine	8
Department of Infectious Diseases	4
Department of Surgery	4
Department of Medical Education	3
Department of Rural Health	2
Department of Clinical Pathology	1
Department of General Practice and Primary Care	1
Department of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Newborn Health	1

A breakdown of the Mentee applications received is provided below. This is based on a total of 43 Mentee applications (out of which one applicant was later found to be ineligible as they did not meet the EMCA criteria and was unable to participate in the program).

Post-PhD stage	Number of Applications
Less than 5 years post-PhD	25
5-10 years post-PhD	13
10-15 years post-PhD	4
More than 15 years post-PhD	1

Department	Number of Applications
Department of Medicine	11
Department of Medical Education	6
Department of General Practice and Primary Care	5
Department of Paediatrics	5
Department of Clinical Pathology	4
Department of Psychiatry	3
Department of Infectious Diseases	2
Department of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Newborn Health	2
Department of Rural Health	2
Department of Surgery	2
Department of Radiology	1

Matching Process

As part of submitting an Expression of Interest to join the Program, potential Mentors were asked to provide information in relation to:

- Mentorship model preference (one-on-one or group mentoring)
- Areas of expertise
- Specific areas of mentoring interest
- Previous mentoring experience
- Leave periods and conflicts of interest

Similarly, potential Mentees were asked to provide the following information as part of their Expression of Interest submission:

- Mentorship model preference (one-on-one or group mentoring)
- Areas of expertise
- Areas of mentoring interest
 - Academic work-life balance
 - Transitioning to a leadership role
 - Career progression and pivots
 - Supervising/managing research teams
 - Developing research skills
 - Working in a regional, rural, or remote location
 - Networking and building connections
- Specific areas of mentoring interest
- Leave periods, conflicts of interest, and other preferences that may be relevant to the matching process.

The Program Coordinator worked with the Research Manager, Research Director, and the Career Development and Mentoring Sub-Committee of the EMCA Advisory Committee to generate a list of matches based on the information provided by potential Mentors and Mentees.

After an extensive review process, matches were proposed and shared with Mentees for their feedback before they were finalised. Feedback from a few Mentees led to a few changes in the matching groups. Finalised matches were officially announced in July 2024.

Program Run

A launch event was held in July 2024, after which Mentors and Mentees commenced the Program. The matched groups were provided with a [Program Guidelines](#) document and a [Program Goal-Setting and Meeting Agenda Template](#) as a reference to set a direction for their mentoring relationship.

Mentees were contacted by the Program Coordinator during the Program to seek provisional feedback on their experience.

Close to the end of the Program, Mentors and Mentees were asked to complete an evaluation survey to provide feedback. This impact report is largely based on the feedback received from Mentors and Mentees through this survey. The evaluation survey was designed to be anonymous, allowing participants to provide honest and transparent input without concerns about privacy or identification.

Mentee Feedback

Response Rate

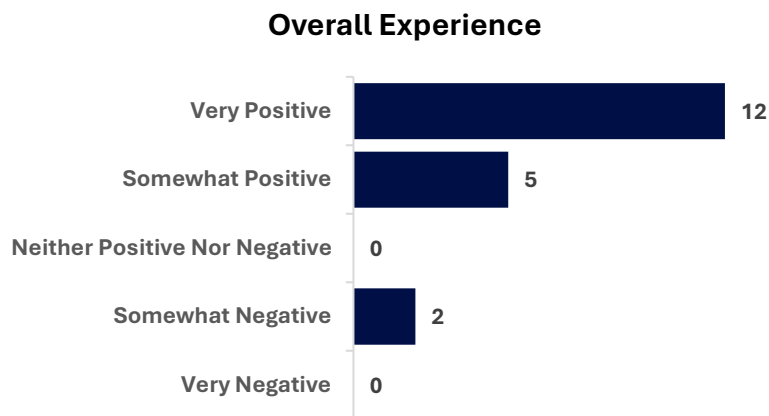
The evaluation survey for Mentees sought information on the following:

- Overall Experience
- Quality and Matching
- Cross-Departmental Collaboration
- Group Mentoring
- Program Impact and Value
- Areas for Improvement and Additional Feedback

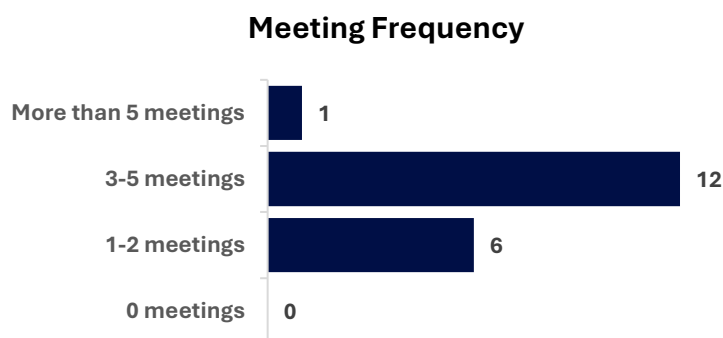
The Mentee findings are based on 19 responses (out of 42 participants) received via the evaluation survey.

Overall Experience

Mentees were asked to rate their overall experience of the Mentoring Program. The majority of respondents (around 70%) reported having a very positive overall experience.



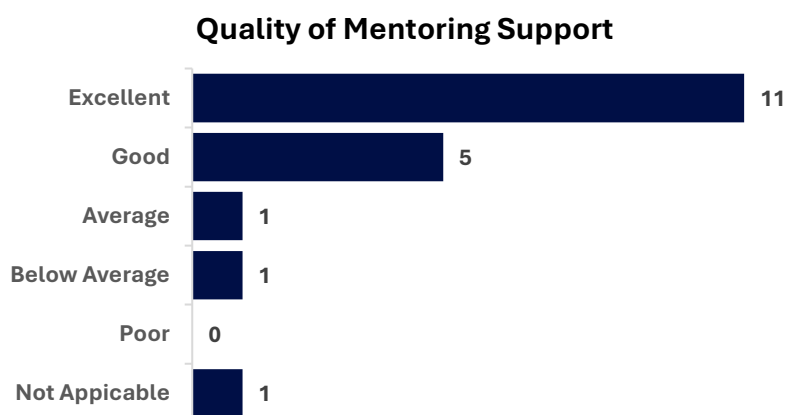
As part of the Program Guidelines, it was recommended that Mentors and Mentees meet at least four times during the Program. Regarding the frequency of meetings, most respondents met with their Mentor 3-5 times during the program, while a few met 1-2 times, or more than 5 times. This is a positive outcome considering that this pilot iteration of the Program ran from July 2024 to December 2024, allowing a limited time for Mentors and Mentees to organise meetings.



Mentees were asked to rate the quality of mentoring support based on the following options:

- Excellent - My Mentor has provided valuable guidance and support throughout the Program.
- Good - My Mentor has been generally helpful and supportive.
- Average - There have been areas where I need more guidance or support from my Mentor.
- Below average - I have often felt unsupported or lacking in guidance by my Mentor.
- Poor - My Mentor has been largely unavailable or unhelpful throughout the Program.
- Not Applicable - The mentoring relationship did not work out and was ceased during the Program.

About 60% of Mentee respondents rated the quality of mentoring support as "Excellent", indicating that Mentors provided valuable guidance and support.



Some comments regarding the quality of mentoring support are provided below.

"I didn't go in with any goals, however the knowledge I received has been great and exactly what I needed, even if I didn't know I needed it. It has been extremely helpful in navigating the end of my PhD and transitioning into my ECR period, some of which can be a bit vague."

"I have met with my mentor, and she has also reconnected me with another mentor (someone I had known and lost touch with) so they both mentor me now. They have both been really supportive and provided guidance and really good feedback on my professional (and personal!) development, which I truly appreciate!"

"... [My Mentor] answered my questions about his experiences publishing and in academia generally, and translational work, and many points he shared endorsed ideas that I have been toying with but was lacking confidence to pursue. He was also a very good fit in terms of the type of mentoring I was looking for (i.e., straight to the point with ideas, no 'fluffing' around, incredibly knowledgeable and confident in his own work and willing to share, etc)..."

“I recently transitioned to the mid-career level and joined the mentoring program seeking guidance in developing leadership skills. I am grateful to the MMS team for thoughtfully pairing me with an excellent mentor who shares a similar academic background, which has been invaluable.

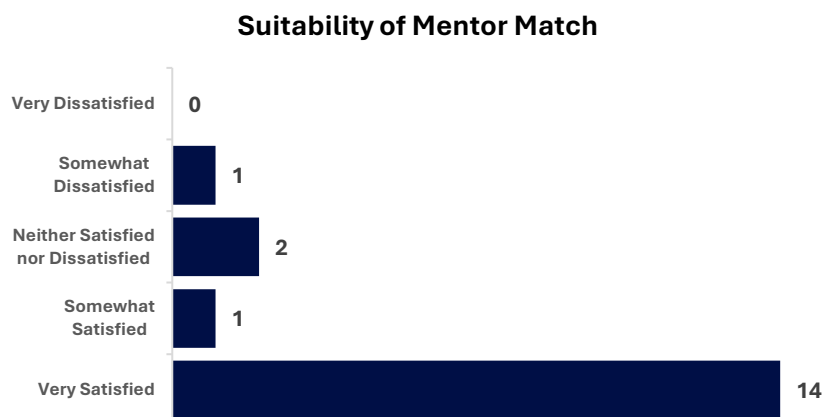
My mentor has helped me understand the meaning of leadership and identify opportunities to enhance my leadership potential within the University. She has dedicated ample time...to discuss my goals, the steps I could take to achieve them, and the progress I’ve made along the way. I’m especially thankful that she has kindly agreed to continue our mentoring relationship for ongoing guidance.”

Mentees were also asked to comment on whether the approximately six-month duration of the Program was sufficient. More than 70% of Mentees agreed.

Note: The responses in the next few sections analysing Mentee feedback are based on feedback from 18 respondents out of the 19 that responded to the survey, as one respondent indicated that the mentoring relationship did not work out and was ceased during the Program.

Quality and Matching

Mentees were asked to comment on the suitability of the Mentor that was matched to them. Most respondents (almost 80%) were very satisfied.



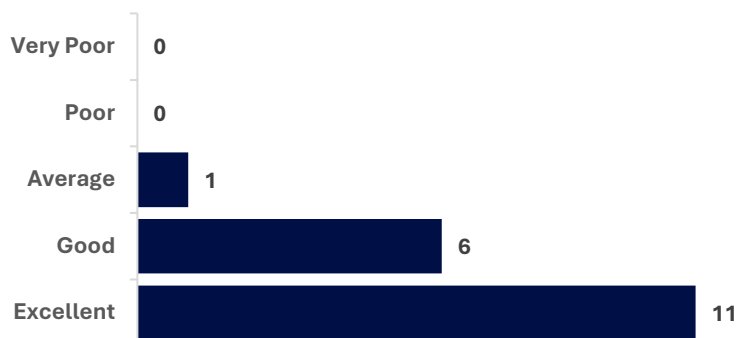
While most respondents were satisfied with their match, Mentee feedback via open-text comments indicated that the matching process could be improved by using more detailed survey questions to better capture Mentee needs, Mentor expertise, and the specific areas where Mentors feel most confident providing advice in.

Mentees were asked to rate the frequency and quality of communication with their Mentor based on the following options:

- Excellent - Communication has been frequent, clear, and highly valuable.
- Good - Communication has been regular and helpful overall.
- Average - Communication has been somewhat inconsistent or could have been better.
- Poor - Communication has been infrequent or unclear.
- Very Poor - There has been very little to no valuable communication.

The frequency and quality of communication with Mentors was rated as "Excellent" by around 60% of respondents, suggesting frequent, clear, and valuable communication.

Frequency and Quality of Communication with Mentor



The frequency and quality of communication relies on many aspects of a mentoring relationship, including rapport, communication methods, and proactive planning for meetings. For future iterations of the Program, it is recommended that professional development activities be introduced to provide Mentors and Mentees with opportunities to build confidence and strengthen their mentoring relationships. A Mentee’s comment on the frequency and quality of communication is provided below.

“.....[My Mentor] definitely opened my eyes to things I had never considered and gave me a wider perspective on my very narrow view of academia at this point in my career. It was great to get the perspective of someone in a different field to me, who uses different methodologies and assumptions. I can now see how easy it is to get stuck in your discipline, and it's good to see where it fits in the bigger picture of other disciplines.”

Cross-Departmental Collaboration

Out of the 24 matches assigned in this Program, all but one were cross-departmental (the exception was a match between academics based at different precincts within the same department). Mentees were asked to comment on whether their cross-departmental mentoring relationship was beneficial to their goals. More than 70% of Mentee respondents found that the cross-departmental match was beneficial.

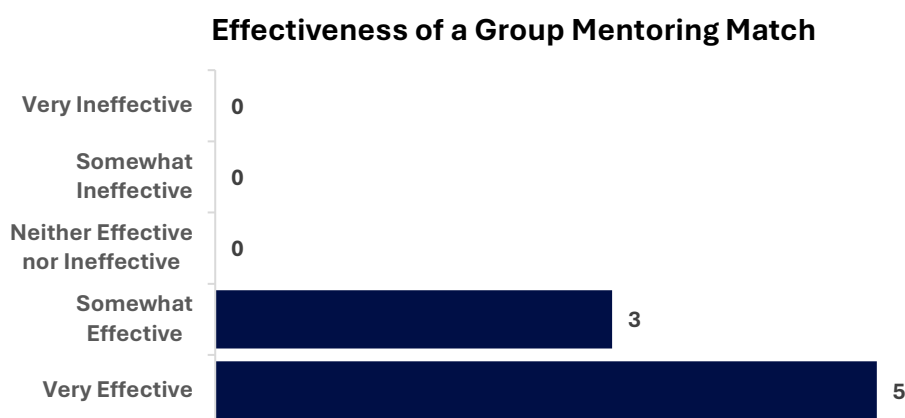
Benefit from Cross-Departmental Mentoring Match



Mentees provided additional feedback via open-text comments and noted that the cross-departmental aspect provided a fresh perspective, objectivity, and a broader scope. However, a few found it challenging due to differences in fields and funding sources.

Group Mentoring

Around 40% of Mentees were part of a group mentoring arrangement. Among them, all respondents rated the experience positively, with approximately 60% describing it as “Very Effective” and the remaining 40% as “Somewhat Effective.” This suggests the group mentoring provided meaningful opportunities for peer learning and networking.



A comment from a Mentee in relation to group mentoring dynamics is provided below.

“It was valuable to hear another MCA with a similar background to mine (a non-clinician involved in clinical research) share her academic journey, the challenges she has faced, and the strategies she is implementing or planning to use to overcome them and achieve her goals.”

Program Impact and Value

Mentees were asked to rate their level of agreement on the following statements:

- The Mentoring Program has helped me advance my goals.
- The Mentoring Program has provided me with valuable networking opportunities.
- The Mentoring Program has helped me develop new skills or knowledge.

Five rating levels were provided for Mentees to choose from (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). The responses selected by Mentees are indicated below.

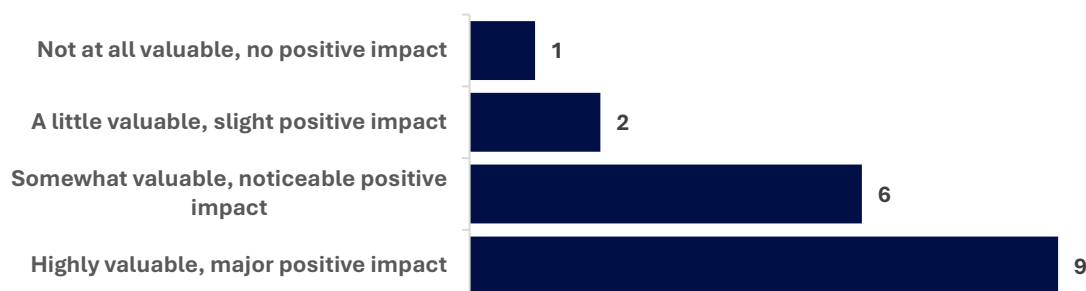
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Mentoring Program has helped me advance my goals.	0 respondents	1 respondent	0 respondents	9 respondents	8 respondents
The Mentoring Program has provided me with valuable networking opportunities.	0 respondents	3 respondents	2 respondents	5 respondents	8 respondents
The Mentoring Program has helped me develop new skills or knowledge.	0 respondents	2 respondents	3 respondents	3 respondents	10 respondents

The responses indicate that 70% or more of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them advance their goals, provided valuable networking opportunities, and helped them develop new skills or knowledge.

Mentees were asked to rate the overall value and impact of the EMCA Mentoring Program based on the following options:

- Highly valuable, major positive impact
- Somewhat valuable, noticeable positive impact
- A little valuable, slight positive impact
- Not at all valuable, no positive impact

Overall Value and Impact



The overall value and impact of the program were rated as "Highly valuable, major positive impact" by 50% of respondents, with around 30% selecting "Somewhat valuable, noticeable positive impact." Positive impacts mentioned by Mentees in open-text responses included clarifying goals, gaining perspective, feeling supported, and boosting confidence. A few participants didn't find the Program as valuable or impactful. These appeared to be the same participants who felt their Mentor-Mentee pairing was not well aligned and suggested improving the matching process (see *Quality and Matching*, p. 8).

Mentees were asked to comment on how the Mentoring Program helped them with shaping their goals. Mentees were also asked to indicate any factors that they found valuable by being a participant of the Program. Some comments from Mentees are included below:

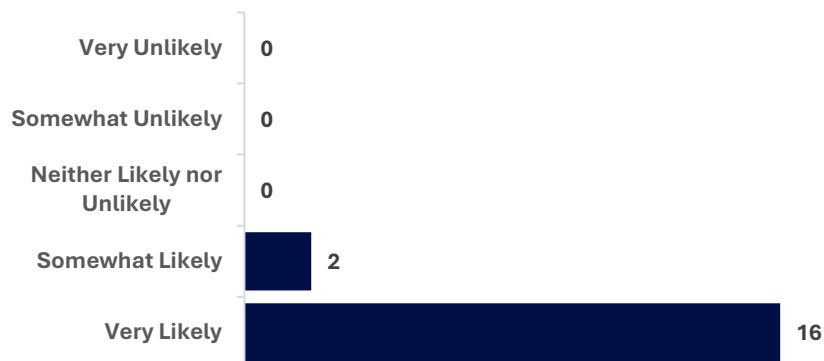
"The guidance provided by my mentor has been truly decisive for both my personal and professional development. I have much clearer goals, vision, and purpose on my research path; I have been able to identify my main flaws and the skills I might need to continue to develop to be able to succeed in my career; I have felt heard and understood; I have felt 'I was not the only one' and thus less isolated. Participation in the mentorship program has also boosted my confidence and helped me regain 'my power' in terms of being able to clearly define my strengths and achievements to promote for a new role....."

"The mentoring program was invaluable in helping me clarify my goals and take meaningful steps toward achieving them. I felt supported, which is especially important as a non-clinician researcher based in a clinical unit, where I often feel isolated from the University and its excellent network of academic researchers."

Areas for Improvement and Additional Feedback

The majority of respondents (around 70%) were “very likely” to recommend participating in future editions of the program to their colleagues.

Likelihood of Recommending the Program



Suggestions for improvement included increasing the duration of the Program, expanding the pool of Mentors to include those with non-traditional academic roles (e.g. research program managers, policy advisors), and improving the Mentor-Mentee matching process.

In summary, the Mentoring Program was generally well-received by the Mentees, with most respondents reporting positive experiences, valuable guidance from Mentors, and beneficial impacts on their goals and development. However, there were also areas for improvement, particularly in the Mentor-Mentee matching process and the inclusion of Mentors with diverse academic backgrounds and roles.

Mentor Feedback

Response Rate

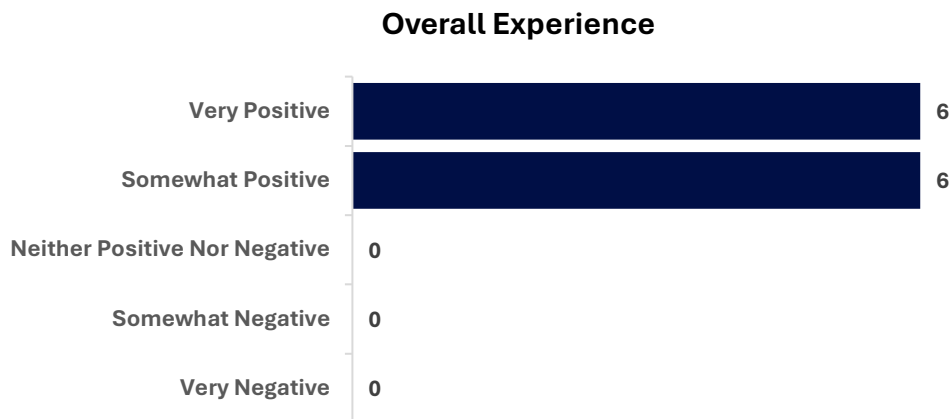
The evaluation survey for Mentors sought information on the following:

- Overall Experience
- Mentee Matching
- Group Mentoring
- Program Impact and Value
- Areas for Improvement and Additional Feedback

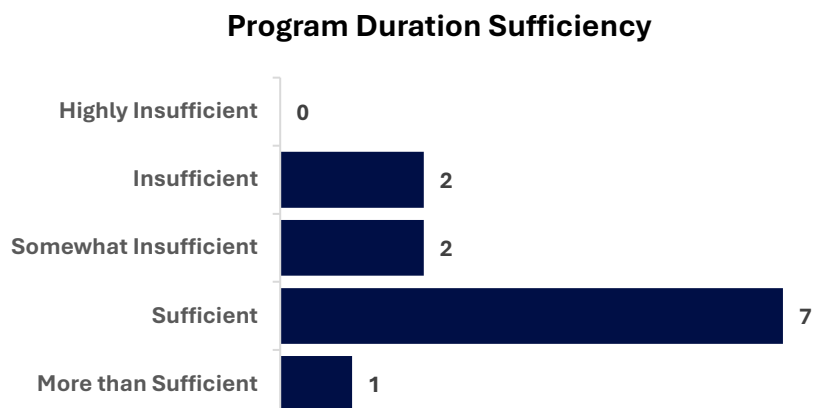
The findings from Mentor feedback are based on 12 responses (out of 24) received via the evaluation survey.

Overall Experience

Mentors were asked to rate their overall experience of the Program. The majority of respondents reported having an overall positive experience with the Mentoring Program.



Mentors were also asked to comment on whether the duration of the Program was sufficient. While most respondents agreed, there were differing views as indicated in the graph below.



Mentors were asked to provide feedback on the Program duration. Some of their comments are included below.

“I think we have formed a great group, and time has moved so quickly. I think there is more to achieve and can see our group continuing. Maybe because it is a group, the process moves a bit slower than one-on-one mentoring?”

“..... scheduling challenges between the three of us has meant that we had a delayed start and have only had three meetings over this period, but my mentees and I intend to continue into next year outside of this program because it seemed less constructive trying to squeeze in all the meetings over this period.....I personally think a 9-month duration would have suited our particular situation better, but 6 months was fine.”

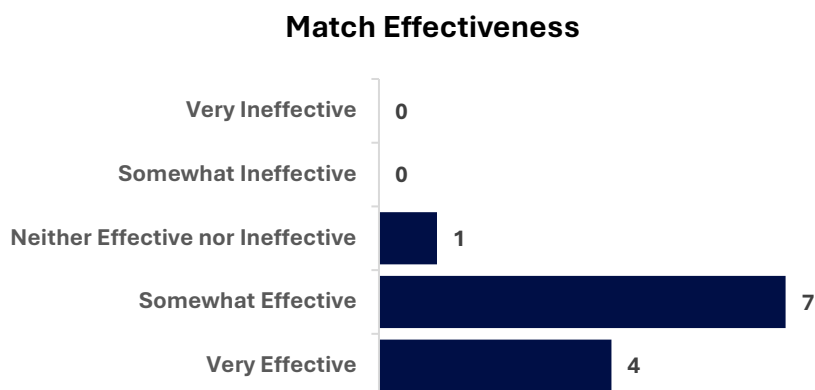
“The 6 months were adequate to work with mentees to develop goals etc., but I can imagine the mentees feeling some lack of continuity with such an arrangement.”

Some of the open-text comments in relation to the Program’s duration indicated that extending it beyond 6 months should be considered to allow sufficient time for Mentors and Mentees to build rapport and better accommodate regular meetings alongside other commitments. As part of the 2025 EMCA Mentoring Program promotions, Mentors and Mentees will be advised that while the Program will formally run for a set period, mentoring relationships can continue beyond this timeframe depending on their needs.

Mentors were asked whether they would be willing to continue serving as Mentors in future iterations of the Program. Most mentors (around 70%) indicated that they were very likely to do so.

Mentee Matching

Mentors were asked to share their opinion on the effectiveness of the matching process. All but one respondent found it effective in pairing them with suitable Mentees.



Some comments from Mentors in relation to the effectiveness of matches are provided below.

“I had two mentees - I felt I was a very good match with one, and not quite as good a match with the second.”

“My mentees are great, and I initially thought the diversity might make it harder to relate to each other, but I think having all three of us across quite different fields - yet still with commonalities - has had its significant benefits (plus there are common challenges faced despite the discipline/domain differences).”

“.....I would like to suggest that clinicians be matched with clinician scientists.....”

“[My] Mentee was from a different area, but I think we found common ground that was helpful for discussion and orientation.”

The matching process was handled by the Program Coordinator, with the support of the Research Manager, Research Director, and the Career Development and Mentoring Sub-Committee. While the process was generally effective, it is recognised that a larger pool of Mentors would have allowed a more robust matching process. For example, the Research Support Team endeavoured, where possible, to match clinician Mentees with clinician Mentors and match non-clinician Mentees with non-clinician Mentors for better alignment. However, this was not always possible due to the limited pool of Mentors available. In such instances, other goals identified by Mentors and Mentees were considered when determining matches. In addition, while matching could be based on factors such as similar goals, background, and research expertise, the success of the match relied on the rapport built between the Mentors and Mentees.

As part of the promotion process for the next iteration of the Mentoring Program, there is an expectation that Departments will support efforts to encourage their senior researchers to participate as Mentors.

Mentors were also asked to rate their Mentees' level of engagement and commitment. All but one respondent rated it as "Excellent" or "Good", indicating that Mentees were largely proactive and well-prepared.

Level of Engagement and Commitment from Mentees



Some comments from Mentors in relation to their Mentees' engagement and commitment are provided below.

"We had one mentee in the group take on the organisation role which was very effective i.e. poll availability and make calendar invites. I would suggest that going forward, groups should be advised that this is very effective approach. We also scheduled meeting every month in advance."

"Fantastic! Came well prepared to each meeting with a set of appropriate questions to structure our discussion. Really well organised and prepared."

"There was very little engagement from one mentee (the clinician). Excellent engagement from the other two. I did not hold group sessions because each mentee's situation was different."

Group Mentoring

More than half of the Mentor respondents (7 out of 12) were assigned to mentor a group (more than one Mentee). These Mentors were asked to indicate how they structured their meetings, for example, whether they held combined group sessions with all Mentees, individual sessions with each Mentee, or a combination of both.

Format of Meetings for Group Mentoring Matches



All 4 Mentor respondents who held combined group sessions found them effective, as reflected in some of their comments provided below.

“Meeting other ECRs and understanding their challenges and successes. They have learnt a great deal from each other. Understanding of how they are different and the approaches they use to meet challenges has been helpful for them. Also, they are very supporting and encouraging of each other.”

“..... the group sessions were very helpful and helped foster peer-mentorship too through getting the mentees to be actively participate in this during the session.”

“[It was] too hard to organise 4 busy people to get together but great to meet different people and share issues which overlapped, and they could advise each other.”

Program Impact and Value

Mentors were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- My Mentee(s) benefitted from my guidance to advance their goals.
- The Mentoring Program has resulted in valuable opportunities for my Mentee(s).
- Through interacting with my Mentee(s), the Mentoring Program has provided me with new knowledge, ideas and/or connections.

Five rating levels were provided for Mentees to choose from: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree. The responses selected by Mentees are indicated below.

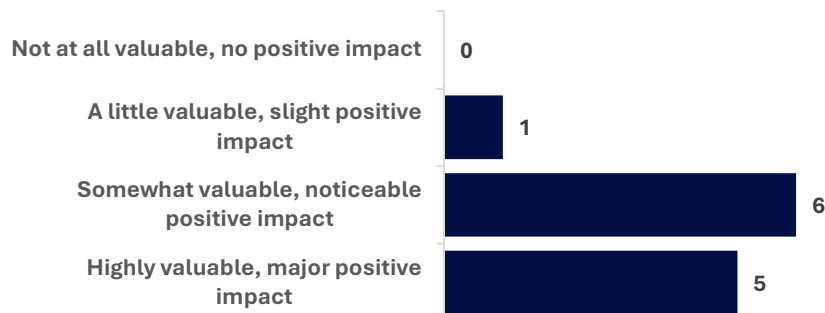
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My Mentee(s) benefitted from my guidance to advance their goals.	0 respondents	0 respondents	1 respondent	7 respondents	4 respondents
The Mentoring Program has resulted in valuable opportunities for my Mentee(s).	0 respondents	0 respondents	3 respondents	7 respondents	2 respondents
Through interacting with my Mentee(s), the Mentoring Program has provided me with new knowledge, ideas and/or connections.	0 respondents	0 respondents	4 respondents	6 respondents	2 respondents

The majority of responses for all three statements fell within the “Agree” to “Strongly Agree” range, suggesting that Mentors generally found the Program valuable. However, the Neutral responses suggest varied experiences, indicating an opportunity to strengthen some aspects of the mentoring experience.

Mentors were also asked to rate the overall value and impact of the EMCA Mentoring Program based on the following options:

- Highly valuable, major positive impact
- Somewhat valuable, noticeable positive impact
- A little valuable, slight positive impact
- Not at all valuable, no positive impact

Overall Value and Impact

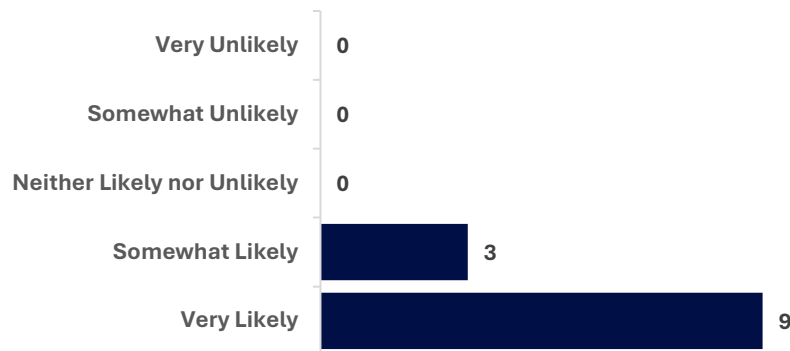


The overall value and impact of the program were rated as "highly valuable, major positive impact" by around 40% of respondents and "somewhat valuable, noticeable positive impact" by 50% of respondents.

Areas for Improvement and Additional Feedback

All respondents indicated that would recommend participating in future editions of the program to their colleagues.

Likelihood of Recommending the Program



When asked to comment on their experience of the Program and suggestions for improvement for future iterations of the Program, some of the respondents provided the following feedback:

“I think it may be important to provide more information to people that have less experience with mentoring about how to have a successful group. Maybe just making some more resources available, in line with what the University have developed.”

“Open up more and provide resources to support both mentor and mentee.”

“.....Even though not every mentee-mentor relationship will be a winner, positive outcomes for at least some of the mentees makes it worthwhile. I’d like to think they will pay it forward.....”

“Went well! I think the frequency and duration of interactions was quite well balanced.”

Based on the overall comments from Mentors, key suggestions for improvement included providing additional resources and guidance on effective mentoring (particularly for group mentoring and for those with less mentoring experience), improving the matching process based on specific topics and goals, and potentially matching clinicians with clinician-scientists. Some Mentors also emphasised the importance of making more structured mentoring resources available to both Mentors and Mentees to help strengthen relationships and maximise the program’s impact.

In summary, the Mentoring Program was generally well-received by Mentors, who reported positive experiences, valuable guidance provided to Mentees, and opportunities for personal growth through the mentoring process. However, areas for improvement include refining the matching process, providing more resources for effective group mentoring, and potentially tailoring the matching for clinicians and non-clinicians.

Overall Findings

Overall, the Mentoring Program was well-received and considered valuable by the majority of Mentors and Mentees who participated. The program provided opportunities for professional development, goal advancement, networking, and knowledge sharing.

For Mentees:

- Around 70% reported a very positive overall experience with the program.
- Most Mentees found their Mentors to be excellent sources of guidance and support, rating the quality of mentoring highly.
- The program helped Mentees clarify goals, gain fresh perspectives, feel supported, and boost confidence in their academic careers.
- Cross-departmental mentoring relationships were seen as beneficial by many, providing objectivity and a broader perspective.
- Group mentoring sessions facilitated valuable peer learning and networking opportunities.

For Mentors:

- Around 60% had a very positive overall experience as Mentors.
- Most Mentors found the 6-month duration sufficient, though some felt it could be extended.
- The matching process was generally effective in pairing Mentors with suitable Mentees but could be improved to better align backgrounds, research interests and career stages.
- Group mentoring sessions were rated as very effective by many Mentors, fostering peer learning among Mentees. However, some respondents noted that additional resources and guidance on structuring effective group mentoring interactions would be beneficial.
- Mentors felt their guidance helped Mentees advance their goals and provided valuable opportunities.

The program allowed Mentors to gain new knowledge, ideas, and connections through interactions with Mentees. While the Program was well-received, feedback suggests there are opportunities to strengthen its. Based on these findings, the following suggestions for improvement should be considered for future iterations of the Program:

- Refining the Mentor-Mentee matching process, potentially based on specific goals or topics, to improve compatibility.
- Providing additional resources and guidance, especially for effective group mentoring.
- Considering longer program durations or offering follow-up opportunities beyond the initial 6 months.
- Tailoring the matching process for clinicians and non-clinicians in some cases to better align research and career backgrounds.

The EMCA Mentoring Program has proven to be valuable, positively impacting the professional development and growth of EMCA Mentees within the Melbourne Medical School. In addition to participation in the Program, the Research Support Team reached out to the Mentee group separately to promote initiatives and events organised by the team, including the EMCA Week 2024 and to seek invitations to submit an Expression of Interest for the MCA Co-Chair role on the MMS EMCA Advisory Committee (advertised in November 2024). There was a high level of participation from Mentees in both initiatives, which is indicative of their motivation and engagement. Additionally, the Program has highlighted that while most EMCAs are keen to engage with MMS initiatives, they may not always be aware of the opportunities available to them. Therefore, further exploration of targeted promotional avenues by the School may be needed to improve engagement across the broader EMCA cohort.

While the Program successfully fulfilled its purpose of extending better career development support to EMCAs and enabling collaborative opportunities between different departments in the MMS, it is important that this initiative is continually refined, resourced, and well-promoted in its future iterations to ensure that it continues to elevate the School's up-and-coming researchers.

Recommendations

Based on learnings from the pilot iteration of the EMCA Mentoring Program, the following recommendations are suggested for future iterations.

Earlier Start and Extended Program Duration

The pilot iteration of the EMCA Mentoring Program took place from July to December 2024. This was due to several factors, including turnover in the recruitment of the Research Support Coordinator (who served as the Program Coordinator) and the 2024 planning timeline of the EMCA Advisory Committee. While these factors impacted the Program's commencement due to delays in the development of guidance materials and promotion, resources are now available to build upon for future iterations. To improve engagement and provide a longer mentoring window, it is recommended that the Program commence in April 2025.

The pilot Program duration was 6 months, which most participants found sufficient. However, extending the Program to 7 months is recommended to better accommodate scheduling challenges and allow more time for meaningful mentorship and engagement. It is proposed that the Program run from April to November 2025.

Professional Development Sessions

The evaluation survey findings for Mentors and Mentees suggest that the Program would benefit from more resources and guidance, specifically in relation to establishing effective group mentoring relationships. In addition to the Program Launch, where a guest speaker with mentoring experience would present on establishing effective mentoring relationships, it is recommended that at least two in-person professional development sessions be incorporated into future Program iterations. Possible topics for professional development sessions might include grant writing tips, and leadership and career planning workshops. In addition to improved guidance, these sessions would provide the opportunity for networking and engagement between EMCA and senior researchers.

Changes to the Mentor-Mentee Matching Process

It has been recognised within this report that a key challenge in the matching process was the limited participation of senior researchers in the Program as Mentors. Although the Research Support Team reached out to senior researchers with past mentorship experience, engagement could have been stronger. This may be due to the Program being a new initiative within the School. Additionally, some departments within MMS offer personalised mentoring opportunities, reducing the participation of their academics in this School-wide Program. To strengthen the matching process, it is recommended that departments be encouraged to promote the Program to their senior researchers to increase the number of Mentors available in the Program. Expanding the number and diversity of Mentors would allow the Research Support Team to work with the Career Development and Mentoring Sub-Committee of the EMCA Advisory Committee to establish a more effective matching process.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Research Support Team and the Career Development and Mentoring Sub-Committee prioritise matching based on background alignment (such as pairing clinician Mentors and Mentees and non-clinician Mentors and Mentees) before looking into other factors, such as career goals and areas of mentoring interest.

Introduction of the EMCA Mentoring Prize

To enhance the Program's visibility and provide a meaningful conclusion for participants, it is recommended that an EMCA Mentoring Prize be introduced as part of the annual Research Symposium, where the MMS acknowledges the School's research achievements. The conditions, nomination process, and eligibility criteria for the Prize would be developed with guidance from the Career Development and Mentoring Sub-Committee of the EMCA Advisory Committee and the Research and Research Training Committee.

Conclusion

Positive feedback was received through the evaluation survey from the pilot iteration of the EMCA Mentoring Program, providing strong evidence of its success. The program provided a structured platform for mentoring relationships, supporting early- and mid-career academics within the Melbourne Medical School. Given its demonstrated value, it is recommended that the Melbourne Medical School continue to run the Program via the Research Support Team in future years.

By implementing the recommendations outlined in this impact report, the EMCA Mentoring Program can continue to evolve and play a critical role in supporting the professional growth and success of early- and mid-career academics. It will not only strengthen the School's commitment to nurturing its research talent but also foster a culture of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mentorship across departments. By investing in this Program, the School can ensure that its up-and-coming researchers receive the guidance and support they need to thrive in their academic careers.