



Mentoring@MSPGH Evaluation Report

Evaluation Advisory Group

2021

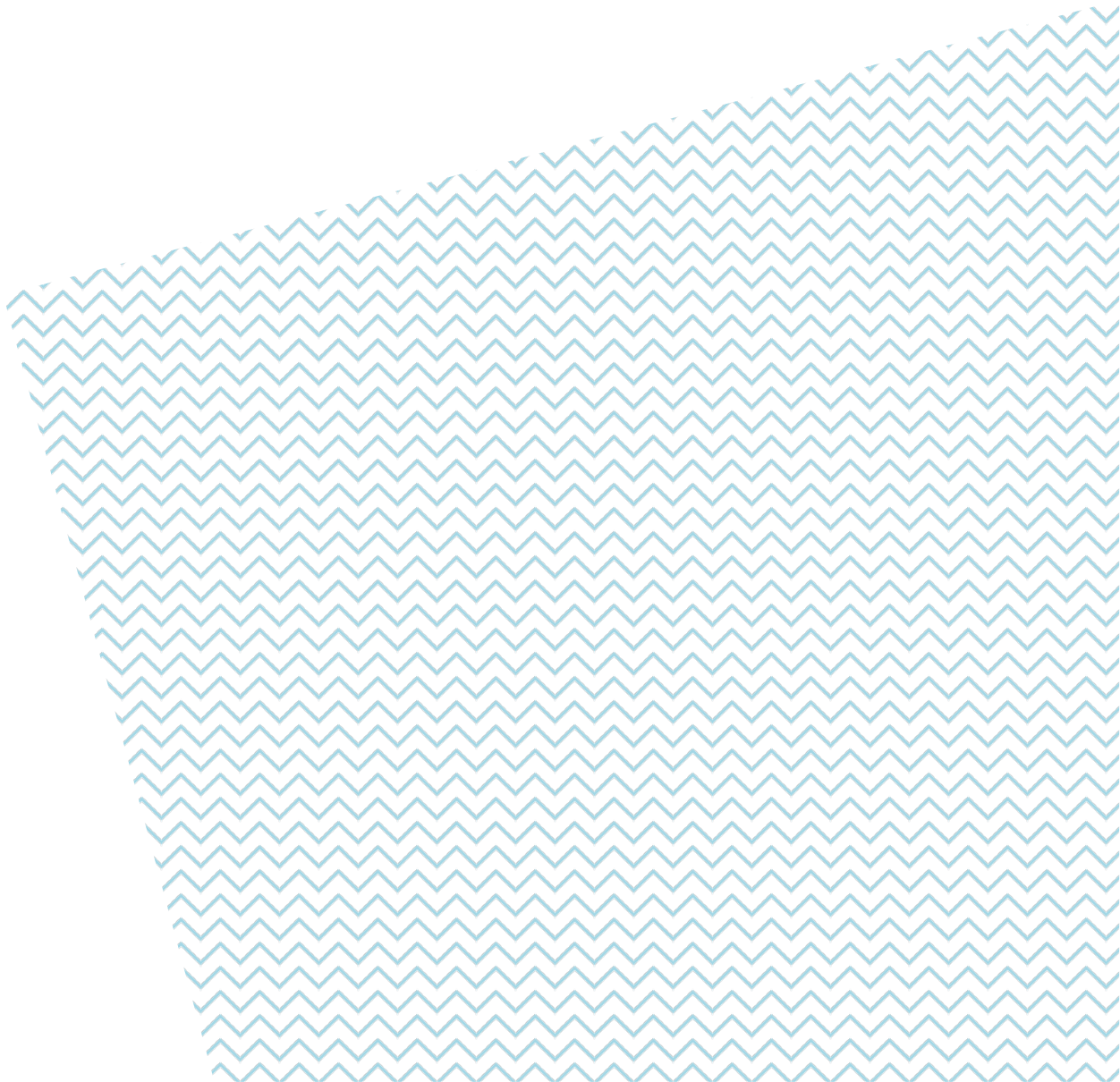


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Overview of the Evaluation of Mentoring@MSPGH

An evaluation of Mentoring@MSPGH has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of the initial 2021 pilot program, and to also provide input to enhancing the program in future years.

Specifically, the evaluation was focused on assessing:

- Mentee and mentor development and experience
- Program structure and administration
- Organisational impact

Evaluation activities were conducted throughout the program's duration (commencement, mid-point, and conclusion); and a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were utilised to inform the evaluation.

Details of the method and findings are below; along with recommendations and limitations.

Evaluation Method

The evaluation of the program consisted of the following activities:

- An online survey of mentees and mentors at the commencement of the program
- Focus groups conducted with mentees and mentors mid-program
- An online survey of mentees and mentors at the completion of the program
- Interviews with mentees and mentors at the completion of the program

Participation in the evaluation activities was voluntary and was not a requirement of participation in the program.

Each activity is further detailed below.

Online survey at commencement of program

A survey was administered using Qualtrics; with the survey link provided to all program mentee and mentor participants at the commencement of the program in June 2021.

This survey was designed to be a baseline survey to enable measurement of some of the questions in subsequent surveys to determine whether there has been any aggregate changes across the cohort as the program progressed. The survey was anonymous; however, to enable capturing changes to baseline questions in future surveys, respondents were requested to develop an identifier that was unique to them and to use this in future surveys.

The survey was mostly multiple choice, with also some opportunity for free-form answers.

The questions focused on current enjoyment of job and working with MSPGH, satisfaction with the administration and support provided with Mentoring@MSPGH, previous mentoring experience, reasons for applying for the program, interest in peer support, mentee topics of interest for professional development, and mentors expertise and skill level assessment.

There were 20 mentee and 22 mentor respondents to this survey (out of a total of 32 mentees and 32 mentors in the cohort). 3 responses were incomplete and removed from analysis therefore total response rate was 45 with 42 responses used for analysis.

Focus groups at mid-program

The purpose of conducting mid-program evaluation activities was to ascertain overall feedback on current satisfaction of the program to-date and whether there were any areas of the program that required immediate modification, as well as feedback that could contribute to the overall program evaluation. It was also an opportunity to engage with program participants to strengthen their connection to the program.

Two focus groups were conducted, one with 6 mentees and one with 6 mentors in September 2021 via Zoom. The focus groups were held at the respective "peer drop-in sessions" which was purposeful to aid participation by not creating an additional scheduling burden for participants busy schedules. Holding separate focus groups for mentees

and mentors separately was also purposeful to ensure participants felt comfortable sharing feedback amongst mentoring peers and not have the 'perceived' mentee/mentoring hierarchy impact.

The focus groups were facilitated by a program participant who was both a mentee and mentor, and a minute taker (a mentee program participant) was also present to take notes of the discussion. It was intentional for none of the Mentoring@MSPGH Advisory Group to facilitate, minute take, or attend these sessions to ensure it did not impair the candour of the discussion.

The same questions were prepared and asked at both focus groups which were intended to be a conversation starter with the facilitator to further explore discussion themes that ensued as appropriate. The discussion questions covered all three areas of the evaluation – participant experience, program support, and organisational impact.

A summary report was prepared for each focus group which provided detail on the main themes that emerged. Participants were anonymous.

Online survey at end of program

Similar to the online survey at the commencement, a survey was administered using Qualtrics; with the survey link provided to all program mentee and mentor participants at the completion of the program in December 2021.

This survey was designed to repeat some questions of the baseline survey to determine whether there were any changes in responses through the program. As per the program commencement survey, respondents were anonymous; and to enable analysing changes in the baseline questions, respondents were requested to provide the identifier they previously developed to enable the analysis.

The survey was mostly multiple choice, with also some opportunity for free-form answers.

The questions focused on current enjoyment of job and working with MSPGH, whether there has been a change in employment during the program, satisfaction with Mentoring@MSPGH, feedback of the skill development and peer drop-in sessions, mentee satisfaction with program outcomes, mentor satisfaction and skill level assessment.

There were 20 mentee and 19 mentor respondents to this survey.

Interviews at completion of program

In order to obtain some more detailed feedback from a qualitative perspective, interviews were conducted with 3 mentees and 3 mentors in December 2021 via Zoom.

The interviews were conducted by a recent Masters of Public Health graduate student who was not a member of the Mentoring@MSPGH Advisory Group in order to foster an environment of open sharing of feedback.

Participants were randomly selected and approached by the interviewer to participate. Questions were prepared for mentees and mentors which were intended to be a conversation starter. The questions covered all three areas of the evaluation – participant experience and outcomes, program support, and organisational impact.

A summary transcript was provided of each interview which was anonymous and de-identified.

Findings

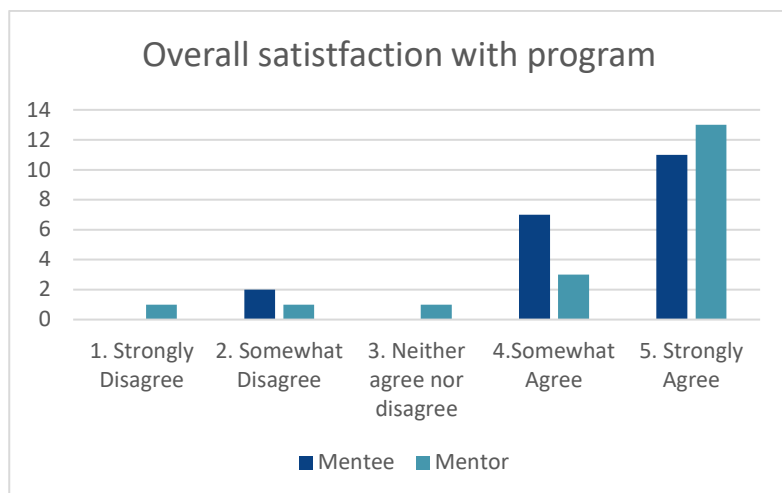
The findings below are a collation of the key themes from all of the evaluation activities, both quantitative and qualitative. These findings are grouped into the three focus areas of evaluation – participant development and experience, program structure and administration, and organisational impact.

Mentee and mentor development and experience

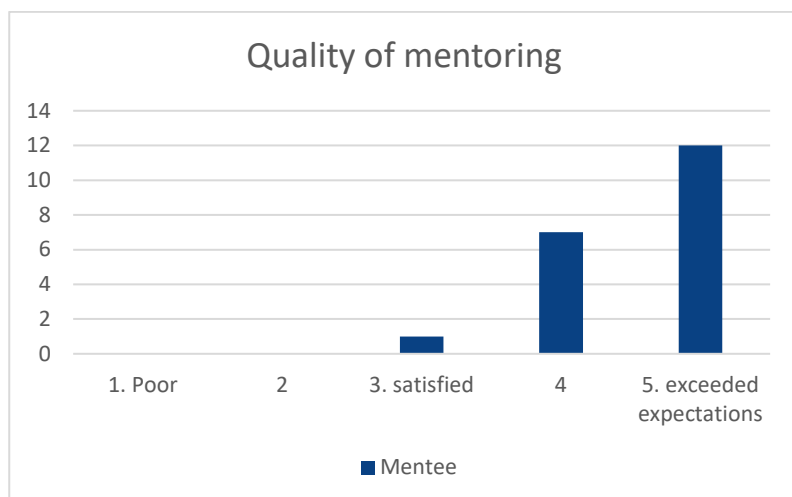
Overall experience of program

Qualitative evaluation activities throughout the program received consistently positive feedback by participants (both mentees and mentors) about their experience in the program. Feedback from mentees included feeling a sense of gratitude for the skills they had learnt and growth in personal qualities, and appreciation of the opportunity to create time to focus on the development of themselves and their careers. The program also provided comfort to mentees by discovering the challenges they experience are not unique to them. Mentors reported that the program is also rewarding and enjoyable, as well as being personally valuable and has enabled mentors to reflect on their own career.

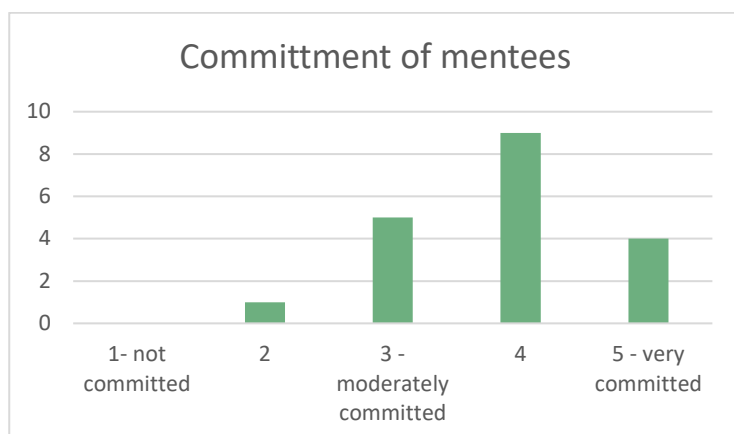
These positive sentiments continued to be reflected in the end of program survey with the responses to “My overall experience with the program has been satisfying” mostly positive:



When asked about the satisfaction of the mentoring they received at the end of the program, mentees responded overwhelmingly favourably, with 95% of respondents rating the mentoring as either a 4 or 5 out of a maximum of 5. Of this 95%, 60% of respondents rated their mentoring as a 5 which was categorised as “exceeded expectations”:

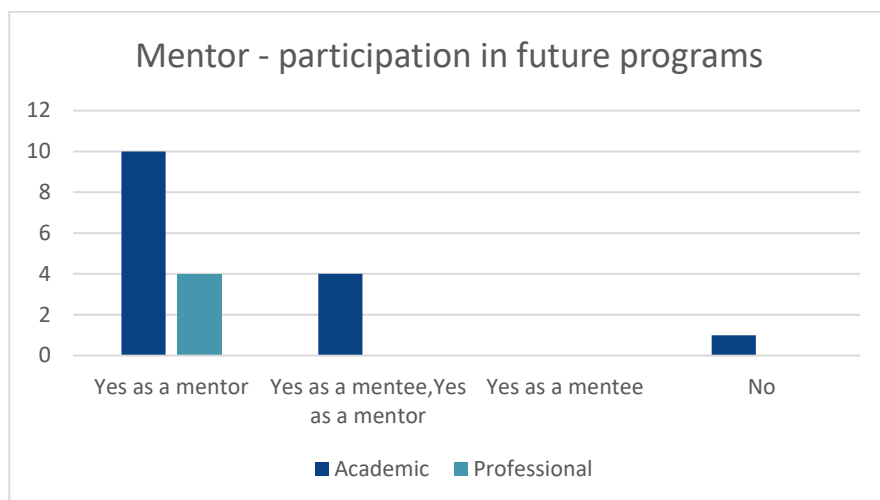
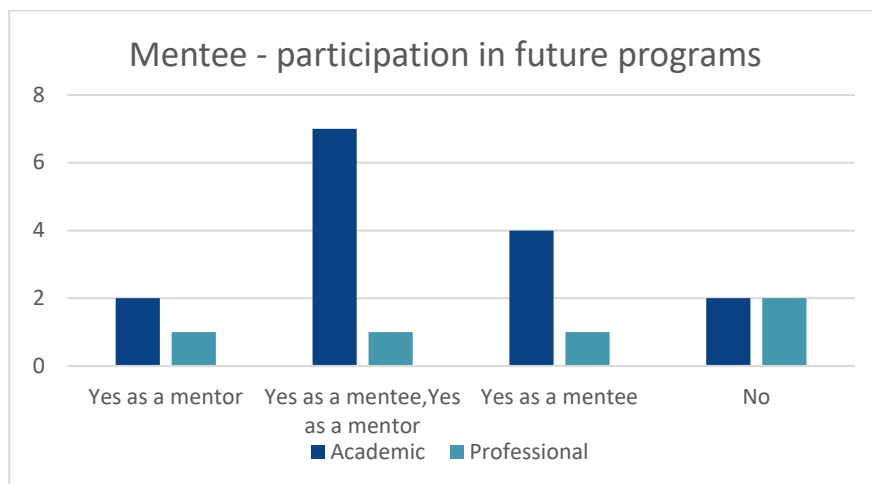


When mentors were asked in the end of program survey about the commitment they believe their mentees had to the program and achieving their goals, the responses were positive, however 31% of mentees were rated as only “moderately committed” or less by the mentor respondents:



In the end of program survey feedback was also sought about whether participants would recommend Mentoring@MSPGH to others to participate in, the response to this question was an overwhelming 100% (from both mentee and mentor respondents) that they would recommend to others.

When asked whether the 2021 cohort would be interested in participating in the program again in the future, 75% of respondents advised they would participate in future programs as either a mentor, as both a mentee and mentor, or as a mentee. Of the 25% who advised they would not participate again, the reasons provided included they would like others to have the opportunity to benefit from the program as they have and they don't feel ready to be a mentor yet, time commitment, not sure if they are useful as a mentor, and they are ready to leave the School.



Participant Outcomes

Mentees

The top reason most mentees were attracted to the program was to obtain clarity on their career planning and this did indeed end up being the top benefit that most experienced. The second most selected reason was to expand their networks.

When mentees were asked whether they achieved the goals they hoped or the purpose of what attracted them to the program, 100% of respondents confirmed they either achieved what they intended, or throughout the program their outcomes had changed but they felt a sense of achievement, or their achievements exceeded their expectations.

The biggest benefits of the program for mentee respondents of the end of program survey were “obtained clarity on my career and develop a career plan” and “expanded my network”; and then skill development to enhance work performance and improving people management skills.

Mentors

Most mentors were inspired to join the program because they want to ‘pay it forward’ to the next generation and they enjoy mentoring people. These were also the top two benefits mentors experienced when completing the end of program survey. In qualitative free text responses, they advised that they also benefited from networking, getting to know their colleagues, reciprocal support from mentee, and self-reflection.

In the commencement survey most mentors believed they could offer mentees professional skills followed closely by work/life balance support and career planning. However, in the completion survey, career planning shifted to the top position and professional skills dropped to the lowest.

In both the commencement and end of program surveys, mentors were asked to self-assess their skill level in several mentor-related skills. Mentors generally rated their mentorship skills as somewhat or extremely skilled, with slight positive increases in the end of program survey. In qualitative free text responses mentors advised they particularly developed their active listening skills.

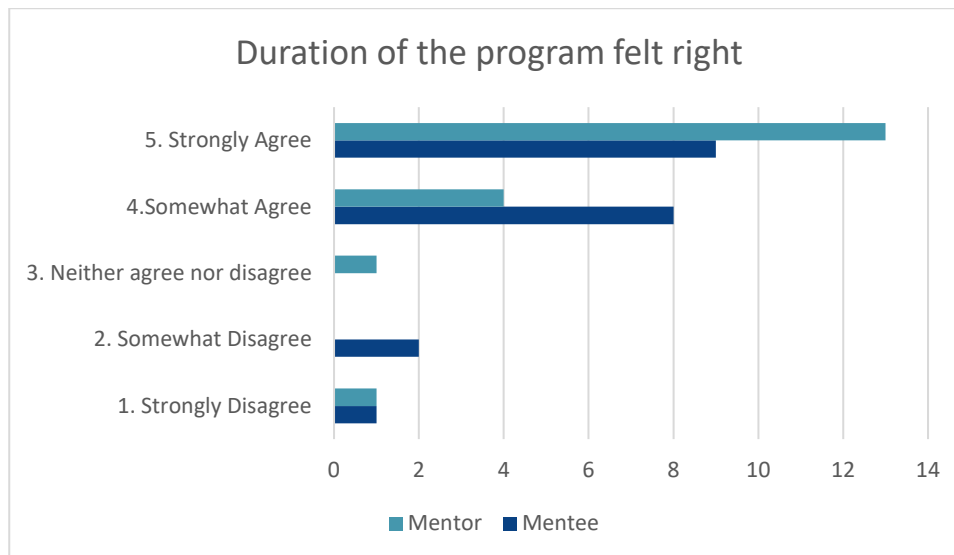
Program structure and administration

Participants were generally positive about their experiences with the program structure and administration. Some further details are below to validate this statement.

Structure of the program

Program duration and engagement

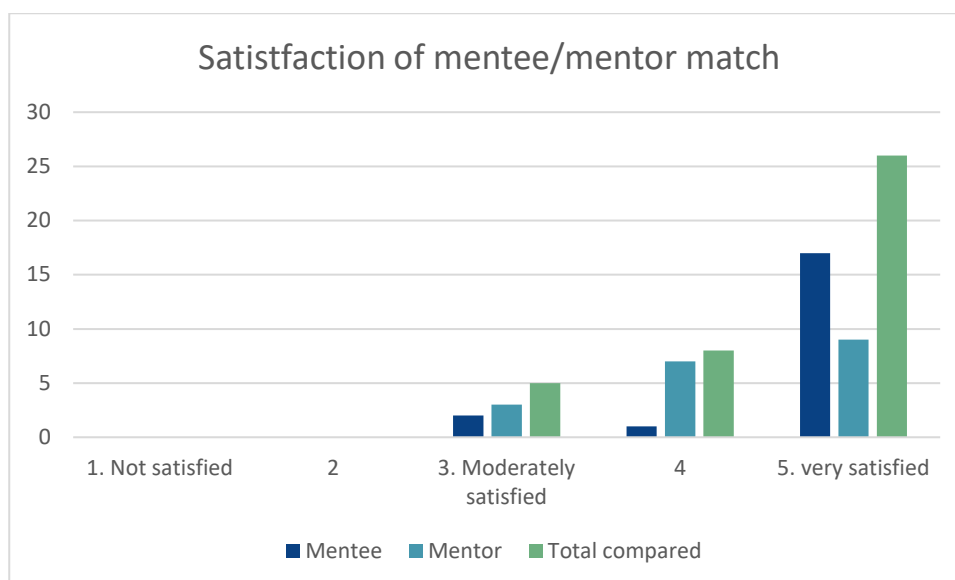
The majority of respondents agreed that the six-month duration of the program felt right with the response below from the end of program survey respondents:



When asked how many mentoring sessions did they have throughout the program, 64% of survey respondents participated in between 3 – 5 mentoring sessions, 28% had more than 5 sessions, and 8% of respondents participated in less than 3 sessions.

Mentee/Mentor matching

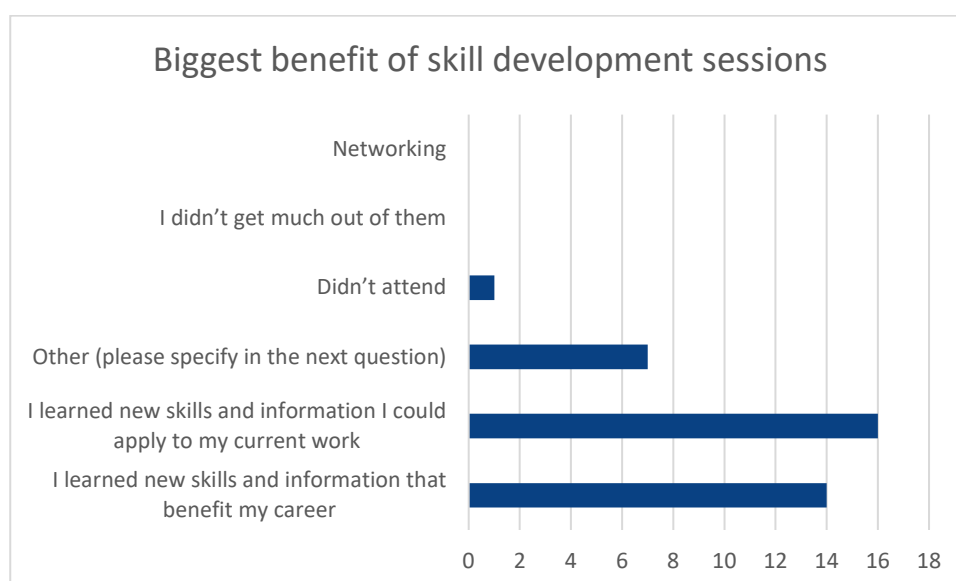
Throughout the program, feedback was regularly provided from participants about the strength of the matching of the mentees/mentors. This was further validated in the end of program survey:



For noting, some qualitative feedback was received that clarity of the nature of mentee goals in advance (whether they were broad career related or specific technical goals) and match mentor accordingly would have been advantageous. Mentors also suggested that the program could benefit from more non-Academic mentors with feedback that “a mentoring program that only occurs inside academia may limit a mentee’s perspective of their skills and work possibilities”.

Skill development sessions

The biggest benefit for participants of attending the skill development sessions throughout the program was that they learned new skills and information they could apply to their current work and also skills and information that benefited their career.



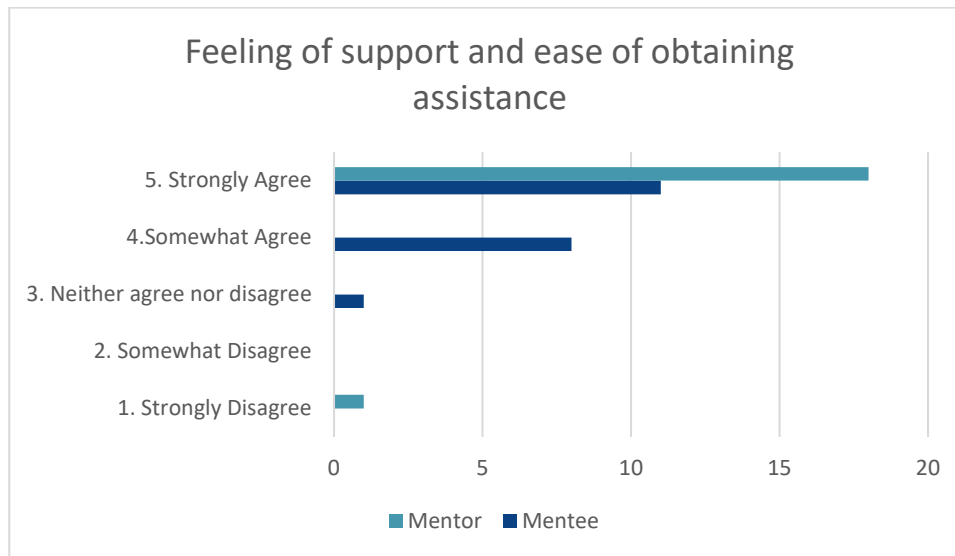
In qualitative feedback collected throughout the duration of the program, the Introduction Training Session was especially valued. Feedback received indicated that the session was particularly useful in establishing a good foundation for the program by setting expectations, as well as providing assistance with goal setting, and creating a good lead into the first mentoring session.

Mentors were asked in the end of program survey whether they would have liked to receive more specific training about being a mentor prior to the commencement of the program; with 79% of respondents advising they wouldn't. This however could be attributed to the seniority of the mentors with 75% of academic mentors Level D and above; and 60% of professional mentors PSC 9 and above.

Program support and administration

Overall support provided

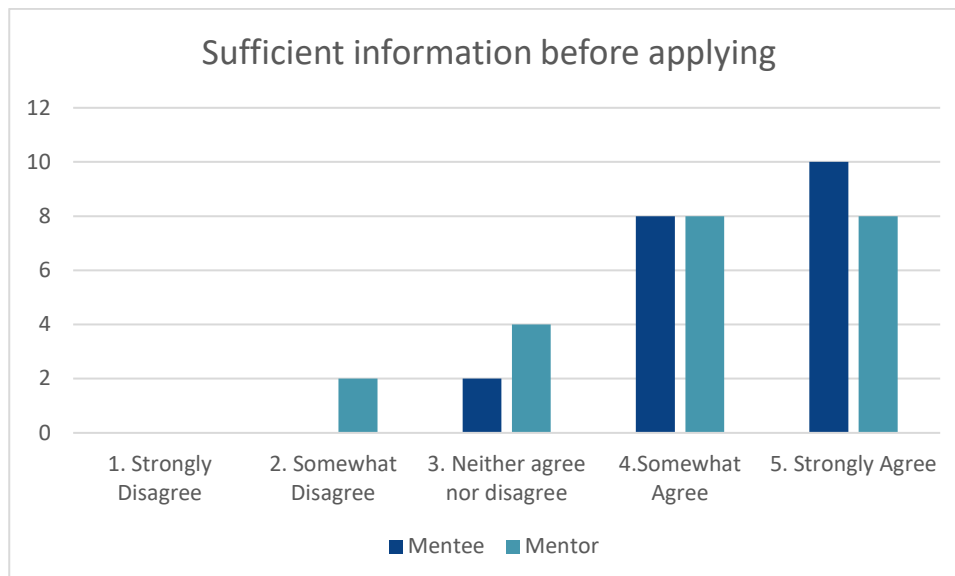
Participants felt supported by program organisers and could easily make enquiries and obtain support; evidenced in the end of program survey respondents feedback below:

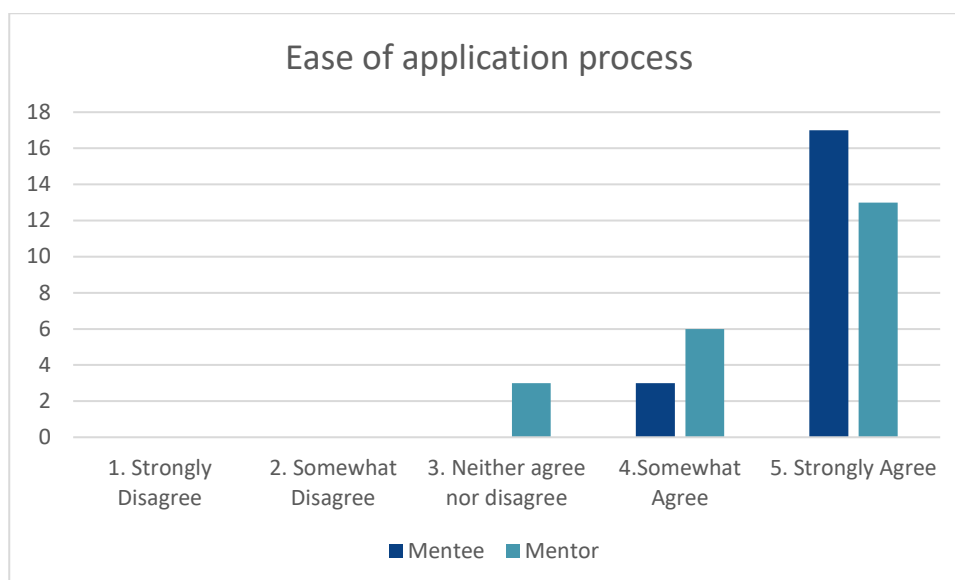


Qualitative feedback also commented that the program was well structured and well organised overall.

Application process

In the commencement of program survey, respondents provided the following feedback about the program application process which was mostly positive:





Organisational impact

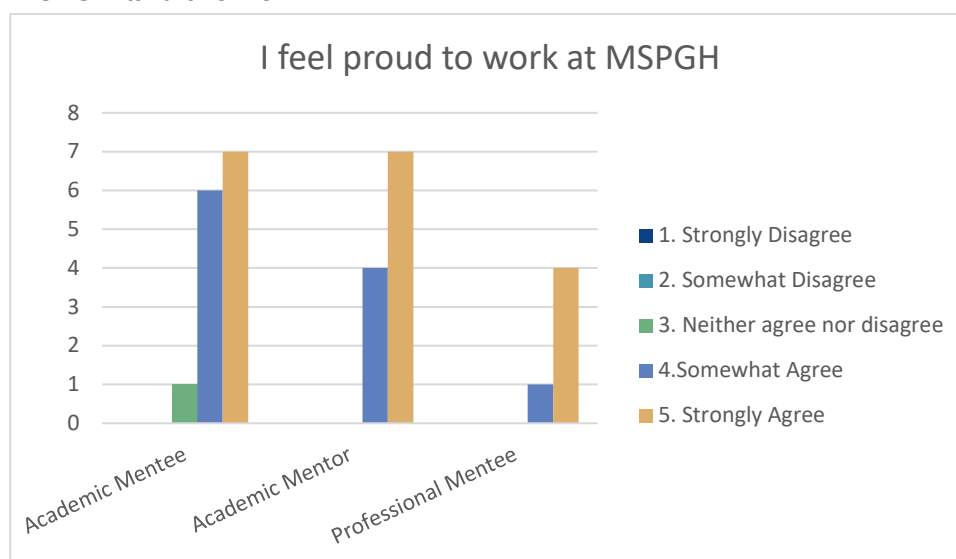
Working at MSPGH

Questions relating to participants roles and MSPGH as a workplace were asked in both the commencement and end of the program surveys to determine whether there was any change in sentiment during the program. The responses remained overall positive, with minor variations from commencement to conclusion. For noting, on some matters, mentors were slightly more positive in their responses.

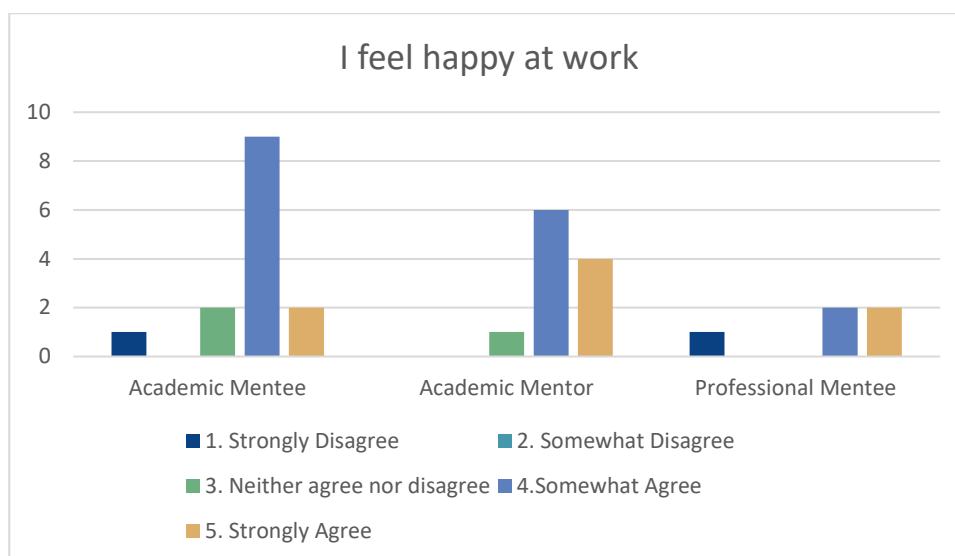
As the number of participants who recorded matched identifiers (a total of 8 mentees and 13 mentors) to enable comparison of data from commencement to conclusion is small and with minimal variation; the data from all respondents of the end of program survey only is displayed below to provide a wider snapshot of current feelings about working at MSPGH.

There is no data for professional staff mentors in this section as none of the professional staff mentors who responded to the survey were employed by MSPGH so they were excluded from answering these questions.

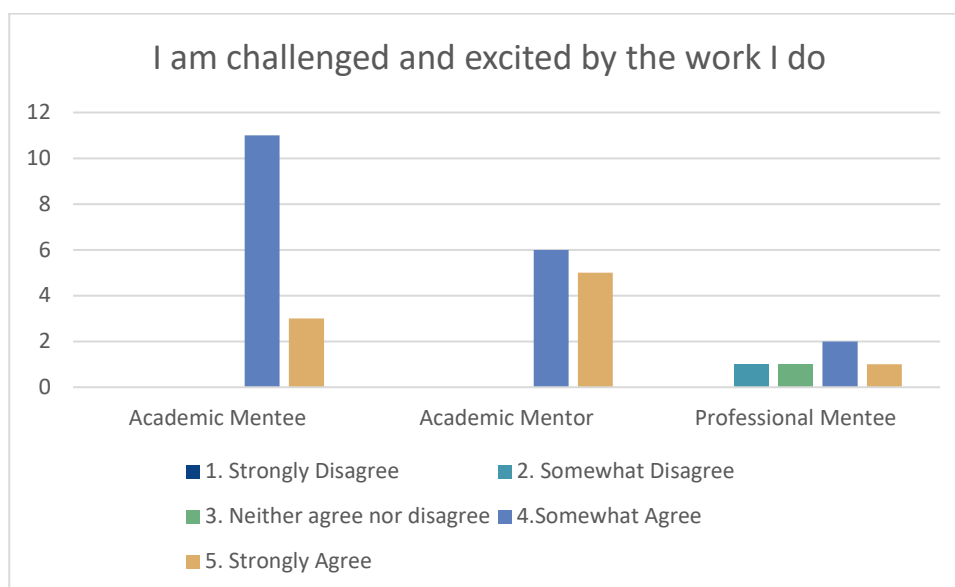
MSPGH and the work



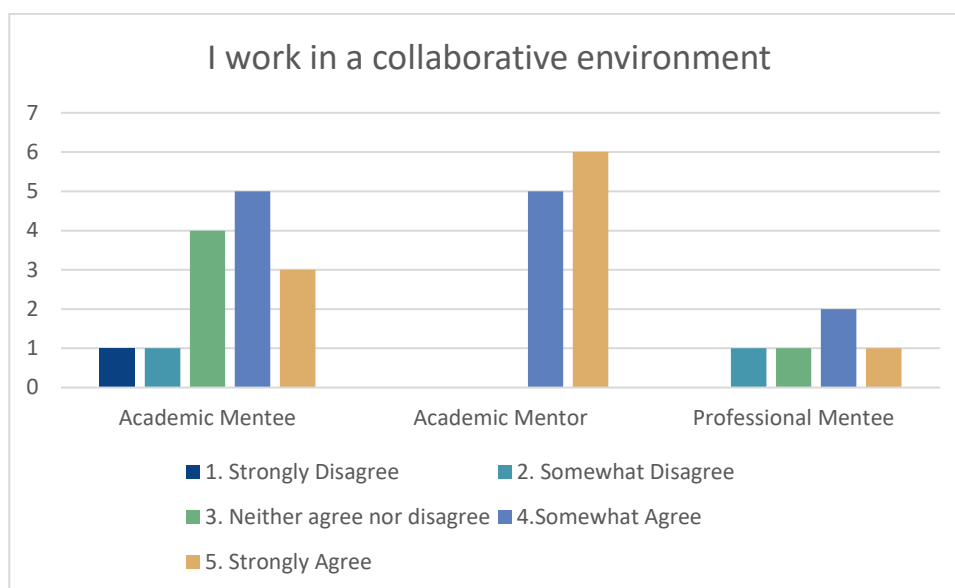
Demonstrated positive feedback from respondents across all categories about feeling proud to work at MSPGH.



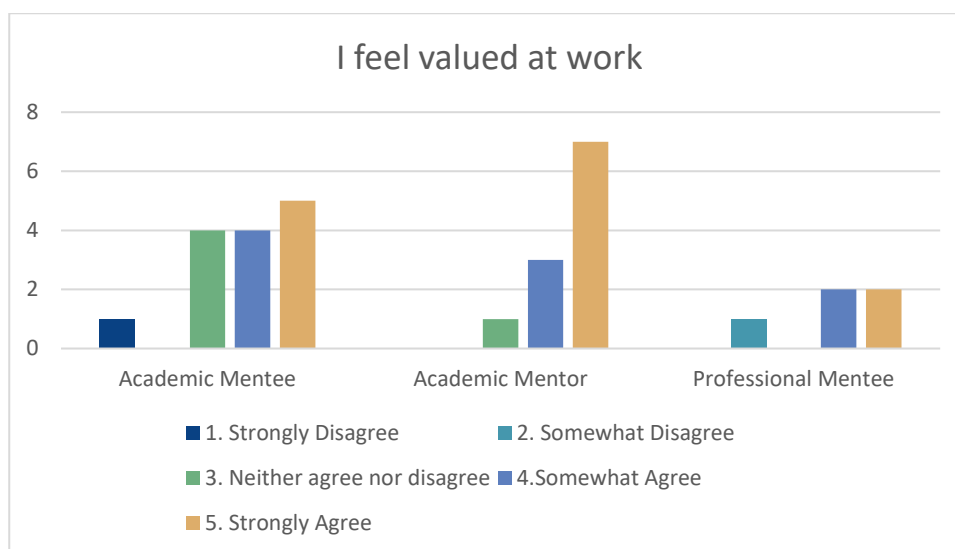
Overall feelings of happiness at work, with slightly less positive feedback from mentees.



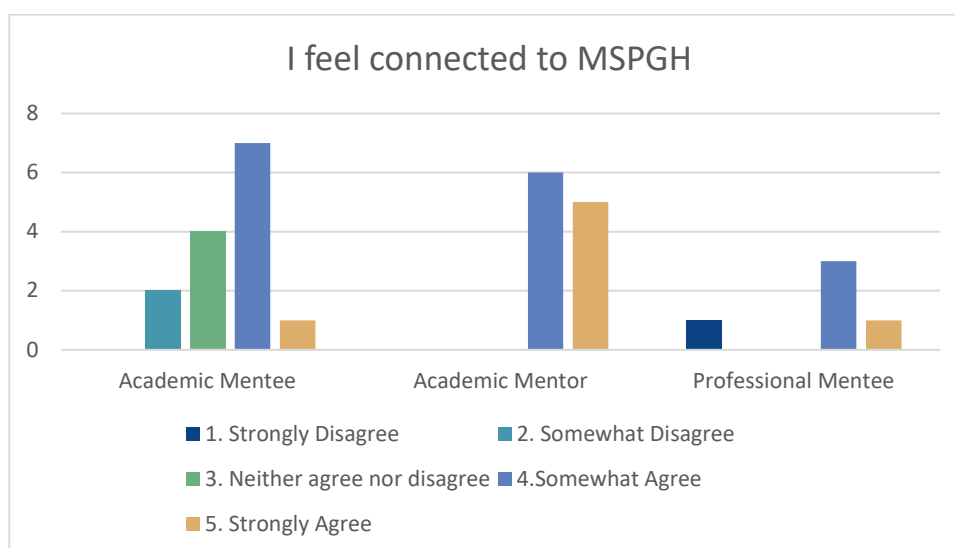
Professional staff respondents are slightly less challenged and excited by their work.



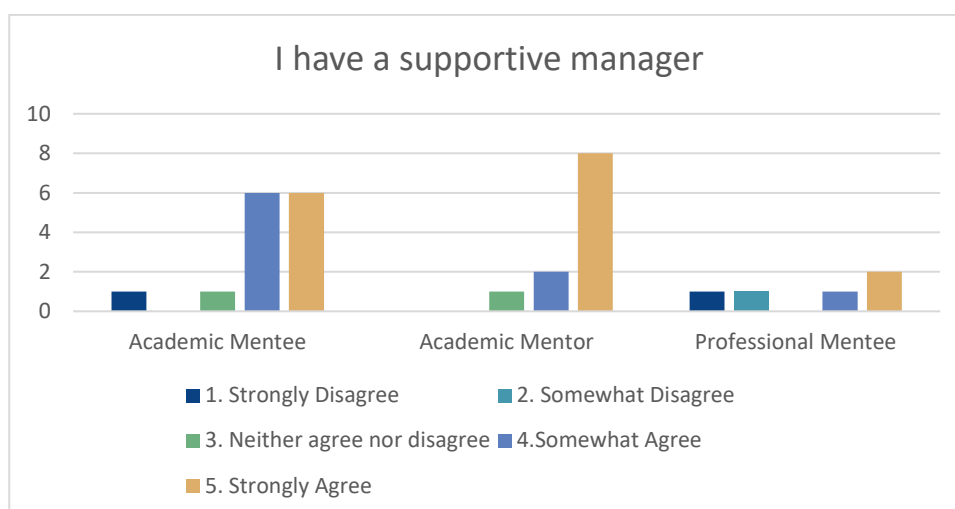
Mentors have a higher sense of collaboration than mentees; and more so in academia than professional.



Overall respondents feel valued at work, with mentors more strongly feeling valued.



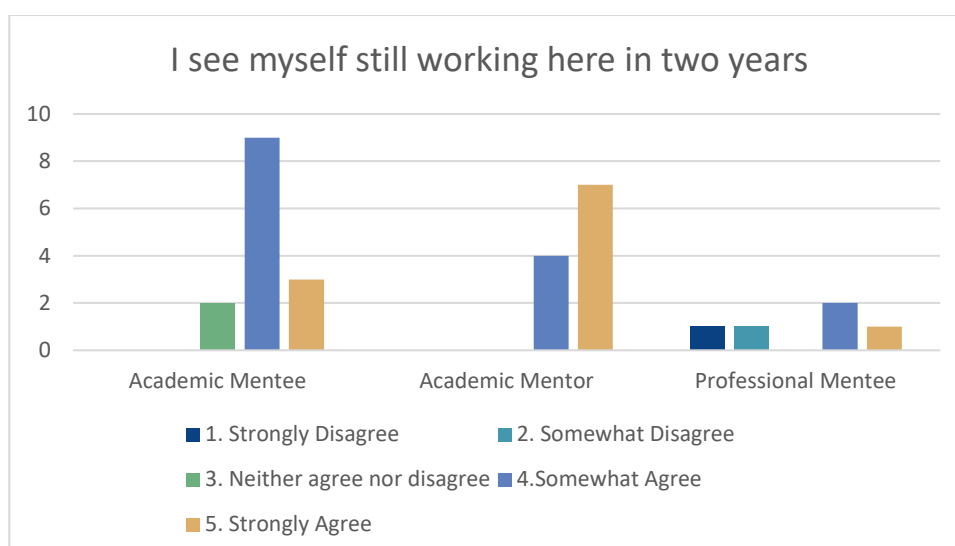
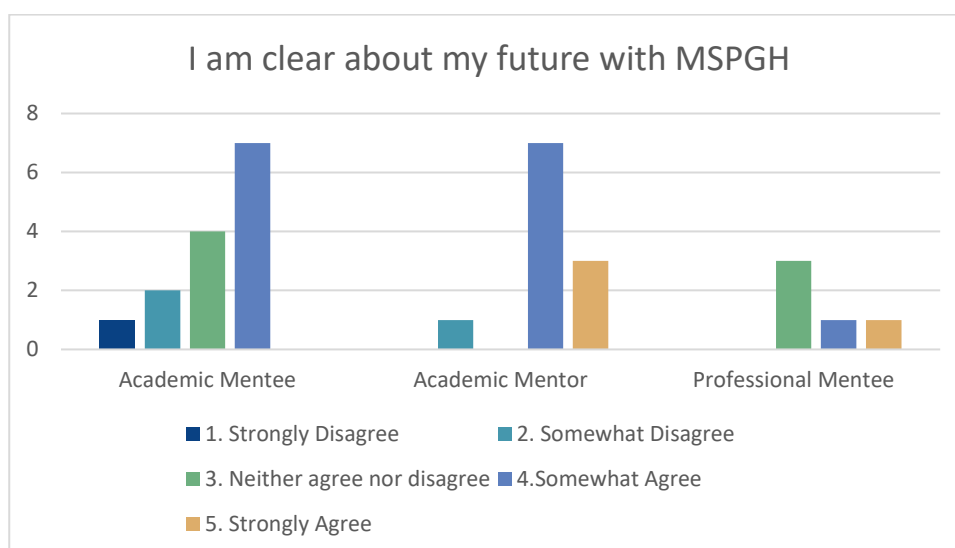
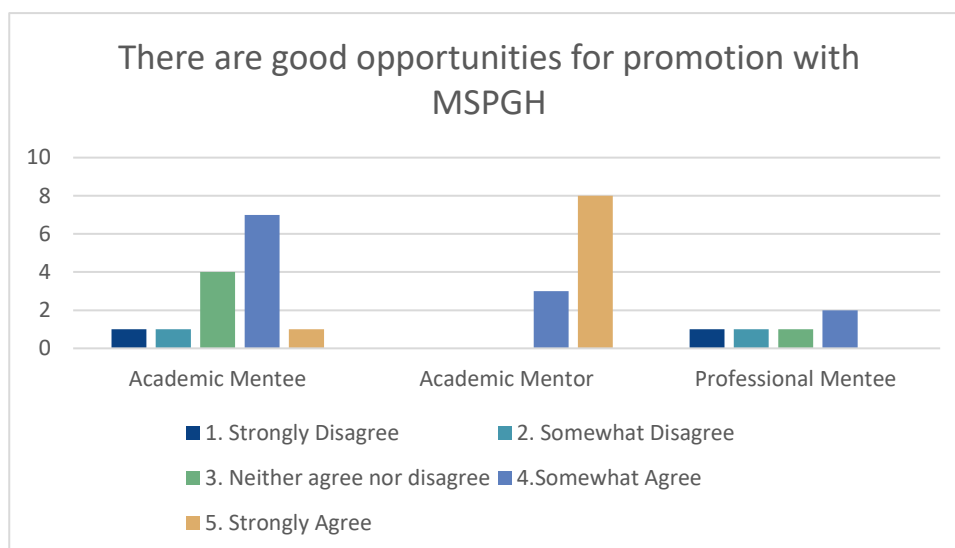
Mentor respondents have stronger connection to MSPGH.



Mentors are more favourable about their manager than mentees.

Career

All career related questions have received a more positive response from mentors. For mentees, responses were slightly more positive for academic mentees than professional mentees.



When respondents were asked if they were to leave MSPGH tomorrow what would the reason be, the most predominant responses were related to precarious employment (32%) and career change/new opportunities (32%). Other responses were summarised as family commitments/moving interstate (16%), illness/retirement (12%), and minimal support/guidance from manager (8%).

Change of employment during the program

15% of mentees and 10% of mentors respondents in the end of program survey experienced a change to their employment in the past 6 months during the program. These changes were a variety of circumstances including academic promotion, moved to a higher level not through the academic promotion process, and also changed position at the same level.

Other feedback about MSPGH and Mentoring@MSPGH

In addition to the above survey data about working at MSPGH, the following qualitative feedback was provided throughout the program:

Impact of Mentoring@MSPGH

- Resulted in mentors actively connecting mentees with others to create informal mentors and overall increased connectivity; and has created overall increased opportunities for networking
- Program has made participants feel important to MSPGH
- Involvement of senior MSPGH staff as mentors is proof MSPGH cares about their people
- The program has facilitated introductions to other units which has opened up opportunities for collaborations
- Increased awareness about other parts of MSPGH
- Shows that MSPGH care about ECRs and considering their needs
- Connection to the School
- Feelings of increased identification with the School, and as if I have a bit more to contribute to it
- It's good to give development opportunities to people at all levels

Other feedback

- Culture could be further improved with more collaboration to improve synergies and engage ECRs in decision making or keep them informed
- Events are very western focused (lack of inclusion for people of different backgrounds) – e.g. quizzes about western songs

Limitations

The main limitation of this evaluation is the small sample size of the data. The pilot of Mentoring@MSPGH had a total of 64 participants; with 65% of participants completing the commencement survey and 61% completing the end of program survey. The attempt to obtain comparison data to ascertain changes in respondents' sentiments during the program was also limited as only 8 mentees and 13 mentors were able to be compared in the survey data with matched identifiers.

It was also difficult to do any comparison and analysis to identify variances between academic and professional staff as there were only 6 professional staff mentees in the cohort.

Furthermore, while some of the qualitative feedback was obtained from the free-text responses in the surveys, the majority of qualitative feedback was obtained from the mid-program focus groups and end-program interviews whereby the sample sizes were 12 and 6 participants respectively. Nonetheless, the qualitative feedback did align with the quantitative survey responses.

The time of year of collecting the data is also a potential limitation; as the end-program survey and end-program interviews were conducted in December 2021 which may have had an impact on participation rates as this time of year is associated with people's focus on completing work before the year-end break, or some are already on leave. Also noting by the end of the year people are tired and looking forward to a break, which could have resulted in less favourable responses.

While an attempt has been made to evaluate the impact of Mentoring@MSPGH for the School; true organisational impact of the program won't fully be able to be identified until a longer timeframe has occurred when there is data available such as employee turnover of the cohort, promotions of program participants, funding success of participants, employee engagement rates, etc.

Recommendations

Evaluation specific

To enhance the evaluation of future Mentoring@MSPGH cohorts, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration:

- At the onset of promoting the program and at the time of enrolment specify it is a requirement of participants to actively participate in evaluation activities to encourage greater participation rates
- Consider incentivising participation in evaluation activities (e.g. a lucky draw for survey respondents); however would need to consider how this can be done to ensure confidentiality of responses
- For quantitative data collection, create mechanisms to capture participants feedback live at events rather than relying on participants taking action on post-event communications (e.g. build time into the program introduction and program end sessions to complete a survey and provide a QR code on the screen for participants to access the survey live)
- In the instance the end of program coincides with end-November timeframes in future, commence end-program evaluation activities prior to the end of program to not impact the end of year “busyness” of participants; as qualitative activities could be done prior to the conclusion of the program or conduct it live at the closing event
- Conduct interviews with manager/supervisors of participants at the end of the program to obtain feedback whether there has been noticeable changes of behaviours and performance in mentees or mentors while participating in the program
- Conduct a follow up survey of the cohort post-program to ascertain future reflections about learnings and the longer term impact of the program; for both the individual and also MSPGH

Overall program

Based on the feedback received during the evaluation of Mentoring@MSPGH, the following recommendations are opportunities to consider which may further enhance the program for future cohorts:

- Hold a program launch event (pre-application period) which is an opportunity to showcase the value of mentoring to create enthusiasm for potential mentees and mentors, as well as briefing to provide enhanced clarity around expectations of participating in the program
- During the program application process request mentees provide an indication of the goals they will set for the program which will create clarity for them about what they want to achieve, highlights the importance of goal setting, as well as ensuring a suitable mentor is matched to them with expertise aligned with goals
- Increase the participation of professional staff as mentors with a targeted promotional campaign – to be matched with not only professional staff, but also academic staff to aid their development
- Create less segregation between mentees and mentors (e.g. peer groups, break out activities in workshops) and more opportunity to connect and learn from other mentees and mentors in the cohort
- Enhance guidance around ending the program with mentee
- Create post-program networking opportunities for the cohort

Conclusion

The evaluation has provided strong evidence that the pilot of Mentoring@MSPGH has been a success.

Overall program satisfaction was high, with all mentees felt a sense of achievement from participating, and mentors also experiencing benefits from participating.

Engagement with the program was high with the majority of respondent participants participating in at least 3 mentoring sessions.

The positive experience of the program and its value is further evidenced in that all participants would recommend the program to others, and most participants would participate in the program again in the future. Also noting that some mentees would apply in the future as a mentor which could be a sign of their individual growth and increased confidence levels as a result of participating in the program.

The positive feedback about the program support and administration, and the high quality of the mentoring also would have impacted on satisfaction levels. The role of the Program Manager should also be acknowledged as being essential to the success of Mentoring@MSPGH with the effort and level of support the Program Manager has provided throughout the program.

In addition to the skill development and other benefits to individuals who participate in the program; there is also a demonstrated benefit for the School of the program. While the long-term impact and benefits cannot yet be realised, the program sends positive messaging to the School community (and wider) about the importance MSPGH places on the commitment and development of its people. The School also benefits from participants increasing their knowledge of the School and their connectivity to it, as well as expanded networks in the School which has the potential to lead to future collaborations.

