AKO AOTEAROA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TERTIARY TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Research report:

A Collaborative Approach to Mentoring: A model for industry training organisations and employers

Report prepared for Downer New Zealand and Ako Aotearoa by Sandra Johnson

Downer
Relationships creating success

A Collaborative Approach to Mentoring: A Model for Industry Training Organisations and Employers

Author
Sandra Johnson

This project was supported through the Ako Aotearoa National Project Fund 2012.

This report and other project resources (a *Mentors workbook*, a *How to guide for mentors of apprentices* and a *Mentor's question wheel*) can be downloaded at www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/projects/mentoring-model-itos-and-employers.

Publisher
Ako Aotearoa National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence
PO Box 756
Wellington 6140

Published
October 2016
ISBN: 978-0-947516-27-7 (online)

This work is published under the *Creative Commons 3.0 New Zealand Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike Licence (BY-NC-SA)***.** Under this licence you are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work as well as to remix, tweak, and build upon this work non-commercially, as long as you credit the author/s and license your new creations under the identical terms.

AKO AOTEAROA NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TERTIARY TEACHING EXCELLENCE

NPF NATIONAL PROJECT FUND AKO AOTEAROA

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following people for their contribution to the project and preparation of this report:

Chris Holland for her role as Research Mentor, supporting the research towards good research practice. Her support in the initial stages of this research was greatly appreciated.

Members of the Project Team who assisted with the implementation of the project into Downer New Zealand, Connexis and Primary ITO, including:

- Sue Beckett, Project Implementation Lead (to April 2015)
- Lee Pennock, Learning Advisor Downer New Zealand and Project Implementation Lead (from April 2015)
- Ian Jennings, Learning Advisor Downer New Zealand
- Peter Sleeman, Downer New Zealand
- Robbie Paul, Connexis
- Michael Styles, Primary ITO

Thank you also to the participants of the research, the apprentices, mentors and ITO field representative, for their input and enthusiasm around mentoring and this study.

Contents

Executive Summary **5**
1 Introduction **9**
1.1 Background 9
1.2 Objectives 9
1.3 Interventions 9
1.4 Defining a Collaborative Approach to Mentoring 9
1.4.1 Shared understanding of mentoring 10
1.4.2 Role clarity 11
1.4.3 Consistent support avenues 12
1.4.4 Consistent mentoring tools 13

2 Methodology **18**
2.1 Research questions 18
2.2 Research design 18
2.2.1 Action research approach 18
2.2.2 Outcome-focused evaluation 18
2.3 Instruments 21
2.3.1 Apprentice collection instruments 21
2.3.2 Mentor collection instruments 21
2.3.3 ITO field representative collection instruments 21
2.4 Demographics Information 21
2.4.1 Selection criteria 21
2.4.2 Demographic size 22
2.5 Data collection 22
2.5.1 Research advisory group 23
2.5.2 Initial data extraction 23
2.5.3 Surveys 23
2.5.4 Interviews 24
2.6 Data analysis 24
2.7 Limitations 24
2.7.1 Methodological limitations 24
2.7.2 Limitations of the researcher 25
2.8 Research ethics 26
2.8.1 Mentoring code of ethics 26
2.8.2 Participant privacy 26
2.8.3 Informed consent 26
2.8.4 Security of data 27

3 Results **27**
3.1 Demographic Results 27
3.1.1 Demographic gender distribution 27
3.1.2 Demographic age distribution 28
3.1.3 Demographic time since last formal qualification 29

3.1.4 Apprentice demographic ethnicity distribution ... 30
3.1.5 Qualifications apprentice are working towards ... 31
3.1.6 Apprentice demographic type ... 32
3.1.7 Apprentice demographic relationship to mentor ... 32
3.2 What are the key methods for employers and ITOs to work effectively together to support apprentices? ... 32
3.2.1 Shared understanding of mentoring ... 33
3.2.2 Role clarity ... 34
3.2.3 Consistent support avenues ... 34
3.2.4 Consistent mentoring tools ... 37
3.2.5 Local level hubs ... 38
3.3 Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the employment retention rates of apprentices? ... 40
3.3.1 Apprentice turnover rates ... 40
3.3.2 Cost of apprentice turnover to the business ... 40
3.3.3 Career pathways within Downer ... 41
3.4 Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the qualification completion rates of apprentices? ... 42
3.4.1 Progress towards qualification attainment ... 42
3.4.2 Estimated cost of non-completions to Downer ... 45
3.5 Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the strength of the relationship between the mentor and mentee? ... 46
3.5.1 Structure of mentoring sessions ... 46
3.5.2 Apprentice buy in to the relationship ... 49
3.5.3 Mentor view of the relationship ... 51
3.5.4 ITO field representative view of the relationship ... 51
3.5.5 Manager versus mentor ... 52
3.6 How does an aligned approach to mentoring improve understanding and practices of mentors? ... 53

4 Discussion ... 54
4.1 Implications of the demographic group composition ... 54
4.2 The collaborative model ... 55
4.3 Retention rates ... 57
4.4 Completion rates ... 57
4.5 Strength of the mentoring relationship ... 58
4.6 Degree of understanding and practices around mentoring ... 58

5 Conclusions & Recommendations ... 61
5.1 Conclusions ... 61
5.2 Recommendations ... 63
5.2.1 Recommendations for Downer ... 63
5.2.2 Recommendations for ITOs ... 64

6 References ... 65
7 Appendices ... 66
7.1 An apprentice framework ... 66
7.2 GROW model mentoring wheel ... 67

7.3 Mentoring agreement 69
7.4 Mentor record 70

Table of Tables

Table 1: Data collection overview 20
Table 2: Survey response rates 23
Table 3: Initial survey age distribution breakdown (67% of sample size) 29
Table 4: Initial survey demographic time since last formal study breakdown (67% of sample) 30
Table 5: Apprentice demographic ethnicity distribution 30
Table 6: Overview of qualifications apprentices are enrolled in 31
Table 7: Qualification level by ethnicity 31
Table 8: Initial apprentice survey indication of type of apprentice (54% of sample group) 32
Table 9: Role clarity ratings from base line to final 34
Table 10: Shift in Support category needs by roles (38% of sample groups) 35
Table 11: Apprentice needs versus issues raised (base line survey 67% of sample groups) 36
Table 12: Apprentice needs versus issues raised (Midpoint Survey 42% of sample groups) 36
Table 13: Apprentice needs versus issues raised (Final Survey 38% of sample groups) 36
Table 14: Mentor rating of the mentoring tools (Final Survey 39% of sample groups) 38
Table 15: Shift in views on relationship between baseline (67% of sample) and final (38%) Surveys 38
Table 16: Shift in ITO field representatives' views on awareness and involvement by Downer between baseline (87% of sample) and final (65%) Surveys 39
Table 17: Shift in mentors' views on awareness and involvement by different roles between baseline (75% of sample) and final (32%) Surveys 39
Table 18: Apprentice turnover rates by year 40
Table 19: Cost of apprentice turnover to the business by year 40
Table 20: Shift in usefulness of mentoring sessions by the apprentice from baseline (52% of apprentices) to midpoint (30% of apprentices) to final survey (36% of apprentices) 41
Table 21: Comparison of progress made towards qualification completions between project participants and Downer Non Ako Aotearoa sample apprentices from March 2014 to March 2015 44
Table 22: Overview Comparisons between project participants and Downer Non Ako Aotearoa sample apprentices from March 2014 to March 2015 45
Table 23: Number of mentoring sessions held (Final Survey, 38% of sample groups) 46
Table 24: Shift in number of mentoring sessions from Base (75% of sample mentors) to Final (32% of sample mentors) Mentor Survey 46
Table 25: Shift in number of mentoring sessions from Midpoint (54% of sample apprentices) to Final (36% of sample apprentices) Apprentice Survey 48
Table 26: Shift length of mentoring sessions from Base (75% of sample mentors) to Final (32% of sample mentors) Survey 48
Table 27: Shift in mentoring session venues from baseline (75% of mentors) to final (32% of mentors) survey 49
Table 28: Apprentice view of who is driving the relationship from midpoint (30% of apprentices to final (36% of apprentices) 49

Table 29: Mentor view of who is driving the relationship from midpoint (49% of mentors) to final (32% of mentors) 49
Table 30: Shift in usefulness of mentoring sessions by the apprentice from baseline (54% of apprentices) to midpoint (30% of apprentices) to final (36% of apprentices) survey 50

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Collaborative Model Overview 11
Figure 2: Collaborative Model – role clarification..... 12
Figure 3: Overview of support avenues 13
Figure 4: Overview of the GROW model..... 15
Figure 5: Overview of SMART goals 16
Figure 6: Example of a completed mentoring agreement 17
Figure 7: Results Based Accountability model 19
Figure 8: Demographic distribution by gender 27
Figure 9: Initial survey demographic distribution by age (67% of sample group) 28
Figure 10: Initial survey demographic time since last formal study (67% of sample) 29
Figure 11: Mentors relationship with the apprentice (75% of sample group) 32
Figure 12: Apprentice progress towards qualification by ethnicity at March 2014 42
Figure 13: Apprentice progress towards qualification by ethnicity at March 2015 43
Figure 14: Apprentice progress towards qualification by age at March 2015..... 43
Figure 15: Length of mentoring sessions (Final Survey, 38% of sample groups)..... 48
Figure 16: Apprentices ratings of the mentoring process (Final Survey, 32% of Apprentice Sample) 50
Figure 17: Shift in view of the mentoring process by the mentor from baseline (75% of mentors) to midpoint (49% of mentors) to final (32% of mentors) survey 51
Figure 18: Shift in view of the mentoring process by the ITO field representative from baseline (87% of ITO field reps) to midpoint (62% of ITO field reps) to final (65% of ITO field reps) survey52

Executive Summary

Background

Downer New Zealand collaborated with Connexis and Primary Industry Training Organisation (ITO) to undertake a research project on introducing a collaborative approach to mentoring apprentices in a workplace environment. The project involved 23 ITO field representatives, 85 Downer mentors and 91 Downer apprentices and aimed to assess whether a collaborative approach to mentoring:

- Increases learner completion rates
- Increases retention rates
- Strengthens the mentor/mentee relationship.

The project finished at the end of August 2015. A collaborative mentoring programme at the apprentice level was introduced into the Downer business. Previously a haphazard approach to mentoring at an apprentice level had occurred throughout the business, being dependent on local understanding of workplace mentoring. Through this project barriers and issues were identified by Downer in terms of making mentoring at the apprentice level sustainable. Downer has since revised the structure of its apprentice mentoring programme with the view to further embedding mentoring practices within the business.

Methodology

An outcome-focused action research approach was adopted for this project. Three research cycles –a baseline survey and two subsequent surveys – were undertaken. The survey process involved the distribution of questionnaires to demographic groups, interviews with selected participants, and the collection of progress results from ITO and/or Downer databases. Follow up qualitative interviews were also conducted.

Three distinct demographic groups were used: apprentices, mentors and ITO field representatives. In addition, base line data was extrapolated from existing databases, and a research advisory group session took place following the initial survey and key information interviews.

Findings Overview

Mentoring at the apprentice level of the Downer business was introduced within the research group, with remaining Downer apprentices being provided with traditional support from their local branch. The focus was able to shift from initiating a collaborative mentoring programme to building sustainable mentoring practices at an apprentice level as a result. The project was able to highlight many issues and barriers large businesses face when introducing a mentoring process at an apprentice level.

Participation in the surveys declined over the course of the research from 67% response rate in the base line survey to 38% response rate in the final survey. Key themes which were identified through group and one-on-one interviews were:

- The need for ongoing championing of mentoring at a senior level of the business
- Greater structure around when apprentices sign into qualifications is needed to assist in monitoring and supporting individual apprentices in a large organisation
- Apprentice input into the selection of their mentor and discouraging the business practice of allowing managers to act as mentors would result in greater engagement by the apprentice
- Conflicting time constraints for mentors and apprentices need to be acknowledged and addressed early on. In particular an understanding of who is expected to drive the relationship at the start of the mentoring is needed.

A positive effect on retention rates was observed for participants of the project (12%) compared to the retention rates of the wider Downer apprentice group (23%). Some causation can be derived between the positive progress made by participants deemed to be at risk and the collaborative mentoring approach. No participants of projects withdrew from their qualifications during the term of the project, compared with 27% of a sample of Downer apprentices who were completing their qualifications outside of the project. Furthermore the number of participants in the project who were over duration dropped from 7% to 3%, compared to the non AKO sample group which rose from 0% to 12% for the same period.

The intent of the project was to encourage collaboration between the ITO and mentors at a local level; roles were clarified during the course of the project, however neither party proactively engaged in the relationship beyond the initial interaction. Greater clarity was needed by both the ITO field representative and the mentor as to the value of investing their time into the relationship on an ongoing basis.

For the purpose of this research the following collaborative model was adopted, involving:

- A shared understanding between the employer and the ITOs of what apprentice mentoring involves
- Training of mentors
- Clearly defined roles for ITOs and mentors within mentoring activities
- Consistent support avenues
- Common mentoring tools
- Establishment of key links at a local level between local mentors and ITO field representatives.

As a result of this research, the model was extended to include:

- Understanding and buy-in to the benefits of collaboration by both parties
- Clear understanding of how the relationship will be driven at a local level, including opportunities to meet identified (i.e. induction workshops, ITO visits)
- The importance of all parties being involved in the initial stages of the apprenticeship.

The collaborative model assumed the mentor and ITO field representative were simultaneously supporting the apprentice in a mentoring role. The findings of this research suggest there is a transfer of the mentoring role that takes place (from the ITO field representative to the mentor) following the initial sign-up of the apprentice into his/her qualification. It is important for the ITO field representative and mentor to collaborate around this transition point.

Time management conflicts between the ITO timeframes and business requirements were identified as a major impact on the degree of collaboration possible; such conflicts in some instances resulted in the mentor and ITO field representative operating in isolation for the good of the apprentice.

An opportunity exists for greater collaboration between ITOs and the employers through a consistent approach to literacy and numeracy (LN) support being provided across all ITOs.

Key Recommendations

In order to implement a sustainable collaborative mentoring approach, both Downer and the ITOs need to proactively promote the value of mentoring and continue to foster ways to initiate and drive this relationship for new apprentices entering the business. The following recommendations are based on the findings of this research with the view to further embedding the collaborative mentoring approach within a business environment.

Recommendations for Downer

Downer continues to invest in building sustainable mentoring practices at the apprentice level of the business, including:

- Developing a process to ensure all new mentors receive a copy of the mentor guide and are required to watch the mentoring video developed as a result of this project.
- Apprentice enrolments continue to be structured, to enable greater monitoring of and support. This would include a formal induction process.
- A mentor selection process is incorporated into the structure of the mentoring programme, which allows greater involvement by the apprentice as to the selection of their mentor, and discourages the use of managers as mentors.
- Where possible mentors and ITO field representatives be involved in the initial induction of the apprentice into the qualification.

- Expectations around the mentor driving the relationship in the early stages of the apprentice/mentor relationship should be highlighted more in mentor training material and workshops.
- The structure of the apprentice programme (including mentoring) is clearly communicated to the relevant ITOs and opportunities for them to be involved are identified where appropriate.

Initiatives that could be considered by Downer to further the embedding of apprentice mentoring within the business are:

- The value of the mentoring role be raised within the Downer business. This could involve:
    - "Mentor of the year" awards
    - Shared stories of successful mentoring practices being distributed throughout the business
    - Further (and ongoing) championing of mentoring at senior management level of the business
- Mentor needs around work time commitments with managers need to be addressed in order for the mentors to invest in the relationship to the degree required
- Greater visibility of the mentoring role within the Downer business through formalising a pathway for employees to become future mentors. This pathway should consider:
    - Apprentices completing their qualifications
    - Skilled employees looking to give back
    - How mentoring is incorporated into the Downer leadership programme.

Recommendations for ITOs

ITOs continue to support and facilitate the mentoring of apprentices by the workplace including:

- Clearly defining the ITO field representative role around mentoring, particularly around supporting the learner to engage in the relationship in the early stages of their apprenticeship and acting as an advisor for mentors around qualifications, support avenues and qualification progress.
- Raising the profile of workplace mentors within an apprenticeship. This could involve:
    - Good news mentoring stories
    - "Mentor of the year" awards
    - Developing further support material targeting mentors for ITO field representatives to engage with businesses around mentoring.
- Encouraging ITO field representatives to proactively seek out workplace mentors, particularly at the initial stages of the apprenticeship where a shift between the support provided by the ITO and the mentor occurs. This could involve:
    - Mentors and ITO field representatives being part of an apprentice induction workshop.
    - Mentors attending part or all of the ITO field representatives visits to the apprentice.
    - Key contact details being provided to the mentor and ITO field representative at the point the apprentice signs into the qualification as a matter of course.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Considerable research (Holland, 2009) has been undertaken regarding how effective apprentice mentoring increases learner success. Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) and employers support mentoring programmes in their own ways. How much more successful would learners be if this support was aligned and driven by the employer?

This project focused on testing a new collaborative (employer-led) approach to collaborative apprentice mentoring. Driven by an employer, Downer NZ, it provided a unique perspective on the challenges faced in providing effective mentoring throughout its business sectors.

Working with two ITOs (Connexis and Primary ITO), the project involved the implementation of an organisation-wide approach to apprentice mentoring as a means to improve learner outcomes and retention rates. The research tracked the establishment (including mentor training) and practice of mentoring across Downer NZ over an 18 month period. Participants were 23 ITO representatives, 85 Downer mentors and 91 Downer apprentice level learners.

This report provides an overview of the findings of the research.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of this project were to identify key methods for enabling employers and ITOs to work effectively together to support apprentices and to improve the understanding and practices of mentors through exploring three hypotheses that collaborative mentoring:

- Increases learner completion rates
- Increases retention rates
- Strengthens mentor/mentee relationships.

1.3 Interventions

A significant part of this research was based on the delivery of 10 workshops on workplace mentoring for Downer mentors and ITO field representatives. 56 of the 91 mentors who signed up to the research attended the mentoring workshops, with one-on-one conversations being undertaken where possible with the mentors who did not attend and all mentors receiving the supporting mentoring material.

1.4 Defining a Collaborative Approach to Mentoring

The collaborative model formulated through this research was developed in consultation with the three organisations, and focuses on:

- A shared understanding of what apprentice mentoring is across all three organisations
- Training for mentors
- Clearly defined roles for key participants within mentoring activities
- Consistent support avenues
- Common tools for workplace mentors and ITO field representatives to use
- Establishment of key links at a local level between local mentors and ITO field representatives.

1.4.1 Shared understanding of mentoring

The project team with input from the advisory group developed a common understanding of what mentoring at an apprentice level meant. A clear definition of mentoring was derived from this group as a result:

> "*Mentoring is a relationship built on trust and respect. A mentor is there to give support and encouragement, based on their wider experience, to allow the mentee to manage their own learning and develop their skills".*

Following consultation with the advisory group, the project team identified key attributes to look for in mentors. These were that mentors are:

- Motivating
- Respectful
- Non-judgemental
- Committed
- Able to ask skilful questions
- Knowledgeable (life and technical skills)
- Organised
- Able to demonstrate organisational knowledge.

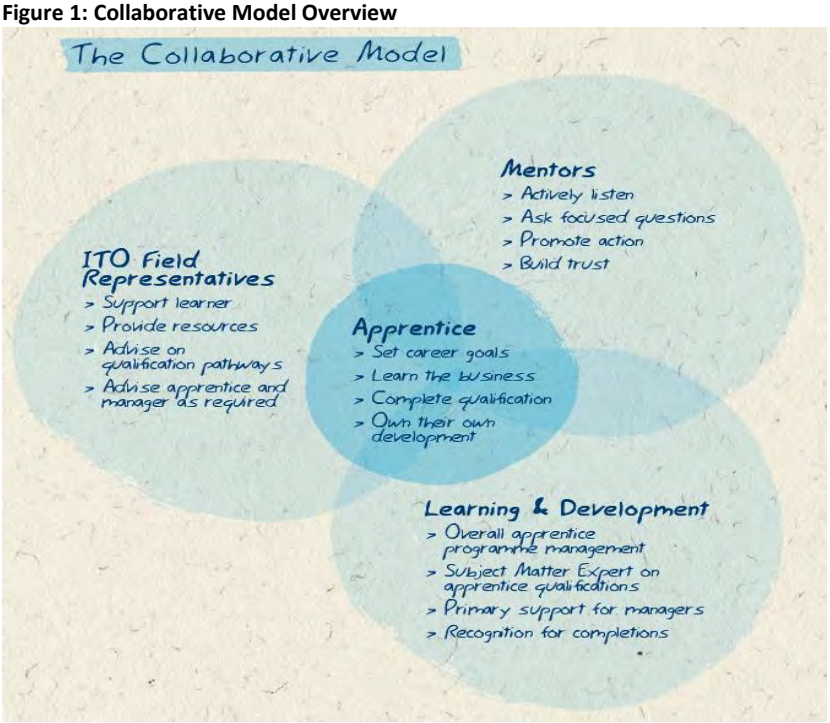
Good mentors were also defined, by the project team following consultation with the advisory group, as doing the following things:

- Building trust
- Focusing on the mentee (whole of life)
- Being a positive role model
- Actively listening
- Using lots of focused, open ended questions
- Gathering ideas about the mentee's goals and problems
- Encouraging the mentee to think realistically
- Challenging the mentee's ideas
- Gaining the mentee's commitment
- Helping the mentee to set SMART objectives
- Having sufficient time to commit to the mentor/mentee relationship.

1.4.2 Role clarity

The Collaborative Approach assumes that Employers and ITOs need clearly defined roles around mentoring, and need to provide a united approach to support learners to achieve better outcomes. These roles were finalised as part of the Advisory Group session. An overview of this approach is as follows:

Figure 1: Collaborative Model Overview



A breakdown of the responsibilities within each of the roles is as follows:

Figure 2: Collaborative Model – role clarification

Defining roles

	Accountability	Start Up	Ongoing Learning	Meetings	Reporting	Results
Apprentice	Learn and complete qualification within required timeframes. Apply learning on the job.	Make commitment. Understand qualification and develop a study plan.	Attend off job training. Meet agreed study goals.	Attend regular mentoring meetings as required. Attend ITO rep meetings.	Submit qualification requirements on time. Report back to manager when unit standard achieved or not achieved.	Gain a broad based skill set. Progress steadily and achieve results. Qualify as a tradesperson.
Mentor	Engage learner. Build relationship and challenge.	Hold start up meeting. Develop study and life goals with mentee.	Technical and personal support. Link with ITO.	Regular contact.	Support for apprentice as required.	Increased productivity/ retention. Increased ability for Downer to win work.
ITO Field Rep.	Set up qualifications. Oversee progression and qualification completions.	Register qualification for apprentice. Make contact with apprentice and allocate assessor.	Contact/meet, minimum standard requirements for qualification /practical support. Inform Downer apprentice manager if issues.	Check in with manager on progress. Manager/ mentor education on qualification.	Apprentice Progress reports monthly.	Qualification completion success rates.
Learning and Development	Manage apprentice programme.	Assist qualification/ career pathways. Support programme development and implementation.	Manage national relationships with ITOs. Mentor the mentors.	Facilitate National Apprentice Steering Group. Multiple business contacts.	Manage funding. ITO reports into the talent pipeline database.	Grow our talent. Grow our business.

1.4.3 Consistent support avenues

A consistent understanding of the support avenues available from each organisation is an important part of the collaborative model. For this project, key support avenues were presented in the following table, to be made available to both Downer mentors and ITO field representatives to refer to.

Figure 3: Overview of support avenues

Issues	Support avenues
Literacy Needs	» Downer in-house literacy champions » Literacy Aotearoa – 25 hours free one on one support » Dyslexia assessment (Primary ITO offer this) » Dragon Software: speech recognition software that turns your talk into text » ITO field representative
Maths	» Downer in-house literacy champions » Literacy Aotearoa – 25 hours free one on one support » Local maths tutors » ITO field representative
Time management	» Goal setting apps on their smart phone » Detail in mentor record » Set SMART objectives » ITO field representative
Employment issues or personal issues	» Employer Assistance Programme phone 0800 284 678 » Downer Human Resource Advisors » Please note: If contacting someone on their behalf, ensure you have their permission and respect their confidentiality.
More ideas on how to mentor	» Downer Learning Advisors » Local mentoring hubs » This guide

1.4.4 Consistent mentoring tools

Consistent tools were developed for use by both mentors and ITO field representatives. The tools were provided in "A how to guide for mentors of apprentices", copies of which could be accessed online through the Downer intranet. The tools included in the guide were introduced as part of the mentoring workshops and their understanding of the tools was enlarged upon through the workshops. The tools were as follows:

- An Apprentice Framework (See Appendix 7.1)
- Active listening
- Focused questions
- GROW Model and aligned mentoring wheel (see Appendix 7.2)
- SMART Goals
- Mentoring Agreement (see Appendix 7.3)
- Planning Record / Mentor Record (see Appendix 7.4)

1.4.4.1 Apprentice Framework

The apprentice framework was developed as a mechanism for apprentices and mentors to understand the various roles people played in supporting an apprentice through their training, and how work place learning and training worked by side to side to grow the apprentices understanding and skill base. The apprentice framework was also intended as a visual aid for ITO field representative and Mentors to explain how trade training is structured with the view to building a greater link between work places and ITOs.

A skeleton apprentice framework was also developed to enable the Mentor and apprentice to hold an initial conversation around the specific people who would support the apprentice and to identify any gaps in the support the apprentice was receiving.

1.4.4.2 Active listening

Active listening is one of the tools Downer leaders are given as part of the Downer Inspiring Leaders programme. The mentoring workshop was used to reinforce this tool and apply it to the apprentice needs. Consideration was also given to Holland (2010). This work also considers apprentice needs and supporting mentors to actively listen to mentees.

Active listening is more than just hearing another person's words. It's the ability of the mentor to really understand what is said through having an awareness of how it's said and what is not said. An active listener uses their ears, eyes, brain, emotions, and body language.

To actively listen:

Stop and listen:

- Stop talking (count to 7)
- Be prepared to listen
- Get rid of distractions
- Use attentive and open body language

Show you're listening:

- Use encouraging responses to show you're listening
- Use open questions to get information
- Repeat back what you have heard to ensure you are on track

Accept what they say:

- Be non-judgemental
- Accept their thoughts, opinions, and feelings as valid for them
- Reflect on their feelings
- Reflect on what the other person is meaning

1.4.4.3 Focused questions

Mentors were encouraged to guide mentees to think things through, form their own opinions, and set their own career goals which they are responsible for achieving. Mentors were encouraged to think carefully about the questions they asked their mentees with the view to encouraging the mentee to take greater control of their learning and development. Two types of questioning used to do this were:

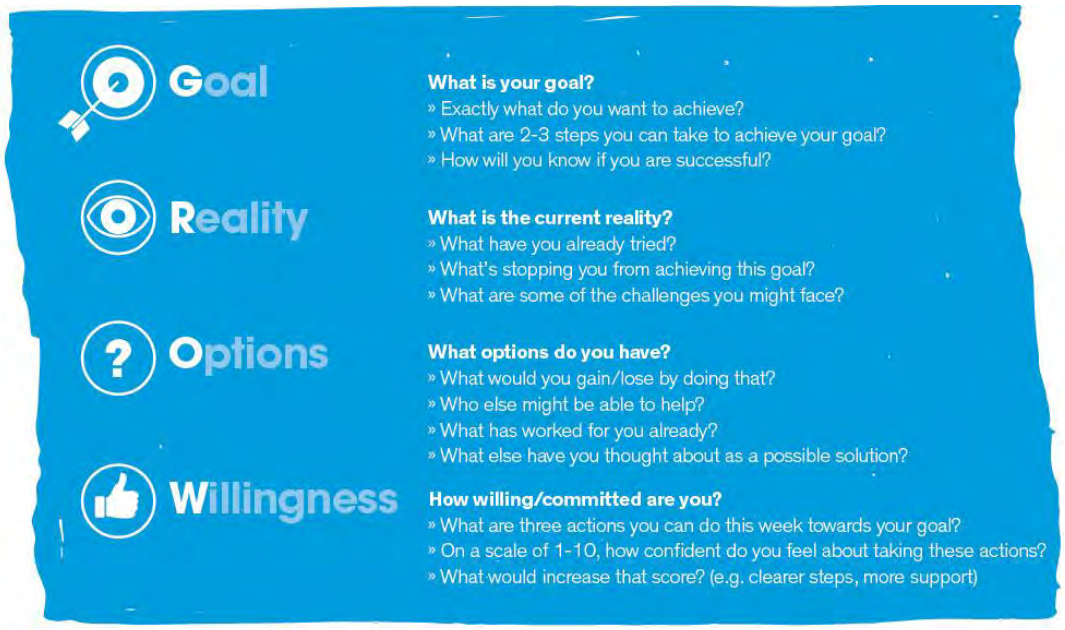
- Using open and closed questions. Closed questions can usually be answered with a single word or a short phrase. Open questions, by contrast are likely to receive a long answer and encourage the person to think, give their opinions and take control of the conversation
- The GROW model. This is a structured way of questioning the mentor to encourage them to think through their goals carefully. The GROW model is expanded on further below.

1.4.4.4 GROW Model and aligned mentoring wheel

The GROW model is another of the tools Downer leaders are provided with as part of the Inspiring Leaders programme. It is a process mentors could work through with the mentee to carefully think through and commit to their learning objectives. The model could also be used to assist the mentee to think through any challenges or setbacks they may be facing in their study or work life and devise their own plans for moving forward.

The GROW model is a four step process, with focused questions being used at each stage of the process to frame the mentee's thinking.

Figure 4: Overview of the GROW model



Mentors were provided with a mentoring wheel which reinforced the different stages of the GROW model and was intended to be stored by the phone as a reference for mentors to refer to when mentees contacted them with different challenges. A template for the mentoring wheel is included as Appendix 7.2.

1.4.4.5 SMART goals

SMART goals help gain understanding about what really needs to be done. Mentors were encouraged to help their mentees set SMART goals around their career and study to identify what they really need to do.

Figure 5: Overview of SMART goals

	Description	SMART goal example
Specific	Which, what, who, where, when, why	Achieve my qualification
Measurable	How much or how many	By completing 35 credits every 6 months
Action oriented	Describe a result	Unit standards appear on my ITO transcript
Realistic and relevant	Realistic and relevant to what else is happening	Taking account of business and personal needs (what are they?)
Time based	By when	By December 2016

1.4.4.6 Mentoring Agreement

A template for developing agreement around the mentoring relationship was developed, (Holland, 2010), and intended to be completed as part of the first meeting. It was assumed that this is likely to be the apprentices' first experience of a mentoring type relationship, therefore it was important for the mentor to guide the session and set expectations around the relationships.

Mentors were encouraged to:

- Discuss how the sessions would be run
- Learn a little about each other
- Discuss confidentiality and boundaries of the relationship
- Schedule ongoing meetings
- Discuss aspects of work and study
- Set a study goal.

The mentoring agreement was intended to assist in guiding this initial discussion.

Figure 6: Example of a completed mentoring agreement

Planning the first mentoring session

Mentee's name: Joe Bloggs **Mentor's name:** Jim Smith

Meeting place: Smoko room Is this space private? Yes No

Date for first session: 25 April 2014

Start Time: 3:30pm How long will you allow?: 1 hour

Introductions?

Interests

What do they want out of this

Confidentiality

What will be the focus?

Future sessions (where, when, how often)

Set boundaries, mentoring agreement, Code Of Ethics

What does Joe want out of this relationship (GROW model)

Set a work goal (smart goal)

What outcomes should there be?

Agreement over future sessions

Mentoring agreement completed

Understand Joe's needs

Have a work goal to focus

What if it all goes to custard?

(What should I do if the meeting doesn't go well?)

How he can get in touch with me if he needs to

If things don't go well in this session practice Active Listening

Find out more about what Joe wants and let him steer the conversation

Any unanswered questions?

1.4.4.7 Planning record

Based on the work of Dr Chris Holland (Holland 2010), a structured mentoring record sheet was provided to mentors. This was intended to encourage focus and structure to the meetings and to define them as mentoring sessions, as opposed to casual conversation.

1.4.4.8 Mentoring video

Following the completion of the research, a mentoring video was put together as a way to promote the mentoring tools and learnings from this research within the Downer business. This video is available to be downloaded here www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/projects/mentoring-model-itos-and-employers.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research questions

1. What are the key methods for employers and ITOs to work effectively together to support apprentices?
2. Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the employment retention rates of apprentices?
3. Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the qualification completion rates of apprentices?
4. Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the strength of the relationship between the mentor and mentee?
5. How does an aligned approach to mentoring improve understanding and practices of mentors?

2.2 Research design

2.2.1 Action research approach

Action research provides opportunities for an action/reflection cycle aimed at developing deep organisational understanding of how an intervention or procedure worked and how it could be improved. Periodic feedback between the researcher, stakeholders, and participants enables emerging ideas to be explored and incorporated formatively into the research rather than simply contained within a final summative report.

2.2.2 Outcome-focused evaluation

Outcome evaluation is a method of evaluating how well a service is doing, and whether end users are better off as a result of the service. It requires an organisation to examine the evidence that end users are actually benefitting from individual and organisational practices. It requires an organisation to unpack and challenge the assumptions behind what they do. Thus, an organisation asks not only, “Did we do what we said we were going to?” but also, “What difference did it make in outcomes for end users?” The model is drawn from Mark Friedman’s work on Results Based Accountability (2005), and asks the important questions - what did we do, how did we do it, who benefited, and how?

Figure 7: Results Based Accountability model

	Quantity	Quality
Effort (output)	*1. How much did we do?*	*2. How well did we do it?*
Effect (outcomes)	*3. How many people / what % were better off?*	*4. How were the clients better off?*

Source: Mark Friedman (2005)

The upper left quadrant, where an organisation counts how much activity it performed, is the quantitative quadrant and is the one in which many organisations currently report all their data. Although it is much easier to get data about how many people you worked with than it is to get data about how well an intervention (e.g. apprentice mentoring) was conducted and whether anyone is better off, the latter qualitative questions dig deeper and provide more meaningful information in terms of outcomes.

Outcome evaluation is a change agent, where the framework can change how organisations think about end users, how they think about data and how they think about using data to improve performance. However, data collection brings special challenges. The method should be simple and common sense, use plain language, produce minimum paper and be useful to managers and decision makers. Most end user satisfaction questionnaires are too long, written at too high a reading level and make no distinction between types of questions.

The evaluation is conducted by working with the project to establish desired outcomes for clients, and then evaluating the effectiveness of the service against those outcomes. Regular ongoing outcomes measurement enables the service to adjust operations in order to increase effectiveness. Once a baseline for the evaluation has been established by the first survey process, repeated surveys are conducted at intervals (6-8 month intervals are recommended). The model can be continued beyond the life of the pilot project.

Outcome evaluation can be seen not just as a tool for data collection, but as a way of focusing organisationally on end user outcomes, and therefore of bringing about a change in its culture (Freidman M, 2005).

The four key focusing questions identified in outcome based evaluation were matched against each of the key outcomes for the research. The matrix shown in Table 2.2.2.1 shows how data was intended to be collected to ensure all the key outcomes of the research would be report upon using outcome based evaluation. This ensured the robustness of the data collected.

Table 1: Data collection overview

	1. How much did we do?	2. How well did we do it?	3. How many people/ what % was better off?	4. How were the clients better off?
1. Key methods	• Tools identified • Key ITO interviewed beginning and end	• Survey ITO field reps • Survey Mentors • Survey Mentee	• Shifts in understanding • Shifts in information sharing • Drop out of ITOs Mentors and business sectors	• Degree of information sharing (transparency) • Interviews with ITO field reps and mentors
2. Retention rates	• Payroll printout in Mar 2014 and Mar 2015	• Survey Mentees • Survey mentors • Follow up interview • Exit interviews (reason for leaving)	• Show shifts in retention rates	• Follow up interviews • Exit interviews (did you discuss this with your mentor & was there any follow up • Value figure for Downer
3. Progress/ Completion rates	• ITO and talent pipeline databases used • Info broken down to subgroups	• Survey Mentees (engaged and motivated to complete) • Survey Mentors • Follow up interviews with mentees	• Show shifts in progress rates	• Follow up interviews (mentors/mentees) • Pre state cost of non-completion rates versus post for Downer
4. Relationship strength (trust)	• Rating by mentor/mentee in survey • Frequency of contact • Survey mentee around things they would use their mentor for • Survey mentor/apprentices re level of trust	• Shifts in ratings	• Shift in things a mentee will approach a mentor about	• Survey question around value of having a mentor • Follow up interviews
5. Mentoring understanding	• Mentor survey – understanding of what's involved • Mentor survey of tools used • Unit standard completion (if appropriate)	• Shift in understanding	• Completion rates and retention rates link • % apprentices who have mentors • Number of active support groups • Question around leadership capability	• Engagement and buy in for other mentors • Survey question around value of having a mentor by mentees

2.3 Instruments

Data was collected through the following methods:

- Online Surveys at three key points
- Selected follow up interviews
- Progress results for ITO and/or Downer databases as at March 2014 and March 2015.

2.3.1 Apprentice collection instruments

- Analysis of quantitative data (Downer and ITO data sets)
- Baseline survey of Apprentices with two further surveys over the project period to identify trends, 6-7 months apart
- Follow up interviews with a demographic group of apprentices following each survey (one-on-one and/or group) as appropriate to clarify information further
- Exit interviews with any apprentices leaving Downer

2.3.2 Mentor collection instruments

- Baseline survey of mentors with two further surveys over the project period to identify trends, 6-7 months apart
- Follow up interviews with mentors following each survey (one-on-one and/or group) as appropriate to clarify information further
- Feedback to mentors on grouped up findings, to allow for reflection and change

2.3.3 ITO field representative collection instruments

- Baseline survey of ITO field representatives with two further surveys over the project period to identify trends, 6-7 months apart
- Follow up interviews with ITO field representatives following each survey (one-on-one and/or group) as appropriate to clarify information further
- Survey of ITO Key links before and after research
- Feedback to mentors on grouped up findings, to allow for reflection and change

2.4 Demographics Information

2.4.1 Selection criteria

For ease of data collection within the Downer business, mentors were selected where possible according to key geographical locations. The demographic group was a convenience demographic.

The following attributes were considered when identifying suitable mentors:

- Organised
- Respectful
- Committed
- Knowledgeable
- Positive.

Mentors were approached by a member of the project team and given the opportunity to take part in the research. All who wished to participate (mentors, mentees and ITO field representatives) were asked to sign the consent form to signal their approval to take part in the research.

Apprentices were selected based on their willingness to be mentored by the selected mentors. Apprentices in their first year of study were primarily selected by convenience. The sample also included apprentices part way through their study. Each business sector was asked to identify possible apprentice candidates who would be invited to join the project. Progress in study was not used as a selection criterion for this research.

A comparison was made between the participants of this project and a sample of Downer apprentices who did not take part in the project but were active trainees at the project commencement with more than 6 months to complete prior to going over duration. This sample group comprised of 75 apprentices.

2.4.2 Demographic size

The initial demographic consisted of:

- 23 ITO field representatives from Connexis and Primary ITO
- 85 Downer mentors aligned with mentees
- 91 Downer employees (mentees) working towards level 3 or 4 qualifications (approximately 50% of all employees studying level 3 or 4 qualifications at the time)
- Field representatives (18 Connexis, 5 Primary ITO)
- Mentors (42 Transportation, 39 Telecommunication, 4 Water)
- Mentees: (44 Transportation, 40 Telecommunication, 7 Water).

The sample size reduced over the course of the project. Reasons for the decline include:

- Apprentices and mentors who left the Downer business
- Mentors who dropped out when their apprentices left the business as they no longer had anyone to mentor
- Field representatives who were no longer overseeing Downer apprentices due to ITO restructurings
- Apprentices who had completed their study and no longer wished to be mentored
- Mentors and apprentices who chose to be removed from the research in line with the Research Ethics (see section 2.8 below).

2.5 Data collection

A triangulation approach has been applied to data collection to ensure the robustness of the information collected. In this study, the sources include surveys comprising questionnaires and interviews with mentors, apprentices, field officers and key informants from within Downer businesses, as well as Downer and ITO data sets.

2.5.1 Research advisory group

A research advisory group session was held on 16 January 2014 in Auckland involving representatives from all organisations. The information gained from this meeting was used to develop the tools to be used in the research project and identify key areas where collaboration could take place.

An Ako Aotearoa Project Team was formed comprising of representatives from within Downer Learning and Development, Downer business, research and the ITO. The project team met on an ongoing basis throughout the project (mainly over the phone) and contributed to the development of the tools, derived roles and implementation into the Downer business.

2.5.2 Initial data extraction

Quantitative baseline data was extracted in March 2014 from the following data sets:

- Downer learning portal database
- Downer payroll
- Primary ITO and Connexis March progress spreadsheets
- NZQA framework

2.5.3 Surveys

Data was collected through the surveying of participants and analysis of existing data sets in three phases: survey 1 (Feb-April 2014), survey 2 (Sept-Nov 2014) survey 3 (May-July 2015). In line with the principles of action research, following each survey period, interim grouped-up results were fed back to participants for reflection/action in order to bring about improvement in practice.

Each survey cycle explored outcomes in relation to the expected outcomes of the project (collaboration, retention, achievement, relationship strength and practice).

Participation in the surveys declined over the course of the research. The table below shows the response rates at the different survey points.

Table 2: Survey response rates

	Baseline	Mid-point	Final
Overall response rate	67%	42%	38%
Apprentices	54% (49 out of 91)	30% (24 out of 81)	36% (24 out of 66)
Mentors	75% (65 out of 87)	49% (39 out of 79)	49% (21 out of 66
ITO field representatives	87% (20 out of 23)	62% (13 out of 22)	65% (11 out of 17)

Surveys were generally completed online through Survey Monkey. Where a respondent did not have access to a computer, they were provided with a hard copy of the survey.

2.5.4 Interviews

Follow up interviews were conducted with apprentices, mentors and ITO field representatives. Guiding questions for the interviews were used to conduct the interviews.

Interviews were held face-to-face, over phone or in group situations. The conversations were recorded with key points being extracted after each interview to identify trends.

2.6 Data analysis

An excel spreadsheet was used to extract and analyse the information.

To protect the individual participants, each participant was assigned a unique number to be used within the raw data. The unique number could only be linked to the participant by the principal researcher. Only the unique number was accessible by all other researchers and project members.

2.7 Limitations

2.7.1 Methodological limitations

- **Demographic size** – Many factors may impact on the apprentice's learning which can't be linked to mentoring. For example, other learning projects (i.e. leadership training) occurring in Downer at the time the research was taking place could impact on the trends found in this research.
- **Survey completion was voluntary** – Participation in each survey was voluntary, which may have influenced the results. Lower achieving apprentices and mentors who were not proactive may have not wanted to complete surveys. This could result in the results being more positively portrayed.
- **Managers as mentors** – Downer has chosen to align managers as mentors in some instances. This may have impacted on the way mentors answered some of the questions, i.e. whether they were answering as the apprentice's manager or mentor.
- **Complexity of the NZQA framework** – Mentors' knowledge of the NZQA framework may have impacted on their ability to answer some survey questions and potentially coloured their understanding in relation to the ITO expectations.
- **Timeframes** – The impact of this research is to be measured over a 16 month period. Potentially, the impact of this process may take longer to show a shift, but this will not be measured through this project.
- **Business restructuring –** The Downer business underwent a major restructure between November 2014 and February 2015. The restructure impacted on all parts of the business operation with some redundancies resulting. This restructuring may have impacted on the retention rates over this period and also in the views provided by apprentices and mentors at that time. Ability for the ITO field representatives to collaborate at a local level during this restructuring may also have been impacted.

- **ITO restructuring –** The ITOs involved in this research underwent considerable restructuring over the course of the research. In particular, water qualifications were transferred from Primary ITO significantly reducing the number of apprentices in the sample enrolled with Primary ITO and the ability for some of the Primary ITO field staff to contribute to the final survey and interviews. This may have impacted negatively on engagement by the ITO field representatives.
- **Change in telecommunications qualifications –** A delay in the implementation of new qualifications in the telecommunications space has resulted in the apprentices commencing a telecommunication qualification in 2014 being enrolled in a different qualification at the start of their qualification with the qualification to be defined once the new qualification is finalised. This delay in the implementation of the new qualification may have impacted on progress towards qualifications reported on for these apprentices.
- **Cost of turnover –** Cost of turnover is based on $5,500 per new employee recruited. This figure has been used across the Downer business in the past and is based on previous research by the Downer recruitment team into the cost to recruit and induct a new employee into the business. The cost of turnover included in this report is therefore a generic value only.
- **Ability to measure the impact the collaborative approach versus mentoring in general has had on the outcomes –** The results from this research cannot solely be attributed to the impact a collaborative approach has had as opposed to participants being part of a structured mentoring programme.

2.7.2 Limitations of the researcher

- **Research experience** – The research team is a very practical based team, with minimal research experience. This limitation was mitigated through the engagement of a research mentor to assist with ensuring good practice research practices were employed at the start of the research.
- **Seasonal nature of the industry** – Civil construction (including open space management), is seasonal by nature, with peaks and troughs in work flow. The three surveys are undertaken at differing times of the year, and time commitments during busy seasons may impact on the demographics ability to provide input at certain times of the year. This may impact on results and the progress apprentices make towards completion of their studies.
- **External research mentor** – The advisory nature of this role has meant the research mentor has been external to the project implementation. Her input into the project has been in a review capacity as opposed to hands-on proactive capacity. Her support was provided at the initial stages of the project.

2.8 Research ethics

2.8.1 Mentoring code of ethics

The mentor/mentee relationship: It is imperative this relationship is built on trust and confidentiality, and that participation by both the mentor and mentee is voluntary. The mentee/mentor relationship should not be compromised as a result of this research. A Mentoring Code of Ethics was developed and assisted in protecting this relationship.

All participants in this research were provided with a copy of this Code of Ethics prior to consenting to take part in the research. Downer also operates under a standard of business conduct which all participants to this survey were expected to abide by.

2.8.2 Participant privacy

The privacy of individual apprentices, mentors and ITO field representatives was protected at all times. Downer was guided by its Privacy Policy and Guidelines. For the purpose of this research, this involved:

- All apprentices, mentors and ITO field representatives being advised of the research at the commencement of the project and given the choice to be part of this research by signing a consent form. The opportunity to withdraw from this research up to the end of data collection was given to all participants with no repercussions to their employment.
- The reason for each survey was highlighted to survey respondents at the start of each survey, including an indication of how the information from the survey was to be used.
- Individuals were not identified in the research findings. All participants were given unique identification numbers and research reporting included summary information of quantitative data. Any quotes included as part of the qualitative data were not linked to the individual.

2.8.3 Informed consent

Initial information sheet and sign up (consent) form for all apprentices, mentors and ITO field representatives who wished to take part in the project.

Business buy in at all leadership levels was considered critical to the successful implementation and embedding of this project within the Downer business. An overview of the project to assist managers understanding was developed. A change management plan was developed using the ADCAR approach, to further assist with the implementation of this project.

Participants could withdraw from the process up to the end of data collection.

2.8.4 Security of data

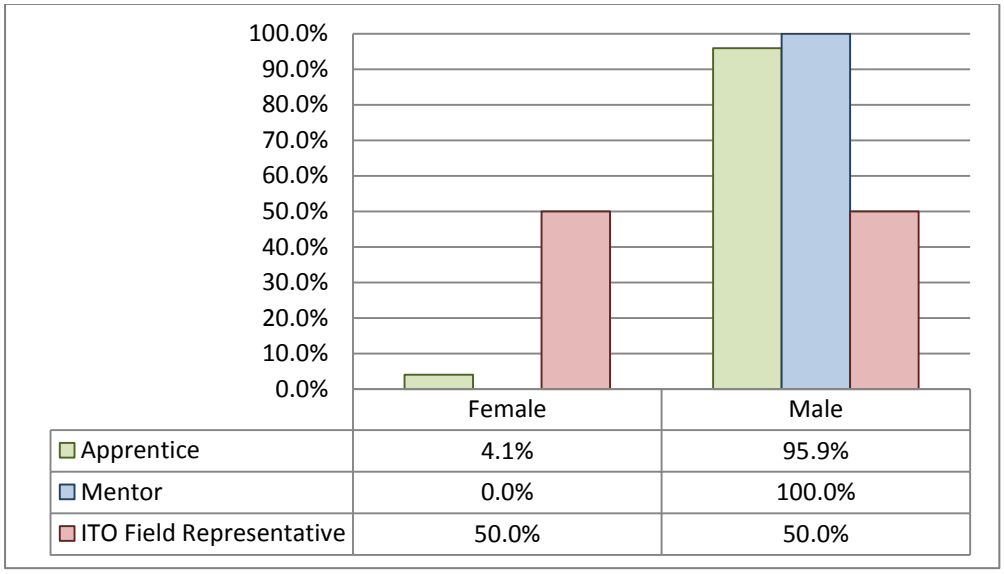
Individuals can be identified in the raw data. For this reason, raw data was accessible to the researcher only.

3 Results

3.1 Demographic Results

3.1.1 Demographic gender distribution

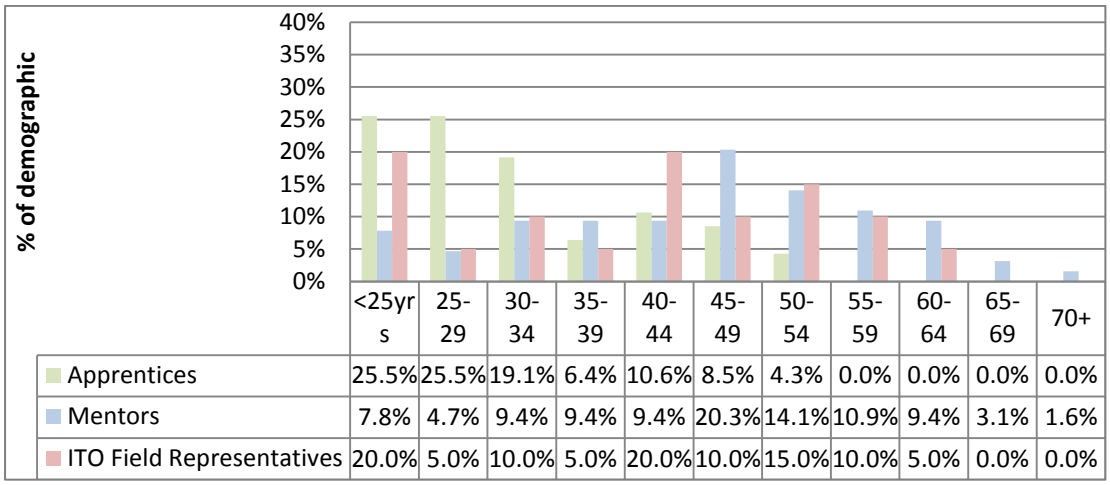
Figure 8: Demographic distribution by gender



- 95.9% of all apprentices involved in the research are male
- 100% of the mentors are male
- 50% of the ITO field representatives are male

3.1.2 Demographic age distribution

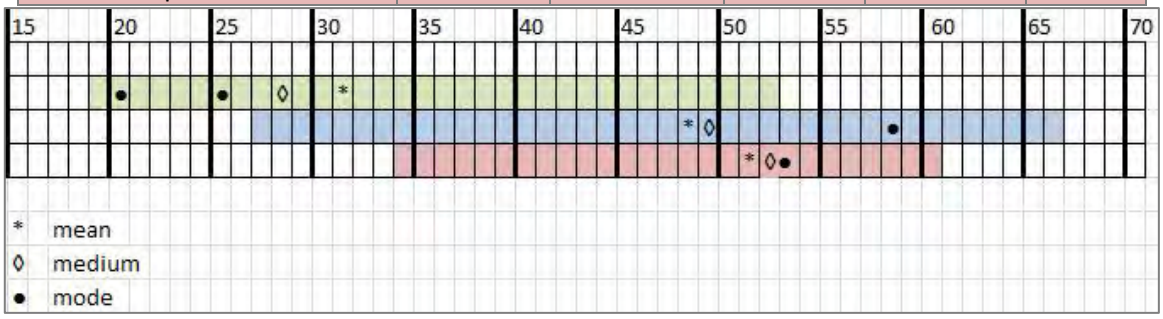
Figure 9: Initial survey demographic distribution by age (67% of sample group)



	<25yrs	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
Apprentices	25.5%	25.5%	19.1%	6.4%	10.6%	8.5%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mentors	7.8%	4.7%	9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	20.3%	14.1%	10.9%	9.4%	3.1%	1.6%
ITO Field Representatives	20.0%	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%	20.0%	10.0%	15.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 3: Initial survey age distribution breakdown (67% of sample size)

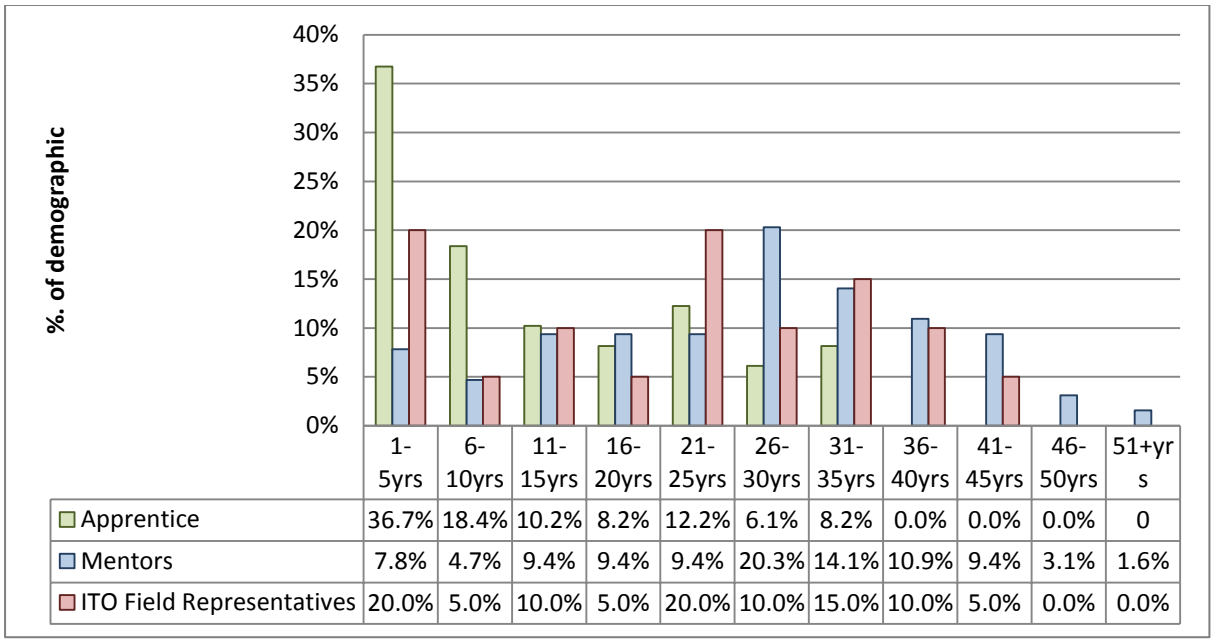
	Average Age	Median Age	Mode Age	Youngest	Oldest
Apprentice	31	28	20, 25	19	52
Mentor	48	49	58	27	66
ITO field representative	51	52	52	34	61



- The average age of an apprentice is 17 years younger than the average age of the mentors being surveyed and 20 years younger than the average age of an ITO field representative being surveyed
- Workplace mentors have the widest spread (between 27 and 66 years)
- A large number of ITO field representatives are in their early 50s

3.1.3 Demographic time since last formal qualification

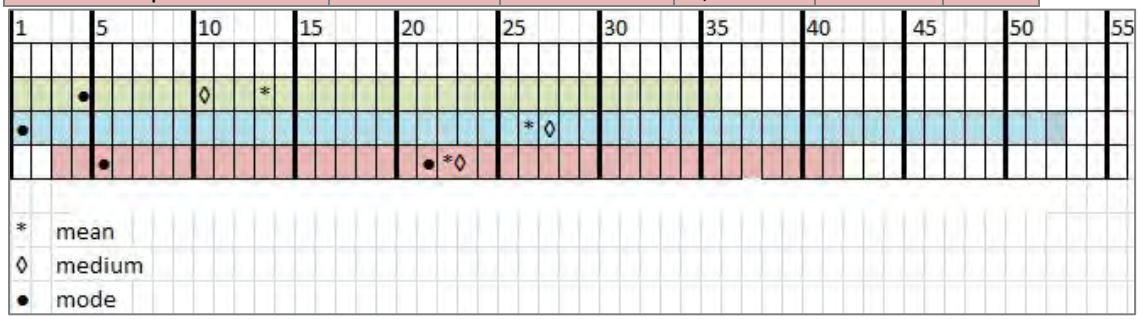
Figure 10: Initial survey demographic time since last formal study (67% of sample)



	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16-20yrs	21-25yrs	26-30yrs	31-35yrs	36-40yrs	41-45yrs	46-50yrs	51+yrs
Apprentice	36.7%	18.4%	10.2%	8.2%	12.2%	6.1%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
Mentors	7.8%	4.7%	9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	20.3%	14.1%	10.9%	9.4%	3.1%	1.6%
ITO Field Representatives	20.0%	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%	20.0%	10.0%	15.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 4: Initial survey demographic time since last formal study breakdown (67% of sample)

	Average Time	Median Time	Mode Time	Recent	Aged
Apprentice	13	10	4	1	35
Mentor	26	27	1	1	52
ITO field representative	22	22	5, 21	3	41



- Wide spread time delay from when all three demographic groups were involved in their last formal study
- The average gap between study for an apprentice was 13 years, compared with 26 years for a mentor and 22 years for an ITO field representative

3.1.4 Apprentice demographic ethnicity distribution

The ethnicity within the apprentice group was identified from NZQA data, with categories provided aligned to the NZQA categories.

Table 5: Apprentice demographic ethnicity distribution

Nationalities	% of demographic
Asian	2%
Australian	1%
Chinese	1%
Dutch	1%
Fijian	1%
Indian	1%
Māori	18%
NZ European/Pākehā	53%
Not stated	11%
NZ Samoan	1%
Other	1%
Other European	1%
Other Pacific People	2%
Samoan	1%
South African	3%
Tongan	1%

- Largest ethnicity represented in the apprentice group demographic is NZ European/Pākehā (53%)
- Second largest ethnicity represented in the apprentice group demographic is Māori (18%)
- Pacifika comprises of 6% of the apprentice demographic (Fijian 1%, NZ Samoan 1%, Other Pacific People 2%, Samoan 1%, and Tongan 1%)

3.1.5 Qualifications apprentice are working towards

87 Apprentices were enrolled in 12 main qualifications at the start of the project. The remaining 4 apprentices were in the process of being enrolled. The qualifications they are enrolled in were as follows:

Table 6: Overview of qualifications apprentices are enrolled in

Qualification	No. of Ap.
NC in Horticulture	4
NC in Horticulture (Advanced)	2
NC in Sports Turf Management	5
NC in Civil Plant Operation (Level 3)	16
NC in Infrastructure Works (Level 3)	3
NC in Civil Construction Supervision (Level 4)	1
NC in Infrastructure Works Supervision (Level 4)	10
NC in Pavement Surfacing	2
NC in Telecommunications (Level 2)	18
NC in Telecommunications (Level 3)	20
NC in Water Reticulation (Supervisor)	2
NC in Water Reticulation (Planned and Reactive Maintenance Technician) (Level 3)	4
Total	**87**

2014 telecommunication apprentices were signed into a level 2 qualification while the new level 4 qualification was finalised.

Distribution of level of qualification by ethnicity is as follows:

Table 7: Qualification level by ethnicity

	Levels		
	2	**3**	**4**
NZ European/Pākehā	8	26	14
Māori	3	8	5
Pasifika		40	2
Other	7	3	1
Not stated		3	3
Total	**18**	**44**	**25**

3.1.6 Apprentice demographic type

Table 8: Initial apprentice survey indication of type of apprentice (54% of sample group)

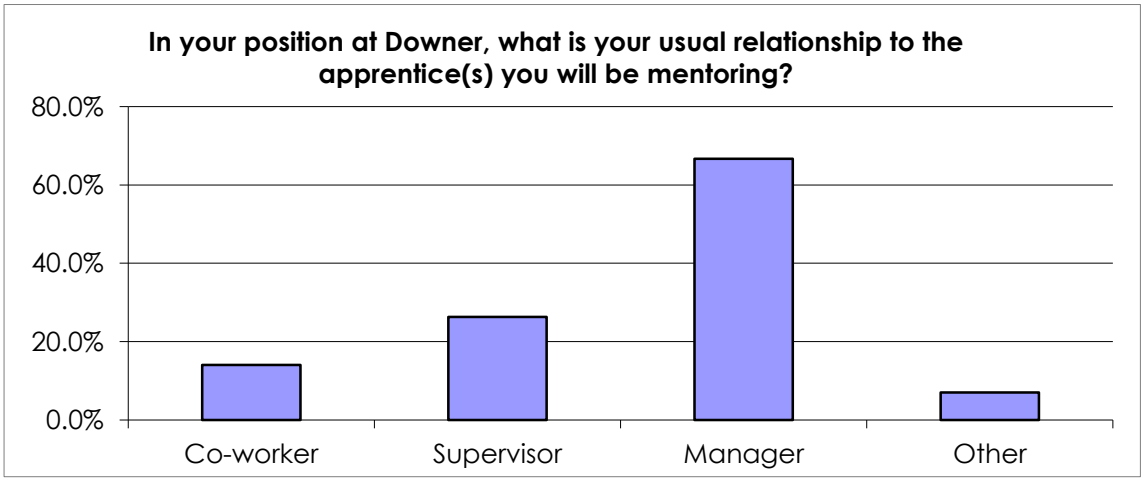
Select the option that best describes you		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Apprentice - straight from school	20.4%	10
Adult apprentice	30.6%	15
Skilled Downer employee gaining qualifications to match skills	32.7%	16
Downer employee increasing skills through study	16.3%	8
If other (please specify)	0	

3.1.7 Apprentice demographic relationship to mentor

- 51% of apprentices have their managers acting as mentors
- 30% of apprentices do not have their managers acting as mentors
- 19% – not determined if manager is the mentor

Mentor responses to a question regarding their relationship with the apprentice indicated the following:

Figure 11: Mentors relationship with the apprentice (75% of sample group)



3.2 What are the key methods for employers and ITOs to work effectively together to support apprentices?

Formulating a means for ITOs and employers to work collaboratively around apprentice mentoring was a key focus of the start-up phase of this research. Considerable research has been undertaken in relation to defining good mentoring practices within an ITO, however no clear research could be found around the link to employer-led workplace mentoring.

Interviews with key leaders from each of the participating ITOs confirmed the findings of the other research aligned with the practices evident within the three participating organisations. Primary ITO have a community-facing volunteer apprentice mentoring programme in place with no links to the employer, focused on progressing unit standard completions and support with literacy, language and numeracy (Peterson, Farrell and Styles, 2014). Downer New Zealand have a business-facing mentoring model active at the diploma and graduate level of study, focused on career pathways and qualification progress. Neither organisation had any structures in place in relation to how they could work more collaboratively around apprentice mentoring. Connexis can clearly articulate their model of collaboration with Downer New Zealand at all levels of operation, but identified mentoring structures as an area of development across their ITO.

3.2.1 Shared understanding of mentoring

Collaborative mentoring workshops were held in 10 locations throughout New Zealand and involved both Downer mentors and local ITO field representatives. Eighty seven percent of the Downer mentors attended the workshops with remaining mentors being provided the information on a one-on-one basis by Downer Learning Advisors. The workshops were the key method used in the research to introduce a shared understanding of mentoring between the employer and ITOs. Further embedding of the model was carried out by Downer with the mentors.

Participants rated the workshop content highly and ability to apply it to their work environment and role as a mentor. Participants were particularly interested in the content relating to:

- Understanding the role of a mentor and company expectations around mentoring
- Learning difficulties, particularly relating to literacy and numeracy and dyslexia
- How to provide a structured approach to mentoring and the importance of having a plan
- Provision of mentoring tools which aligned with Downer's leadership program (ILP).

The workshop content appeared to be understood by participants. Interest was shown by some participants in learning more about adult literacy, including Smart Pens and dyslexia. The majority of participants who provided feedback indicated they would make the following changes as a result of attending the workshop:

- Make more time for their mentees, meeting more regularly with them in a structured environment
- Be clearer about their role as manager and mentor
- Listen more, and ask focused questions (i.e. GROW model).

Participants valued the course and the ability to network with employees from across the business and the ITOs.

3.2.2 Role clarity

On a scale of 1 (not yet) to 5 (working well), Mentors and ITO field representatives were asked to rate the following statements about role clarity:

Table 9: Role clarity ratings from base line to final

Role	Statement	Average Rating			Shift
		Base line	Mid-point	Final	Baseline to final
Mentor	*"I am clear about my role as a mentor"*	2.16	3.62	3.9	+1.74
ITO field representative	*"I am clear about my role in mentoring as an ITO field representative"*	2.39	3.58	3.64	+1.25

There was a positive shift in understanding around role clarity between baseline and final survey. Role clarity was rated the lowest of all the statements provided to both the mentors and ITO field representatives in the base line data.

Baseline interviews with mentors indicated confusion around what the mentoring role entailed. All mentors interviewed at the midpoint demonstrated an awareness of their mentoring role. One mentor was not yet aware of who his apprentice was, but understood what was involved once he knew this. Final surveys showed a continued understanding of the mentoring role, with mentors being able to articulate how they had carried out this role with their apprentices.

3.2.3 Consistent support avenues

To identify the support being provided by each role, a list of support categories was provided to each of the three demographic groups as part of the initial survey.

- Apprentices were asked to rate (1 low – 5 high) their abilities for each area of support
- Mentors and ITO field representatives were asked (yes or no) whether their apprentice(s) had raised the issues with them.

Table 10: Shift in Support category needs by roles (38% of sample groups)

	Apprentice		Mentor		ITO field rep.	
Area of support	**Final rating 1-5 rating**	**Shift from base**	**Final rating Yes/no response**	**Shift from base**	**Midpoint rating Yes/no response**	**Shift from base**
Work time management	4.13	+0.05	57%	+10%	55%	-12%
Study time management	3.67	+0.32	67%	+34%	45%	-44%
Study requirements	4.17	+0.39	71%	+22%	45%	-49%
Workplace culture	4.33	+0.33	62%	+9%	55%	-6%
Personal issues	4.00	+0.2	57%	+17%	64%	+8%
Managing finance	4.08	+0.2	43%	+15%	36%	+7%
Workplace documentation	4.08	+0.24	70%	+17%	45%	-22%
Study materials	4.00	+0.27	57%	+13%	64%	-30%

Apprentices have raised their perception of their ability with the greatest shifts in perception relating to study requirements, workplace culture and study time management. There is an increase in the percentage of issues raised with mentors with the greatest shifts regarding study time management and study requirements.

With the exception of personal issues and managing finance, the number of issues being raised with ITO field representatives has dropped over the same period. The most significant decline was around study requirements and study time management.

These shifts may be attributed to a number of things such as:

- Business mentoring not underway at time of first survey
- ITO start up support being factored into baseline survey responses
- Mentoring combined training providing greater role clarity
- Availability of the mentor for the apprentice to go to compared to the ITO field representative.

Based on the responses from the survey, the following table has been formulated to indicate how apprentices prioritise their needs compared to how mentors and ITO field representatives are prioritising their investment in mentoring.

Table 11: Apprentice needs versus issues raised (base line survey 67% of sample groups)

Apprentice Needs	Mentor Support	ITO Support
Study Time management	Workplace documentation	Study requirements
Workplace culture and expectations	Workplace culture and expectations	Study materials
Study requirements	Study requirements	Study time management
Personal issues that impact on work and study	Work time management	Work time management
Workplace documentation	Study Materials	Workplace documentation
Managing finance	Personal issues that impact on work and study	Workplace culture and expectations
Study materials	Study time management	Personal issues that impact on work and study
Work time management	Managing finance	Managing finance

Table 12: Apprentice needs versus issues raised (Midpoint Survey 42% of sample groups)

Apprentice Needs	Mentor Support	ITO Support
Study time management	Study time management	Study materials
Study requirements	Study requirements	Study time management
Workplace culture and expectations	Study materials	Study requirements
Managing finance	Workplace culture and expectations	Work time management
Workplace documentation	Work time management	Personal issues that impact on work and study
Study materials	Workplace documentation	Workplace documentation
Personal issues that impact on work and study	Personal issues that impact on work and study	Workplace culture and expectations
Work time management	Managing finance	Managing finance

Table 13: Apprentice needs versus issues raised (Final Survey 38% of sample groups)

Apprentice Needs	Mentor Support	ITO Support
Study time management	Study requirements	Personal issues that impact on work and study (1st =)
Study materials (2nd =)	Workplace documentation	Study materials (1st=)
Personal issues that impact on work and study (2nd =)	Study time management	Work time management (3rd =)
Managing finance (4th =)	Workplace culture and expectations	Workplace culture and expectations (3rd =)
Workplace documentation (4th =)	Study materials (5th =)	Study time management (5th =)
Work time management	Personal issues that impact on work and study (5th =)	Study requirements (5th =)
Study requirements	Work time management (5th =)	Workplace documentation (5th =)
Workplace culture and expectations	Managing finance	Managing finance

Tables 11, 12 and 13 above suggest a shift in mentoring roles has occurred over time. The ITO field representative took on the initial mentoring role around study requirements, materials and time management, a role transfer took place following the workshop interventions, with the support

being provided by the mentor being better aligned to the apprentice needs at that time. The final survey shows a more need based approach is now in place. It is possible that a shift in expectation has occurred as the mentoring relationship has matured, with the apprentice being expected to drive the relationship more.

Follow up interviews with mentors and ITO field representatives suggested that while each person had a clearer understanding of their role and the role the other person was taking around mentoring, no ongoing collaboration between the ITO field representative and the mentor had occurred to indicate the transfer of roles had been a deliberate action.

Literacy and numeracy was highlighted in the workshops as an additional area in which apprentices may need support, with mentors expressing interest in learning more about dyslexia and other learning disorders. The expectation for mentors to take a role around supporting literacy and numeracy needs is also noted in the ITO Literacy and Numeracy Good Practice Guide (2006) stating "*mentors support of trainees in literacy and numeracy should be given where the mentor feels confident and able and has appropriate professional development and other organisational support" (p. 4).* The report also suggests further professional development may be needed for the mentor to support literacy and numeracy needs in their trainees (p. 9).

Inconsistency between ITOs is apparent in terms of the support provided to mentors and trainees around literacy and numeracy. Primary ITO provides a community facing volunteer mentoring programme incorporating support around literacy and numeracy (Peterson, Farrell and Styles, 2014), whereas Connexis focuses on administering the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Assessment tool and embedding practices within workbooks.

Mentors interviewed at the midpoint and final survey indicated they had linked into the Downer National Learning Team for guidance, particularly in the telecommunications sector; no mentors had approached the ITO field representatives for support in this area, but indicated that contacting their ITO field representative would be useful.

ITO field representatives expressed concern that they had observed a lack of engagement from the mentors attending the workshops. They did not follow the relationship up any further. One ITO field representative commented *"The ITO has good processes in place to support the Trainee; however the support from the company and the trainee is removed when the press is to make money".*

3.2.4 Consistent mentoring tools

Consistent mentoring tools were introduced to the mentors and ITO field representatives at the collaborative mentoring workshops. For the midpoint and end of project surveys questions were asked around the use of these tools to measure how embedded they become.

Table 14: Mentor rating of the mentoring tools (Final Survey 39% of sample groups)

Mentoring Tool	Mentor		ITO	
	Final rating	Shift from midpoint	Final rating	Shift from midpoint
The apprentice framework diagram	3.52	+0.26	3.29	-0.71
SMART objectives	3.48	+0.2	3.29	-0.57
The GROW model	3.38	+0.22	3.29	-0.57
The question wheel	3.38	+0.38	3.14	-0.72
Mentoring agreement	3.33	+0.11	3.14	-0.72
Mentoring Record	3.33	+0.15	3.14	-0.72
Support Avenues	3.24	+0.32	3.29	-0.57

Mentor buy in and understanding of the mentoring tools increased from midpoint to the final survey. The follow up interviews with mentors showed the mentors had engaged with the tools and were able to articulate how they had used the tools with their apprentices.

ITO field representatives' perception of the value of the tools dropped from the midpoint to final survey. Many felt the tools were not relevant to their role. Primary ITO expressed value in the role clarity diagram and provided an example of how they were able to support another large employer with a work based mentoring programme with the assistance of the tools, in particular the role clarity diagram.

The apprentice framework model was valued the highest by both the mentor and ITO field representative. A mixed reaction was given to the agreement and record sheet, with some mentors highly valuing the structure these documents provided to the sessions, whereas others didn't like the constraints the formal documentation imposed on the sessions.

3.2.5 Local level hubs

Mentors and ITO field representatives were asked to rate the relationship between Downer and their ITO in specific areas:

Table 15: Shift in views on relationship between baseline (67% of sample) and final (38%) Surveys

	Mentor response		ITO field rep response	
	Final rating (1-5)	Shift from base	Final rating (1-5)	Shift from base
We are working together	2.81	+0.29	3.73	-0.01
The mentor/ITO field rep and I discuss the apprentice	3.05	+0.53	2.64	-0.04
Our roles complement each other	3.05	+0.48	2.91	-0.14
We share progress information	2.86	+0.4	3.18	-0.08

There was a positive shift observed in how mentors viewed the relationship. Follow up interviews showed that prior to the intervention the mentors did not understand the way apprentices gained their qualifications or the role the ITO played in this. Increased understanding of the process and the

ITO role is thought to have been a key driver behind the mentors looking more favourably on the relationship with the ITO. The value of involving the ITO field representative in the mentoring relationship was questioned by mentors during the mid and final interviews. One mentor noted that he was aware of the ITO field representative but wouldn't proactively work with him as he was not clear what the value was in maintaining this relationship.

A marginal negative shift in terms of the relationship was given by the ITO field representatives. Unless the mentor was someone with whom the ITO field representative had an existing relationship, no further contact with the mentor was initiated by the field representative. The perceived value of having a relationship with the mentor as opposed to the manager or supervisor was also questioned by the ITO field representative.

Neither the mentor nor the ITO field representative was proactive in driving the relationship.

Table 16: Shift in ITO field representatives' views on awareness and involvement by Downer between baseline (87% of sample) and final (65%) Surveys

	Involved in ITO visits		Informed of Apprentice progress	
	Final rating (1-5)	Shift from base	Final rating (1-5)	Shift from base
The apprentice's manager	2.9	-0.34	3.5	+0.26
The apprentice's supervisor	2.7	-0.97	3.6	-0.07
The apprentice's mentor	2.8	-0.51	3.6	+0.29

There has been an overall decrease in perception of how involved the business is in visits by ITO field representatives. However, ITO field representatives have increased their perception of how informed the business is in apprentice progress.

Mentors were asked to rate the involvement of key roles in mentoring and provide their perception of how well informed the ITO field representative was.

Table 17: Shift in mentors' views on awareness and involvement by different roles between baseline (75% of sample) and final (32%) Surveys

	Involved in mentoring		Informed of apprentice progress	
	Final rating (1-5)	Shift from base	Final rating (1-5)	Shift from base
The apprentice's manager	3.89	0.87	Not assessed	
The apprentice's supervisor	3.44	0.57		
ITO field representative	2.65	-0.18	3.14	0.29

Confusion around the nature of the ITO visits was evident with some mentors. At the midpoint survey, two mentors indicated that the ITO visit was confidential to the apprentice and mentors should not be involved in this. Mentors continued to indicate confusion around who their local ITO field representative was throughout the research.

Mentors appear to have spoken more with internal people (managers and supervisors) around the apprentice and not been proactive in seeking out the ITO field representative.

ITO field reps and Mentors are both looking more to the Downer National Learning team to act as the key link for support. Interactions at a local level between the ITO and employer were dependent on how proactive individuals had been in furthering the relationships.

3.3 Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the employment retention rates of apprentices?

3.3.1 Apprentice turnover rates

Table 18: Apprentice turnover rates by year

Year ending	Turnover rate	25yrs and under	Over 25 years
31 March 2014 (All apprentices)	23%*		
31 March 2015 (Research Sample)	12%	22%	10%

* Sourced from Downer New Zealand Senior Executive report

Turnover of apprentices involved in the research for the year ending 31 March 2015 is 12%. Turnover has dropped significantly compared to last year. Forty five percent of the research sample apprentices who left the business in the year ending 31 March 2015 gained a qualification prior to leaving. Thirty three percent of the apprentices who were over 25 year olds and left the business earned a qualification prior to leaving, compared with 57% of the apprentices who were 25 years and under who left the business earned a qualification prior to leaving.

The Downer business underwent considerable restructuring between November 2014 and February 2015 it is unclear whether this restructuring is reflected in the turnover rates for this group or whether a flow on affect would result, impacting on the results for 2016.

3.3.2 Cost of apprentice turnover to the business

Table 19: Cost of apprentice turnover to the business by year

Year ending	Cost per 100 apprentices
31 March 2014 (All apprentices)	$126,500
31 March 2015 (Research Sample)	$66,000

The calculations are based on a cost to recruit of $5,500 per apprentice. This figure aligns with other recruitment estimates undertaken by the Downer business.

Based on the 12% turnover for the research group for year ending 31 March 2015, the cost of turnover is estimated to be $66,000 per 100 apprentices Downer invests in, who are involved in the collaborative mentoring model. This is a cost saving of $60,500 per 100 apprentices per year.

Exit interviews were not held with the apprentices who left the business; as such it is not possible to ascertain whether collaborative mentoring had any impact on their reasons for leaving.

3.3.3 Career pathways within Downer

On a scale of 1 (not useful) to 5 (very useful), apprentices rated the usefulness of having a Downer mentor to support them to continue a career within Downer.

Table 20: Shift in usefulness of mentoring sessions by the apprentice from baseline (52% of apprentices) to midpoint (30% of apprentices) to final survey (36% of apprentices)

	Baseline survey response (1-5)	Midpoint survey response (1-5)	Final survey response (1-5)	Shift in response from baseline
Supports me to continue a career within Downer	3.96	3.54	3.42	-0.54

From the baseline to the final survey, apprentices saw less value in the usefulness of mentoring sessions in terms of progressing their careers within Downer.

Baseline interviews with apprentices identified a number of the apprentices were looking to progress into leadership roles within Downer after achieving their qualification. The mentors and apprentices interviewed saw acting as a mentor as part of the pathway within Downer to gaining a leadership role.

Eleven of the apprentices were promoted during the period between March 2014 and March 2015. Four of the people promoted had gained their qualification during the same period the remaining were on track to complete their qualifications in the allocated timeframe. Six of the 11 apprentices promoted were 25 years old or younger and five were over 25 years of age. No one over 25 years of age who was promoted had gained their qualification.

The mentors' focus changed throughout the course of the research. The initial interviews focused on establishing a relationship with the apprentice, midpoint interviews centred on progress towards qualifications and final interviews were career focused.

One mentor acted as a champion for his apprentice, highlighting the initiatives the apprentice had completed. Another mentor highlighted the need to work with his apprentice around setting realistic career goals and recognising personality traits of good leaders. Three mentors identified areas they saw their apprentice naturally specialising in and the challenges around exposing them to a fair rotation of the industry prior to specialising.

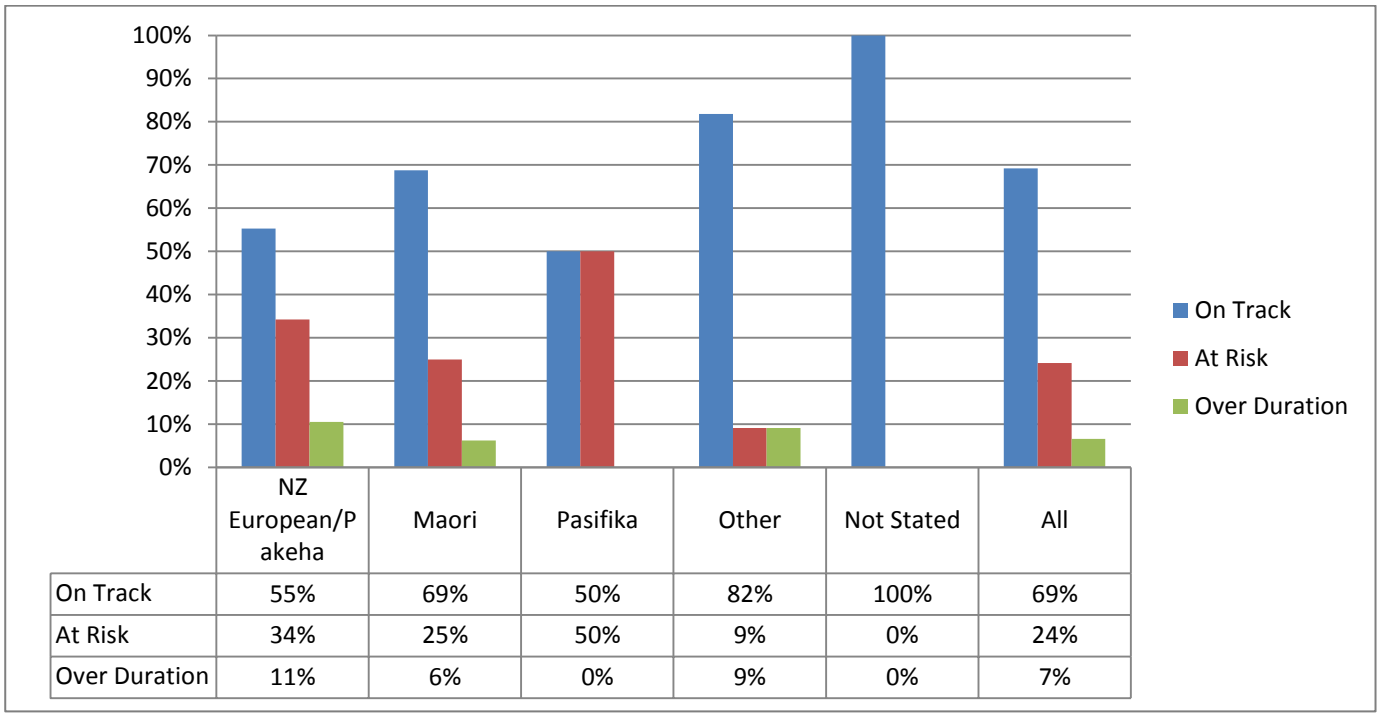
3.4 Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the qualification completion rates of apprentices?

3.4.1 Progress towards qualification attainment

For the purpose of this research, progress toward qualifications has been grouped in three main categories:

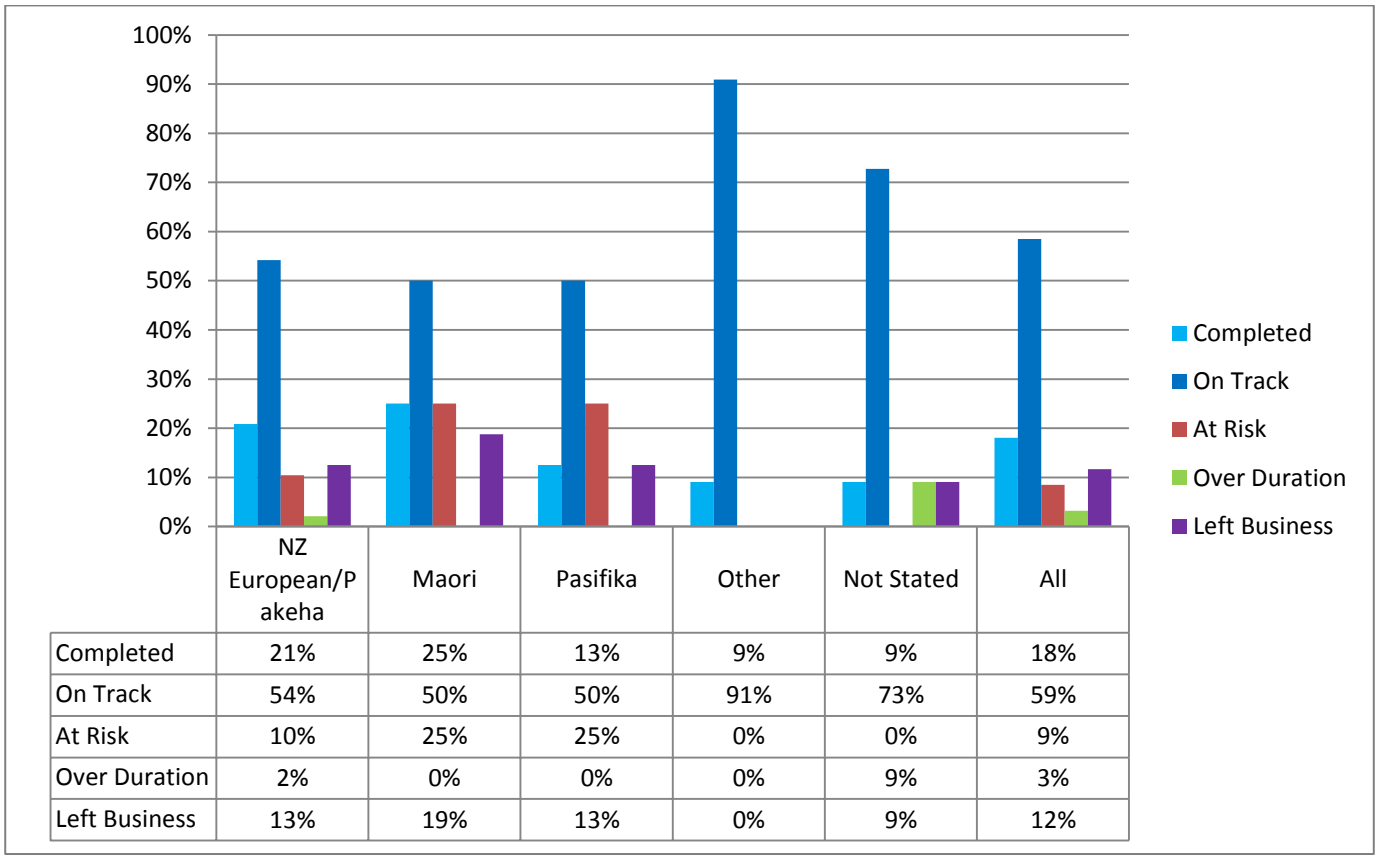
- On track: percentage of credits completed is aligned or better than percentage of duration (no more than 20% behind)
- At risk: percentage of credits completed for the qualification is 20% or less than the percentage of time allowed to complete the qualification (i.e. falling behind on number of credits completed compared to duration)
- Over duration.

Figure 12: Apprentice progress towards qualification by ethnicity at March 2014



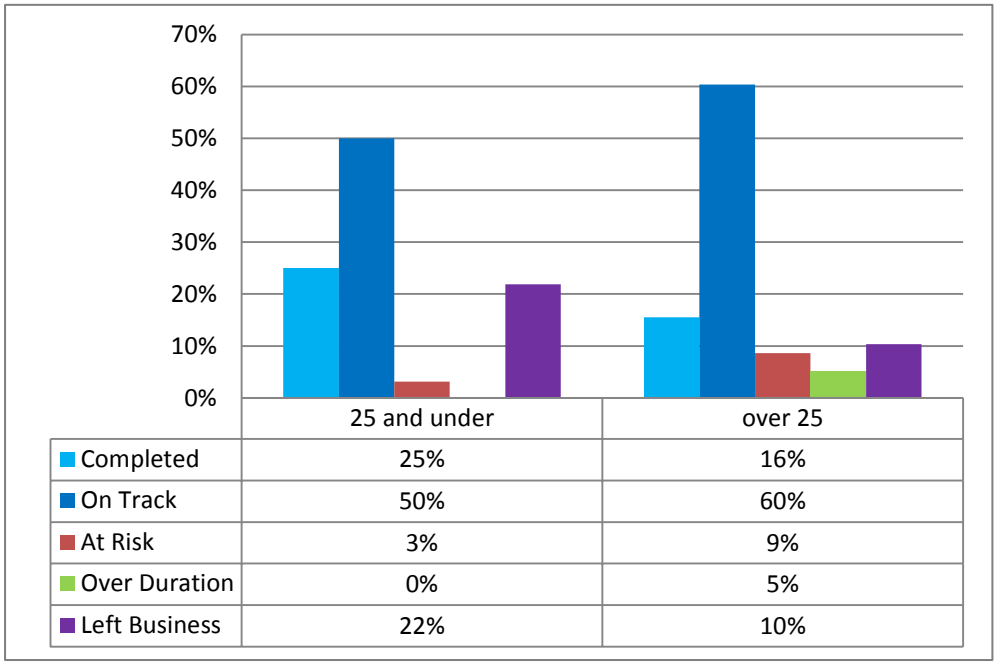
	NZ European/Pakeha	Maori	Pasifika	Other	Not Stated	All
On Track	55%	69%	50%	82%	100%	69%
At Risk	34%	25%	50%	9%	0%	24%
Over Duration	11%	6%	0%	9%	0%	7%

Figure 13: Apprentice progress towards qualification by ethnicity at March 2015



	NZ European/Pakeha	Maori	Pasifika	Other	Not Stated	All
Completed	21%	25%	13%	9%	9%	18%
On Track	54%	50%	50%	91%	73%	59%
At Risk	10%	25%	25%	0%	0%	9%
Over Duration	2%	0%	0%	0%	9%	3%
Left Business	13%	19%	13%	0%	9%	12%

Figure 14: Apprentice progress towards qualification by age at March 2015



	25 and under	over 25
Completed	25%	16%
On Track	50%	60%
At Risk	3%	9%
Over Duration	0%	5%
Left Business	22%	10%

The average number of credits completed between 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015 was 52 credits per apprentice. The average credits for 25 and under was 42, compared with 57 for over 25 year olds.

On average, those earning their qualifications between March 2014 and March 2015 achieved them in 153 days (22 weeks) less than the duration allowed for the qualification. Of those who gained qualifications between March 2014 and March 2015, two apprentices went over duration. The average time over duration for these two apprentices was 753 days (108 weeks).

Comparisons were made between the progress made by participants of the project and a sample of other Downer apprentices over the same duration. The number of participants who were on track or had completed their qualifications was slightly higher for the project participants: from 69% of the participants of the Ako Aotearoa project to 76% compared to the Downer non-Ako Aotearoa sample which rose from 44% to 49% for the same period. Twenty seven percent of the Downer non-Ako Aotearoa sample were withdrawn from their qualifications; it is unclear how many of these were withdrawn due to leaving the business, however only 12% of the participants of the Ako Aotearoa project left the business, but did not withdraw from their study. Similarly, the number of participants in the Ako Aotearoa project who were over duration in March 2014 (7%) dropped to 3% by March 2015, compared with an increase in over durations from 0% to 12% for the Downer non-Ako Aotearoa sample for the same period. Some causation can be inferred between the mentoring support provided to the project group and progress made towards completing qualifications by participants who were at risk or over duration. The average number of credits completed during the year by the Downer non-Ako Aotearoa sample group was 27 credits per apprentice is significantly less than the average of 52 credits per apprentice achieved by the participants of the Ako Aotearoa project. 40% (30) apprentices in the Downer non-Ako Aotearoa sample group achieved zero credits between March 2014 and March 2015, with 17% (5) of those non-Ako sample apprentices who did not achieve their qualifications being withdrawn from their studies – the remaining 83% (25) apprentices in the non-Ako Aotearoa sample showing zero progress remained active in their training status. Apprentices in the Downer non-Ako Aotearoa sample who earned their qualifications between March 2014 and March 2015 achieved them, on average, in 123 days (18 weeks) less than the duration allowed for the qualification, compared to 153 days (22 weeks) less than the duration allowed for the qualification for the participants of the Ako Aotearoa group who completed their qualifications.

Table 21: Comparison of progress made towards qualification completions between project participants and Downer Non-Ako Aotearoa sample apprentices from March 2014 to March 2015

	March 2014	March 2015

	On track	At risk	Over duration	Completed	On track	At risk	Over duration	Withdrawn	Left
Ako Participants	69%	24%	7%	18%	59%	9%	3%	0%	12%
Downer non-Ako sample (75)	44%	56%	0%	24%	25%	12%	12%	27%	

Table 22: Overview Comparisons between project participants and Downer Non-Ako Aotearoa sample apprentices from March 2014 to March 2015

	Ako Participants	Downer non-Ako sample (75)
Average number of credits achieved between dates	52 credits	27 credits
Percentage of apprentices who made zero progress between dates	0%	40%
Average time taken to complete qualification	153 days (22 weeks) less than duration allowed	123 days (18 weeks) less than duration allowed

3.4.2 Estimated cost of non-completions to Downer

March 2014 estimate of cost of non-completions

The number of apprentices involved in the research who were over duration was very low. This is possibly due to non-completions of apprenticeship qualifications being monitored by the Downer national learning and development team, and action being taken to either ensure the apprentices complete their qualification or remove them from the study. Based on a cost of $50 per month, the current cost of non-completions to Downer for the demographic group at project commencement is $2,200.

A large number of apprentices in the demographic group (22) were deemed to be at risk of non-completion. The cost of this group not completing but continuing to be enrolled in the qualification is $1,100 per month.

In April 2014, Downer negotiated a special fee schedule with Connexis which included fees no longer being imposed for non-completions. As such, costs incurred by the Downer for over durations could be removed as an influencing factor to progress qualifications. The cost of non-completions indicated below is therefore indicative only of what Downer would have incurred had the revised schedule not been introduced.

March 2015 estimate of cost of non-completions

As at 31 March 2015, the cost of non-completions would have risen to $3,850. Two of the over durations had completed their qualifications and one of the other over duration apprentices completed his apprenticeship within one month of leaving the business. No one was removed from a qualification due to being over duration, however one apprentice over duration is currently in the process of being placed on hold due to medical conditions.

The number of apprentices in the demographic group deemed to be at risk of non-completion (8) dropped significantly. The cost of this group not completing but continuing to be enrolled in the qualification would have fallen from $1,100 per month to $400 per month, if the $50 per apprentice per month over duration fee structure was still in place.

3.5 Does an aligned approach to mentoring improve the strength of the relationship between the mentor and mentee?

The majority of mentoring commenced following the baseline survey. This data could be skewed as it is possible that mentors voluntarily replying to the survey are the ones who are proactively undertaking the mentoring. Apprentice responses suggest this also.

3.5.1 Structure of mentoring sessions

Table 23: Number of mentoring sessions held (Final Survey, 38% of sample groups)

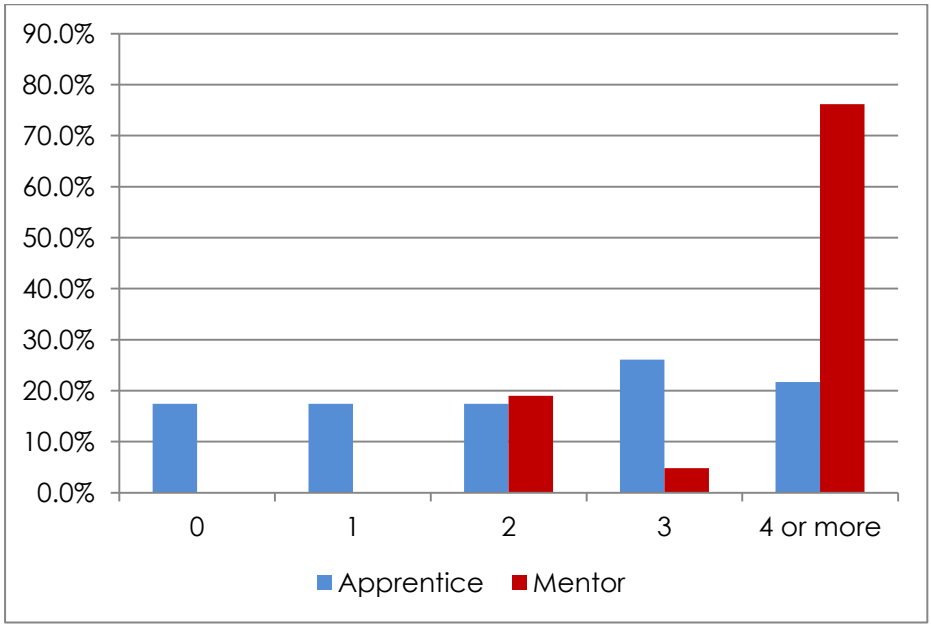


Table 24: Shift in number of mentoring sessions from Base (75% of sample mentors) to Final (32% of sample mentors) Mentor Survey

No. of sessions	Baseline survey response	Midpoint survey response	Final survey response	Shift from base survey
0	49.1%	2.6%	0	-49.1%
1	10.5%	12.8%	0	-10.5%
2	10.5%	30.8%	19.0%	+8.5%

3	7%	15.4%	4.8%	-2.2%
4 or more	22.8%	38.5%	76.2%	53.4%

Table 25: Shift in number of mentoring sessions from Midpoint (54% of sample apprentices) to Final (36% of sample apprentices) Apprentice Survey

No. of sessions	Midpoint survey response	Final survey response	Shift from midpoint survey
0	20.0%	17.4%	-2.6%
1	35.0%	17.4%	-17.6%
2	10.0%	17.4%	7.4%
3	10.0%	26.1%	16.1%
4 or more	25.0%	21.7%	-3.3%

There has been a positive shift in number of mentoring sessions being undertaken between the baseline and final surveys. However, the duration of mentoring sessions appears to have decreased.

Figure 15: Length of mentoring sessions (Final Survey, 38% of sample groups)

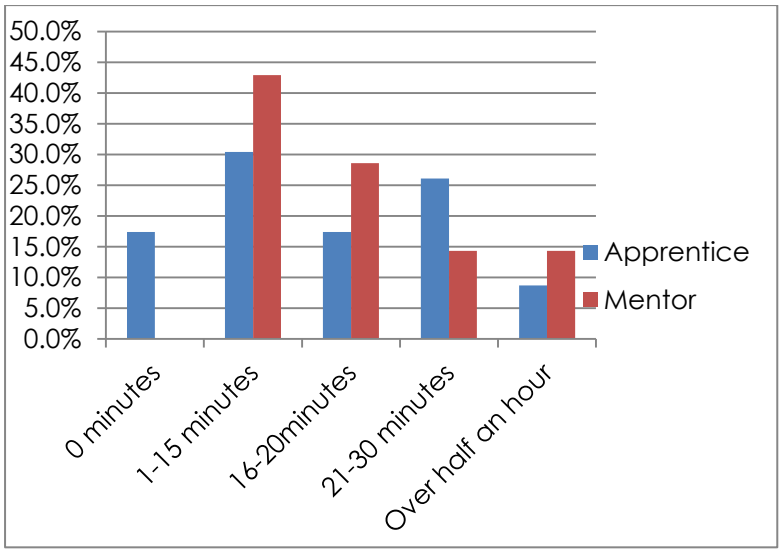


Table 26: Shift length of mentoring sessions from Base (75% of sample mentors) to Final (32% of sample mentors) Survey

No. of sessions	Final survey response	Shift from base survey
0 minutes	0.0%	-47.4%
1- 15 minutes	42.9%	+32.4%
16-20 minutes	28.6%	+18.1%
21-30 minutes	14.3%	-10.3%
Over half an hour	14.3%	+7.3%

The most common way in which mentoring sessions were held was face-to-face. A high proportion of others ticked in the baseline survey were assumed to be mentors who had not yet commenced mentoring when the baseline data was collected. Follow up interviews indicated that mentors and apprentices may keep in touch between formal face-to-face meetings via phones. Mentors indicated that phone calls and texting were driven by the apprentice on an as-needed basis.

Table 27: Shift in mentoring session venues from baseline (75% of mentors) to final (32% of mentors) survey

No. of sessions	Final survey response	Shift from Base Survey
Face to face	100.0%	+40.4%
Over the phone	9.5%	+0.7%
Texting	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0%	-40.4%

Mentoring relationships that were working well at the apprentice level appear to have been driven by the mentors in the first instances, but which over time became more equally driven.

Table 28: Apprentice view of who is driving the relationship from midpoint (30% of apprentices to final (36% of apprentices)

	Midpoint survey response	Final survey response	Shift from midpoint survey
You	25.00%	10.5%	-14.5%
Your mentor	5.00%	10.5%	5.5%
We both drive the relationship	70.00%	78.9%	8.9%

Table 29: Mentor view of who is driving the relationship from midpoint (49% of mentors) to final (32% of mentors)

	Midpoint survey response	Final survey response	Shift from midpoint survey
You	51.00%	42.9%	-8.1%
Your apprentice	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%
We both drive the relationship	49.00%	57.1%	8.1%

3.5.2 Apprentice buy in to the relationship

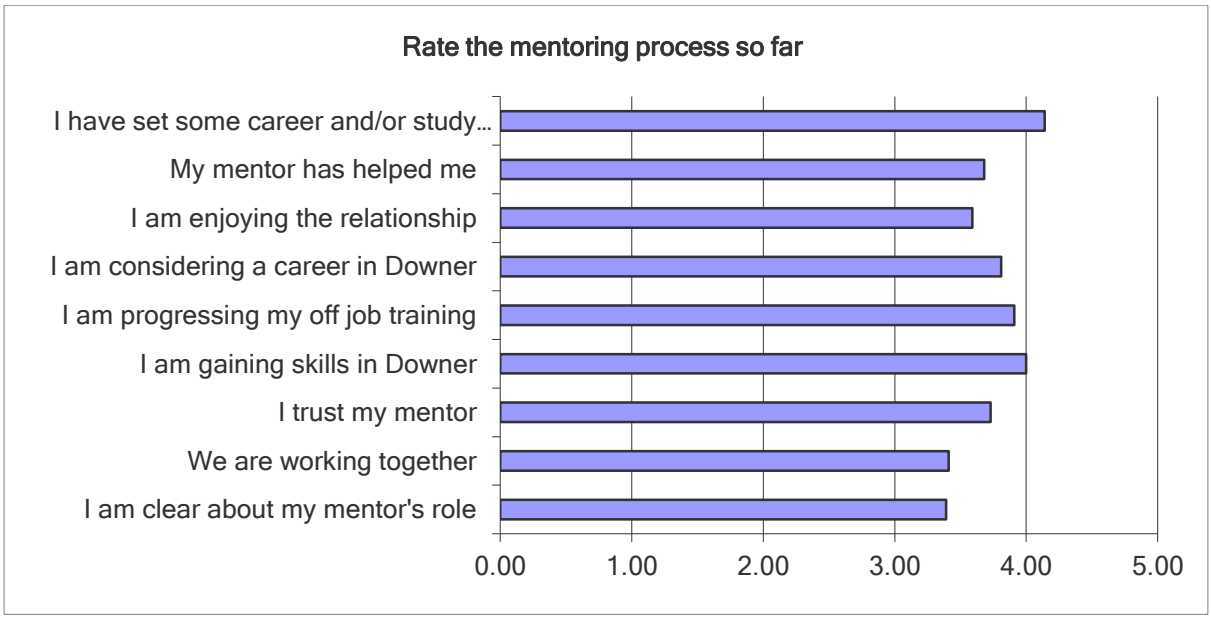
On a scale of 1 (opposed) to 5 (very positive) the apprentices surveyed rated how positive they were about having a mentor as 4.47 in the base line survey (52% of apprentice sample) and 2.5 at midpoint (30% of apprentice sample) moving back up to 3.5 at the final (36% of apprentice sample). It is possible the apprentices choosing to respond to the survey were not happy with the mentoring they had received and were using it as an avenue to raise their concerns.

Table 30: Shift in usefulness of mentoring sessions by the apprentice from baseline (54% of apprentices) to midpoint (30% of apprentices) to final (36% of apprentices) survey

	Baseline survey response (1-5)	Midpoint survey response (1-5)	Final survey response (1-5)	Shift in response from baseline
Supports me to continue a career within Downer	3.96	3.54	3.42	-0.54
Enables me to achieve units towards my qualification	3.98	3.50	3.42	-0.48
Enables me to gain skills in the company	4.29	3.83	3.46	-0.46
Enables me to share concerns about my job	4.16	3.71	3.42	-0.45
Enables me to share concerns about training matters	4.14	3.79	3.50	-0.35

Apprentices saw less value in the mentoring sessions from the baseline to final survey but still rated the mentoring highly. Initial apprentice interviews indicated apprentice expectations around having a mentor were high. Most apprentices interviewed had not been in a mentoring relationship, and expectations were set by ideals. The midpoint and final surveys showed a decrease in value of the relationship by the apprentice. Apprentices interviewed at the mid and final points in the research who were not happy with the mentoring they were receiving expressed concern about the way their mentors had been selected and/or the quality or lack of mentoring taking place.

Figure 16: Apprentices ratings of the mentoring process (Final Survey, 32% of Apprentice Sample)



A common theme of apprentice interviews was that they valued the idea of having a mentor, however wanted more input into the selection of the mentor. Trust in the mentor's advice was closely linked to the mentor's technical knowledge and dependent on how far removed the mentor was from the apprentice's day to day activities. The further away from operations the less highly rated the mentor became.

3.5.3 Mentor view of the relationship

Figure 17: Shift in view of the mentoring process by the mentor from baseline (75% of mentors) to midpoint (49% of mentors) to final (32% of mentors) survey

	Baseline survey response (1-5)	Midpoint survey response (1-5)	Final survey response (1-5)	Shift in response from baseline
I am clear about my role as a mentor	2.16	3.62	3.9	+1.74
I am hearing about the experience of my apprentice(s)	2.53	3.59	3.71	+1.18
We are working together	2.88	3.67	3.81	+0.93
We are identifying workplace related concerns	2.60	3.41	3.57	+0.97
We are identifying study related concerns	2.42	3.46	3.76	+1.34
I am happy with the trust I have established with my apprentice(s)	3.28	4.13	3.76	+0.48
Skills are being gained by my apprentice(s) in the company	3.19	4.13	3.86	+0.67
Progress is being made by my apprentice(s) with off job training	2.44	3.46	3.71	+1.27
A career in Downer is being considered by my apprentice(s)	3.30	3.85	4.1	+0.8
Confidentiality is being kept	3.65	4.21	4.14	+0.49
I am enjoying the relationship	3.35	3.97	3.76	+0.41
My role is of benefit to the apprentice	3.30	3.67	3.76	+0.46
I am supported to carry out this role by my manager	3.09	3.64	3.81	+0.72

Mentors' ratings were consistently higher in relation to the mentoring process from the baseline to the final survey. Mentors showed increased knowledge around study requirements and their mentor role in the mid and final interviews compared to initial surveys, in which a number of mentors had expressed a need for greater clarity around what the mentoring role involved.

3.5.4 ITO field representative view of the relationship

ITO field representatives were asked to rate a similar set of statements around the mentoring process.

Figure 18: Shift in view of the mentoring process by the ITO field representative from baseline (87% of ITO field reps) to midpoint (62% of ITO field reps) to final (65% of ITO field reps) survey

	Baseline survey response (1-5)	Midpoint survey response (1-5)	Final survey response (1-5)	Shift in response from baseline
I am clear about my role in mentoring as an ITO field representative	2.39	3.58	3.64	+1.25
I am hearing about the experience of my apprentice(s)	2.59	3.75	3.55	+0.96
I am learning about workplace related concerns	2.82	3.58	3.36	+0.54
I am learning about study related concerns	3.41	3.67	3.64	+0.23
I am happy with the trust I have established with my apprentice(s) and Downer mentors	3.76	3.67	3.7	-0.06
Skills are being gained by my apprentice(s) in the company	3.63	3.75	3.91	+0.28
Progress is being made by my apprentice(s) with off job training	3.41	3.67	3.64	+0.23
A career in Downer is being considered by my apprentice(s)	3.35	3.33	3.55	+0.2
Confidentiality is being kept	4.00	4.00	3.91	-0.09
My role is of benefit to the apprentice	4.13	3.82	3.91	-0.22
I am supported to carry out this role by my ITO manager	4.06	3.83	3.82	-0.24

In general, the ITO field representatives' view of the mentoring process increased from baseline to the final survey. Clarity about the ITO field representative's role in mentoring showed the greatest positive shift. The ITO field representatives' ratings decreased slightly from baseline to final survey for the amount of support they were provided and how they saw their mentoring role benefiting the apprentice. Significant restructuring of the ITOs were taking place when the mid and final surveys were conducted which may have impacted negatively on the ITO field representatives responses to these questions.

3.5.5 Manager versus mentor

Fifty one percent of mentors were also the apprentices' managers. This situation is predominant in the telecommunications sector, where a previous mentoring programme was unsuccessfully introduced involving mentors who were not directly involved with the apprentices' work flow. The telecommunication sector felt they would have a higher success rate in implementing a mentoring programme if the apprentices' managers became their mentors. In the transportation and water sectors, managers may have been assigned as mentors in cases where, due to geographic location, it was difficult to find an alternative support for the apprentice.

The managers acting as mentors who were interviewed as part of the follow up interviews to the initial survey indicated that they did not struggle with being able to separate the two roles. Examples were given by the mentors as to where there was also benefit in being the manager, such as around structuring work to ensure unit standards were completed. Manages acting as mentors discussed

conflicts arising around the need to rotate apprentices through different technical areas of the job, versus getting them to do what they were good at doing and the work that needed to be. Apprentices who had their managers as mentors expressed concerns about how far removed their manager was from their day-to-day tasks, but did not raise any issues around confidentiality or trust.

Mentors who were not the apprentices' managers could not see how the relationship could function if they were also their manager. One mentor had previously been his apprentice's manager. The mentor described how he understood the apprentice from a work perspective and in a mentoring capacity. He had found it beneficial and was able to work with the apprentice's current manager to resolve a gambling problem the apprentice had, and which had been impacting on the apprentice's performance at work.

3.6 How does an aligned approach to mentoring improve understanding and practices of mentors?

To reinforce the use of the record sheet and mentoring agreement, alignment has been made with Unit Standard 25451: Provide mentoring in an organisation (level 5, 5 credits), which requires them to show evidence of

- completion of a mentoring agreement
- completion of six mentoring sessions
- written reflection on practice
- written apprentice feedback.

Uptake of the unit standard by mentors was very low. Six mentors had submitted all evidence required to gain the credits. A number of mentors had provided some of the evidence; however the majority of mentors had chosen not to complete the unit standard.

Mentors raised the following issues, which they say as barriers to progressing their understanding of mentoring.

- Time constraints to invest in mentoring. Conflicts between work commitments and the time needed to invest in the mentoring were raised.
- Management input into the mentoring process. Manager buy in to the mentoring relationship was raised as a concern at the initial interviews, however during the midpoint and final interviews the majority of mentors interviewed noted they had not sought support from their manager around mentoring, but believed the manager would provide support if asked to do so.
- Language barrier. A lack of knowledge regarding the NZQA framework and what an apprentice needed to do to gain their qualification was evident in a number of mentors. ITO field representatives, on the other hand, showed a clear understanding of the NZQA framework and the specific unit standards apprentices were completing. Mentors

regarded anyone with knowledge of the NZQA framework as from the ITO. For many there was confusion about who worked for the ITO and who was part of Downer's national learning department.

- Minimal contact occurred between mentors and the ITO field representatives. While both parties were positive about working collaboratively with the other, it was not clear who should drive these relationships what benefit would be gained from doing this.

4 Discussion

4.1 Implications of the demographic group composition

An early challenge for this project was identifying the apprentice demographic group. How far through their study an apprentice was in relation to the duration of the research impacted on their ability to be involved. In addition, considerable consultation was needed with the business (at a local level) prior to apprentices being signed up. While structured intakes were in place within the telecommunications sector of the Downer business, civil engineering trade qualifications occurred on an ad hoc basis. This added an additional layer of complexity to the identification, monitoring and alignment of mentors to the civil engineering apprentices. This challenge caused delays to the project commencement and impacted on final demographic distribution, particularly around ethnicity split.

Expectations around the age of an apprentice varied between the ITO and Downer. The assumption that an apprentice was generally younger and just out of high school was not correct. This assumption seemed to align with the definition of a modern apprentice used until recently for funding purposes. Only 20% of the demographic group were identified as coming straight from school; the majority are adult apprentices. This is reinforced through the age distribution statistics.

The business and apprentices themselves appeared to have an issue with the term 'apprentice' not recognising their years of experience in the industry or role status within the business. The nature of the industry is also to gain qualifications to match skill base after entering the industry as opposed to straight from school. ITOs use the term 'trainee', which in Downer is used to describe employees working at level 1 and 2 qualifications. Title within the business environment is viewed as important by apprentices, as it links to the payroll database.

The age gap between mentors and apprentices was also apparent. Apprentices respected the knowledge base of the older mentors, but would value the recent experiences younger mentors could bring. The age gap also varied the length of time for which mentors had been out of study and for some of the mentors this may have impacted on their ability to hold meaningful discussions with apprentices around study requirements. Many apprentices discussed becoming future mentors as

part of their final interview, however no pathway is in place within the Downer apprentice programme to capture this.

4.2 The collaborative model

The basis of the Collaborative Model was defined as:

- A shared understanding of what mentoring is across all three organisations
- Clearly defined roles for key participants within mentoring activities
- Consistent support avenues
- Common tools for workplace mentors and ITO field representatives to use
- Establishment of key links at a local level between local mentors and ITO field representatives.

The concept of a shared understanding of mentoring was introduced through the collaborative workshops and follow up meetings with mentors. A lot of research has been undertaken (e.g. Clutterbuck, 2004) around the values needed to be an effective mentor and this shared understanding between the ITOs and the employer of the key values is evident in this research. The research advisory group feedback around mentoring values suggested that both the ITOs and the employer had a similar view on the values needed in a mentor prior to the research commencing.

While a shared understanding of the value of mentoring is evident, the benefit for the ITO field representatives and the mentors to be involved in collaborative mentoring is not as evident. The ITO funding deliverables around completions within timeframes is critical for the ITO field representatives, as one ITO field representative noted, "Mentoring is part of the programme. However, we (ITO field representatives) need to devote our time to individuals to complete their training on time, is the issue".

The mentors' focus is on skill development and initiation into the industry/business, with completion of the qualification a component of this. Work commitments within tight timeframes are viewed as a conflicting priority to the apprentice study requirements. While mentors can see value in working with the ITO field representatives, the conflicting time issues result in apathy in initiating the collaboration. An ITO field representative noted "*support from the company and the trainee is removed when the pressure is to make money".* This time management conflict reduces the degree of collaboration possible and can result in the mentor and ITO field representative operating in isolation for the good of the apprentice.

For the collaborative model to truly be introduced, the shared understanding needs to be expanded to include the benefits and barriers for both the ITO field representative and mentor to engage in the relationship, and value seen to be gained by both parties from collaborating.

Mentors' and ITO field representatives' initial concerns around role clarity in mentoring apprentices appear to have been addressed through the workshops. Through the intervention, mentors and ITO field representatives gained greater understanding of each other's roles around mentoring apprentices, however this did not result in greater collaboration between the two. Analysis of the apprentice needs against the support provided by the mentors and ITO field representatives suggests that they transferred the mentoring role rather than working alongside each other. The ITO field representative assumed the role early on, which aligned with initial responsibilities around signing the apprentice into the qualification. Following the workshop interventions, the mentor took over mentoring the apprentice. Recognising the transition from ITO setup to the mentor relationship starting in earnest should be an important point for ITO field representatives to collaborate with mentors going forward.

Literacy and numeracy (LN) needs and learning needs such as dyslexia have been highlighted by both mentors and ITO field representatives as an area of further support.

Inconsistencies existed between the support mechanisms provided for trainees with LN difficulties by the two ITOs involved in the research. Primary ITO has adopted a community-facing approach involving additional assessments for dyslexia and identified support people within a local community, whereas Connexis have focused on supporting LN skill development through embedding LN in workbooks. Mentors faced with apprentices with learning difficulties chose to seek advice from Downer's national learning team (particularly in the telecommunications sector) and did not choose to collaborate with their ITOs around this. Similarly, ITO field representatives were more likely to go to the National Learning and Development team to discuss concerns than to seek out a mentor.

Greater clarity is needed with regard to the role of the ITO in LN. The ITO Literacy and Numeracy Good Practice Guide (2006) recognises mentors may be able to support LN trainee needs where they feel confident and have the appropriate professional development (p.4), however no guidance is provided in how the mentors should gain the professional development or the role the ITO should take in assisting with this professional development. An opportunity exists for greater collaboration between ITOs and the employers through a consistent approach to LN support being provided across all ITOs.

Local area links appear to be an area of challenge for the model. Following the collaborative workshops, mentors were able to identify their local ITO field representative, but most indicated they did not engage with them. Few mentors attended ITO apprentice visits, with some considering these visits to be confidential between the ITO and the apprentice. Aligning mentoring activities with ITO visits may be a mechanism for gaining greater collaboration and formalising mentoring, however there is no clear driver around this at present.

4.3 Retention rates

The term 'retention rate' had different meanings between the ITO and business contexts. ITO were more focused on retaining learners within a qualification, whereas the business were taking a longer term view around investment in the study and follow on career opportunities within Downer. Retention within the business has been used for the purpose of this research.

Turnover rates between 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015 reduced by 11% from 23% (for whole of Downer apprentices as sourced from the Downer NZ Senior Executive Report) in 2014 to 12% (for research sample apprentices) in 2015. The drop in turnover was less significant for apprentices 25 years and under (22%) compared to apprentices over 25 years of age (10%).

Based on a cost to recruit of $5,500 per apprentice, the cost of apprentice turnover for March 2015 per 100 apprentices is $66,000 compared to a cost of $126,000 per 100 apprentices in March 2014. It is unclear how much (if any) of this reduction can be attributed to the collaborative mentoring.

Apprentices rated the value of having a mentor to assist them to progress their career within Downer as less useful than at the start of the research. Initial interviews with apprentices indicated a number of the apprentices were looking to progress into leadership roles within Downer.

Age does not appear to be a barrier to gaining a promotion, with 6 of the 11 apprentices who earned a promotion in the year ending 31 March 2015 being 25 years old or younger.

4.4 Completion rates

Eighteen per cent of all the apprentices in the research completed their qualification during the year ending 31 March 2015 with the average time to complete their qualification being 22 weeks less than the duration provided for in the qualification. On average apprentices achieved 52 credits within the year. Apprentices who were 25 years or younger achieved 42 credits on average, compared to 57 credits achieved on average for apprentices over 25 years of age. There has been a significant drop in the number of apprentices who are over duration or at risk of becoming over duration.

The drop in the number of apprentices who are identified as at risk of going over duration is significant, however it is unclear (if any) of this can be attributed to collaborative mentoring.

Comparisons made with a sample of Downer Apprentices who did not take part in the project showed the mentoring provided to participants of the project had a significant positive impact on apprentices who were considered at risk or over duration. Apprentices being mentored through the collaborative mentoring project were less likely to withdraw from their studies and earned credits towards their qualification at a significantly higher rate than those not involved. Some causation has

been observed between the ability of the collaborative approach to mentoring has on at risk apprentices.

4.5 Strength of the mentoring relationship

On average, the apprentices had been involved in four or more mentoring sessions that lasted between 16 and 20 minutes and were conducted face-to-face with their mentor. Some confusion is apparent around who should drive the mentoring relationship, ideally a joint approach to driving the relationship works best, however in the early sessions the mentor needs to take a stronger role. Clarity around driving the relationship in the initial stages of the relationship would be useful to include in future mentoring workshops.

Apprentices saw less value in the usefulness of having a mentor at the end of the research than they had when the research commenced. Issues around the selection process and technical hands on knowledge base of the mentor were the main issues identified by the apprentice for the decline. Many of the apprentices struggled with having their manager's act as their mentors.

Downer's mentor selection process needs to be reviewed to provide greater input in the selection of mentors by the apprentices. Downer's decision to assign managers as mentors should also be reviewed to align with good mentoring practice, and reduce the risk of a conflict of interest occurring between the two roles. Greater education is needed with mentors on how to drive the relationship in the early stages of the relationship.

4.6 Degree of understanding and practices around mentoring

Only six mentors provided evidence to gain the unit standard in mentoring offered at the workshops. The unit standard does not link into any qualification provided at Downer and as such was seen to be of minimal value for the mentors.

Barriers identified as reducing mentoring practices and understanding of mentoring by mentors includes:

- Time constraints of the mentors to invest in the project. Particularly the conflict with other work commitments.
- Different language used by business and ITO impacting on ability to collaborate.
- There is a greater awareness by the ITOs of the business drivers, however a lack of understanding by the business as to the funding drivers for the ITO.
- Lack of clarity around who drives the relationship between mentors and the ITO field representatives, and the value add for role to invest more time in collaborating.

The mentoring tools introduced as part of this research were of greater value to business mentors than the ITO field representatives. The apprentice framework diagram was rated highly by both the mentors and ITO field representatives. Business mentors also valued tools which helped them guide

conversations with mentors (i.e. GROW model and SMART objectives). There was a mixed response to the use of mentoring agreements and mentoring records by mentors. 50% of the mentors at midpoint preferred a less formal approach to mentoring, however those interviewed who had a less formal mentoring relationship at times blurred conversations between workplace discussions and mentoring discussions. Mentors who indicated they liked the structured mentoring documentation indicated they did not have time to properly fill them in all of the time.

One of the ITOs was able to use the mentoring tools to assist them to develop a mentoring programme within a similar sized business environment. The ITO saw the tools as having greater value in assisting them to engage with other businesses at a strategic level as opposed to assisting them in their day to day conversations.

Downer has put in place measures to ensure sustainability around the use of the mentoring tools introduced in this research within the business. The mentoring handbook has been revised and aligned with a formal induction workshop now being run across the business with all new apprentices. A video for mentors has been developed to introduce new mentors to the tools and handbook, and what it means to be a mentor.

An apprentice induction day is placing greater structure around the apprentice programme in the civil engineering space. This structure was not apparent at the start of this project, as apprentices were signed into qualifications in a haphazard manner which resulted in the ability to monitor individual apprentice progress being very challenging. Mentoring has been included as an area to be included in an apprentice induction day and ITO field representatives are invited to attend part of the day. This revised structure to the apprentice programme should encourage greater collaboration between the ITO and the Downer business at a local level.

5 Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Mentoring at the apprentice level of the Downer business was introduced within the research group on the whole. The focus was able to shift from initiation of a collaborative mentoring model to building sustainable mentoring practices at an apprentice level as a result. The project was able to highlight many issues and barriers large businesses face when introducing a mentoring process at an apprentice level.

The issue of conflicting time constraints for mentors and apprentices was identified. Time issues were addressed where greater buy in was observed from management and the mentor. Further elevation of the status of mentors may be needed to enable the business to recognise and invest further time into mentoring at a local level. This is an ongoing change management issue within the business environment around mentoring.

Greater structure has been placed around the Downer apprentice programme as a result of this research. Apprentice buy in to the mentoring programme declined over the course of this research as they engaged more with their actual mentor as opposed to the concept of mentoring. The main issue raised by apprentices was in relation to the selection of their mentor and a lack of consideration for their personal preferences. Good practice suggests greater input is needed from the apprentice in selecting his/her mentor and to avoid using their managers as mentors. Incorporated into the new structures Downer is placing around the apprentice programme is a mentor selection process as part of the apprentice induction period. Greater input into the mentor selection process by the apprentice should result in higher engagement levels.

The degree of collaboration between the Downer mentors and the ITO field representatives is not apparent. Components of the collaborative approach proposed in this research are working well, however barriers became apparent which promoted working in isolation by the two roles.

The introduction of the Collaborative Approach to mentoring saw a shared understanding around the values needed in a mentor and greater role clarity for mentors and ITO field representatives in how they should support the apprentice in a mentoring capacity. Common mentoring tools were introduced with the provision of an Apprentice Framework being well received by both the mentors and ITO field representatives. The majority of the other tools were felt to be more relevant to the business mentors than the ITO field representatives. There was also a greater understanding of the type of support the two roles are providing to the apprentice, and greater alignment observed between apprentice needs and the support provided by mentors.

Despite the intent of the project being on encouraging collaboration between the ITO and mentors at a local level, neither party proactively engaged in the relationship beyond the initial interaction. Greater clarity was needed by both the ITO field representatives and the Mentor as to the value of investing in the relationship on an ongoing basis.

A key barrier impacting on the implementation of the collaborative model was no one was driving the relationship at a local level. No clearly defined rationale existed as to why mentors and ITO field representatives should collaborate more at this level, and there was a lack of understanding of what each party would gain from the relationship. Time constraints to deliver on key performance indicators for each role (i.e. qualification completions within duration for the ITO field representatives and meeting customer contractual requirements within timeframe for the mentors) resulted in the collaborative relationship being classed as a nice to have as opposed to pivotal to the apprentice's success.

Consistent support avenues were identified as a component of the Collaborative Model; however the support provided by individual ITOs varied resulting in the ITO not being viewed by the mentors as important to collaborate around support needed. This inconsistency has been highlighted in this research in relation to the support provided by the participating ITOs around learning difficulties, in particular supporting LN needs and dyslexia, with one ITO adopting a community facing approach to support which has been widely researched and the other adopting a more embedded approach. Despite needs by mentors around specific learning difficulties in their apprentices, none of the mentors interviewed in this research had chosen to seek support from their local ITO field representative, preferring instead to gain support from Downers national learning team. This is considered a lost opportunity for greater collaboration and ability to take advantage of the rich resources being offered by the ITOs.

The collaborative model assumed the mentor and ITO field representative were supporting the apprentice in a mentoring capacity simultaneously, however, the findings of the research suggest there is a transfer of the mentoring role that takes place (from the ITO field representative to the mentor) following the initial sign up of the apprentice into his/her qualification. It is important that the ITO field representative and mentor collaborate around this transition point, but it is not clear how ongoing collaboration past this point will support better outcomes for the apprentice.

Further work is needed for the collaborative approach to truly be embedded within the Downer organisation. Opportunities do exist for mentors and ITO field representatives to collaborate more around support for learning difficulties, and for mentors to become more involved in the ITO visits. Greater promotion of the value and the specific benefits at a local level each role hopes to gain from the collaborative relationship needs to take place.

Collaboration between Downer and the ITOs around apprentice mentoring is desirable by both parties and in theory is viewed as having favourable outcomes on apprentice completion and

retention rates. Positive shifts in completion and retention rates were observed over the course of this research however, they cannot be linked specially to greater collaboration occurring. This research has identified some challenges and areas where ITOs and Downer can collaborate further around apprentice mentoring.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to implement a sustainable collaborative mentoring approach both Downer and the ITOs need to proactively promote the value of mentoring and continue to foster ways to initiate and drive this relationship for new apprentices entering the business. The following recommendations are based on the findings of this research with the view to further embedding the collaborative mentoring approach within a business environment.

5.2.1 Recommendations for Downer

Downer continues to invest in building sustainable mentoring practices at the apprentice level of the business, including:

- Developing a process to ensure all new mentors receive a copy of the mentor guide and are required to watch the mentoring video developed as a result of this project.
- Apprentice enrolments become structured, to enable greater monitoring of and support. This would include a formal induction process.
- A mentor selection process is incorporated into the structure of the mentoring programme, which allows greater involvement by the apprentice as to the selection of their mentor, and discourages the use of managers as mentors.
- Where possible mentors and ITO field representatives be involved in the initial induction of the apprentice into the qualification.
- Expectations around the mentor driving the relationship in the early stages of the apprentice/mentor relationship should be highlighted more in mentor training material and workshops.
- The structure of the apprentice programme (including mentoring) is clearly communicated to the relevant ITOs and opportunities for them to be involved are identified where appropriate.

Initiatives that could be considered by Downer to further the embedding of apprentice mentoring within the business are:

- The value of the mentoring role be raised within the Downer business, this could involve:
    - "Mentor of the year award".
    - Shared stories of successful mentoring practices being distributed throughout the business.

    - Further (and ongoing) championing of mentoring at senior management level of the business.
- Mentor needs around work time commitments with managers need to be addressed in order for the mentors to invest in the relationship to the degree required.
- Greater visibility of the mentoring role within the Downer business through formalising a pathway for employees to become future mentors. This pathway should consider:
    - Apprentices completing their qualifications
    - Skilled employees looking to give back
    - How mentoring is incorporated into the Downer leadership programme.

5.2.2 Recommendations for ITOs

ITOs continue to support and facilitate the mentoring of apprentices by the workplace including:

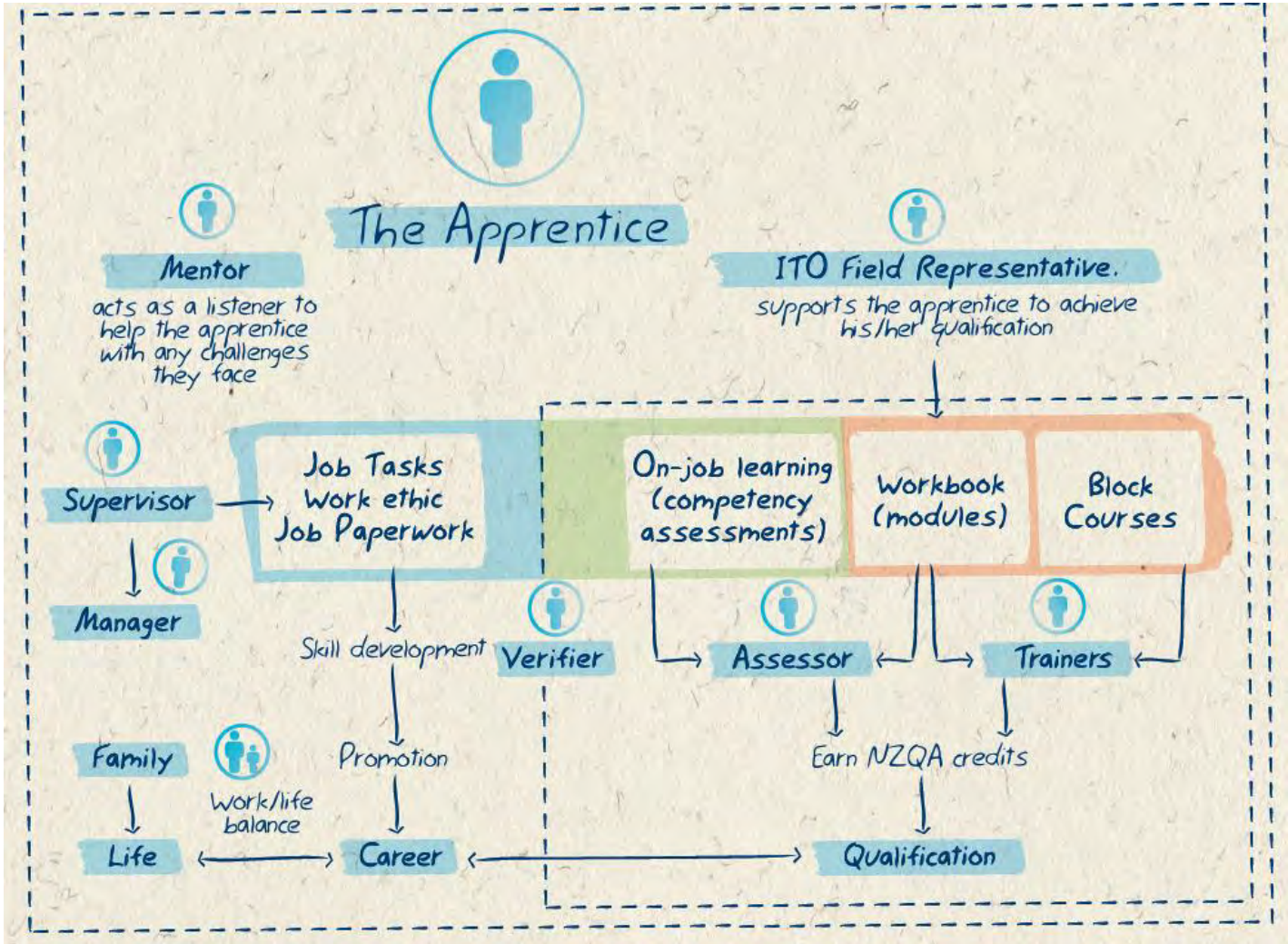
- Clearly defining the ITO field representative role around mentoring, particularly around supporting the learner to engage in the relationship in the early stages of their apprenticeship and acting as an advisor for mentors around qualifications, support avenues and qualification progress.
- Raising the profile of workplace mentors within an apprenticeship, this could involve:
    - Good news mentoring stories
    - Mentor of the year awards
    - Developing further support material targeting mentors for ITO field representatives to engage with businesses around mentoring.
- Encouraging ITO field representatives to proactively seek out workplace mentors, particularly at the initial stages of the apprenticeship where a shift between the support provided by the ITO and the mentor occurs, this could involve:
    - Mentors and ITO field representatives being part of an apprentice induction workshop.
    - Mentors attending part or all of the ITO field representatives visits to the apprentice.
    - Key contact details being provided to the mentor and ITO field representative at the point the apprentice signs into the qualification as a matter of course.
- Greater consistency around the support provided between ITOs around LN. Including greater clarity and structure introduced into the industry around the role ITOs play in supporting LN.

6 References

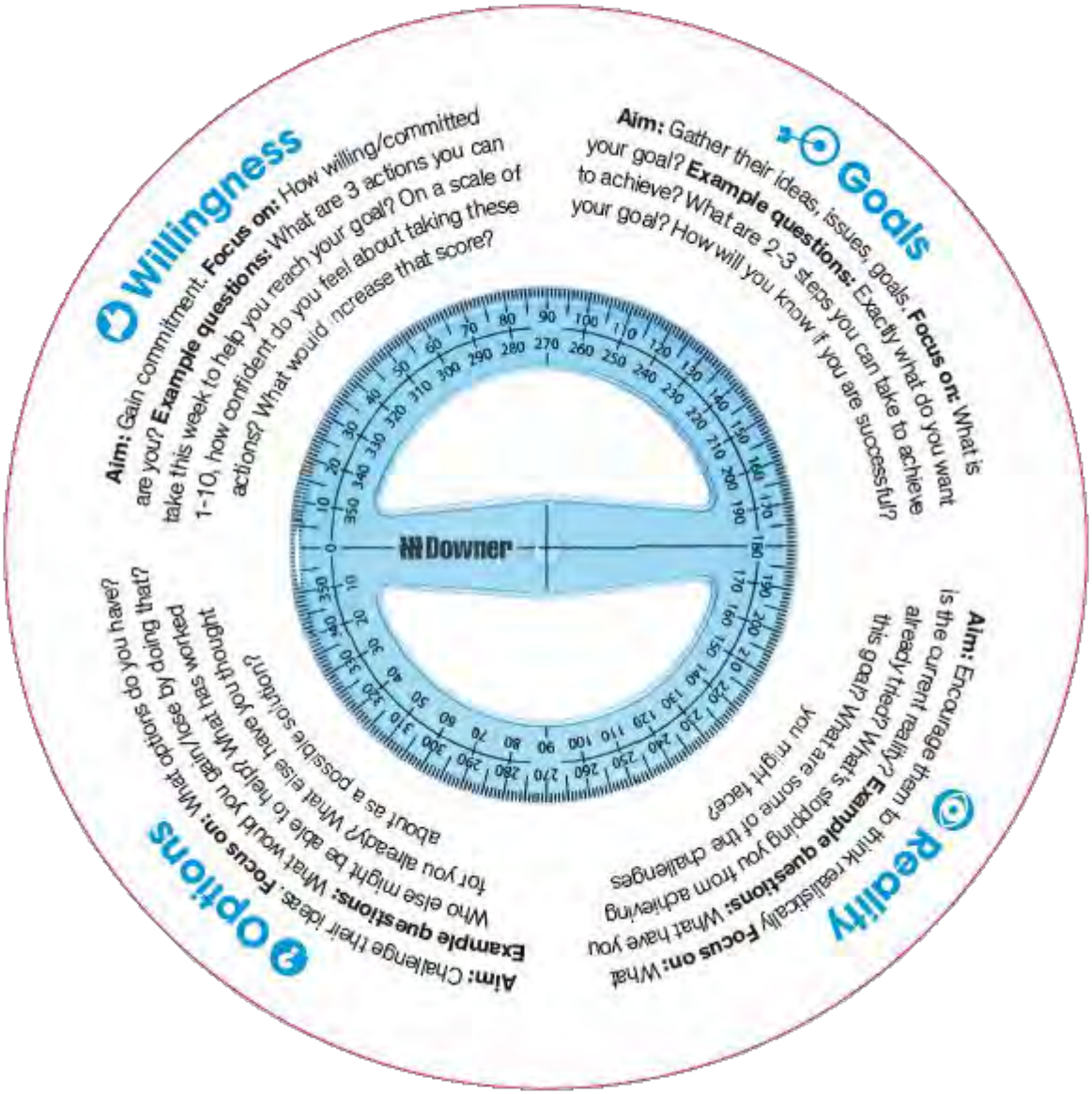
- Clutterbuck, D., Everyone needs a mentor: Fostering talent in your organisation, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, England, 2004
- Freidman, M., Trying Hard is Not Good Enough, Trafford Publishing, United States, 2005
- Harris-Worthington, Dr P., Mentor training resource, Creative Commons 3.0, New Zealand, 2009
- Harris-Worthington, Dr P., Mentoring guidelines, Creative Commons 3.0, New Zealand, 19 June 2009
- Holland, Dr C., Workplace mentoring: a literature review, Creative Commons 3.0, New Zealand, August 2009
- Holland, Dr C., Murray, Dr N., Professional development for mentors in industry, Creative Commons 3.0, New Zealand, December 2010
- ITO Literacy and Numeracy Good Practice Guide, New Zealand Industry Training Federation, New Zealand, 2006
- Petersen, Dr L, Farrell, M & Styles, M, Evaluating a mentoring scheme for trainees in the Primary ITO, AKO Aotearoa, New Zealand September 2014

7 Appendices

7.1 An apprentice framework



7.2 GROW model mentoring wheel



Mentor's question wheel

Mentors challenge mentees to question themselves.

Focus your questions:

Goal (gather their ideas)
Reality (encourage them to think realistically)
Options (challenge their ideas)
Willingness (gain commitment)

AKO AOTEAROA NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TERTIARY TEACHING EXCELLENCE Downer

7.3 Mentoring agreement

Mentoring Agreement

Mentee's name:

Mentor's name:

This agreement begins on: **and ends on:**

Our long term goals for this mentoring relationship are:

How we will meet: (place, frequency and duration)

How we will communicate between meetings:

How we will record and monitor our progress:

Confidentiality

We agree to keep everything that is within the mentoring relationship confidential. Nothing will be shared without the permission of the other person.

Mentee: **Date:**

Mentor: **Date:**

7.4 Mentor record

Mentor Record

Mentee's name: Mentor's name:

Meeting place: Time:

What was discussed:

Any action points achieved? *(since last session)*

Any action points agreed?

Comments/ feedback from the mentee

Date of next arranged meeting:

Mentee and mentor sign off: *(required)*

Mentee: Date:

Mentor: Date:

Please send to your local Learning Administrator