

Chapter 3: Guidance on how to begin a sponsorship program

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This is the third of five chapters in the sponsorship toolkit. This chapter explores three important areas for beginning a sponsorship program:

- how to create an effective expression of interest (EOI) process
- how to create a screened matching process and prepare for a matching panel
- how to run a capability program for participants.

Video embed:

[Sponsorship Guidance Toolkit - Alumni Insights - Chapter 3](#)

Expression of interest process

Successfully establishing a sponsorship relationship requires a structured and targeted EOI process. EOIs for a sponsorship program are not assessments of an individual's capability or skill level, but about finding the best possible matches and ensuring that sponsorship is suitable for the individual. This applies to both sponsors and sponsees.

The EOI process should assess the suitability of potential participants and collect information to inform the matching process. This supports the objectives of sponsorship, which include:

- increasing public advocacy of CALD employees
- increasing visibility of CALD employees

- capability uplift for sponsors in inclusive leadership.

Mentoring and coaching programs may not require this level of detail in an EOI process. For mentoring and coaching, EOI questions may be directed to areas such as:

- personal motivations and broader aspirations
- reasons for seeking a mentor
- the kind of mentor they would prefer.

The skills, competencies and outcomes of sponsorship are different to mentoring or coaching. Accordingly, fulfilling the goals of sponsorship requires a different approach to EOIs.

Checklist for a successful EOI process

This tool is designed to support you with setting up an EOI process for sponsors and sponsees. It outlines the key tasks, milestones and considerations for running the process.

[Download the checklist for a successful EOI process](#)

Resourcing, EOI assessors and matching panel

Sponsorship program cohort size and required resourcing



First consider the minimum number of participants for your sponsorship program:

- For a medium to large organisation this could be around 15-20 sponsors and 15-20 sponsees
- For a smaller agency 10-15 sponsors and 10-15 sponsees may be sufficient.

The decision on what size cohort to run is best determined by:

- the size of organisation
- the number of support staff available for the program
- your organisational context, including upcoming restructures or resourcing changes.

Successfully building an assessment team



The EOI assessment team should include:

- Staff with experience assessing applications, including experience with recruitment and leadership program applications
- At least 1 CALD senior assessor with lived experience of bias and barriers

- Staff across different grades and levels, including those with and without management responsibility

Successfully building a matching panel



The matching panel should comprise staff at a leadership level and include:

- Staff with experience in assessing applications in the leadership development context
- At least 1 CALD senior staff member with lived experience of bias and barriers
- Staff with varying levels of leadership experience, including those who have moved from middle management to an executive role recently
- Staff with lived experience of having a sponsor, ally, advocate or mentor who has supported their career journey, or who have experience as a sponsor, ally or mentor.

Example: Resourcing for Elevate & Advocate



In running Elevate & Advocate, for a cohort of 30 sponsors and 30 sponsees, the OPSC's resourcing was as follows:

1-2 program administrators

- They are responsible for administering the EOI process
- These staff need an understanding of delivering programs for CALD staff

1 senior expert on CALD senior leadership

- They need an understanding of coaching, mentoring and sponsorship from a diversity and inclusion perspective
- Preferably they have lived-experience as a CALD person

3 – 4 assessors

- They are responsible for reviewing and assessing all EOIs
- See below for further information on building an assessment panel

3 – 4 matching panel staff

- This includes the senior expert, along with 2-3 other senior internal staff
- The panel is responsible for selecting the final cohort

See below for further information on building a matching panel.

Timeline and process for EOIs, assessment and matching

This timeline is designed to support you with scheduling key milestones in preparation for the launch of your sponsorship program.

[View this information in a table](#)

1 month prior to EOI release

Tasks

- Select and confirm matching panel staff
- Schedule the briefing session
- Schedule the panel session for matching

Process notes and additional information

- See Successfully building a matching panel for advice on how to put together a suitable matching panel

EOIs open

Tasks

- Program administrators initially process submissions
- Program administrators contact and advise any ineligible applicants
- Program administrators share de-identified EOIs with assessors

Process notes and additional information

- Assign an EOI number to each submission
- Filter out incomplete submissions
- Filter out ineligible submissions, e.g., sponsees who do not identify as CALD or who are unavailable for key program dates

EOI assessments

Tasks

- EOI assessors assess each submission
- EOI assessors develop a shortlist of suitable sponsors and sponsees

Process notes and additional information

- Ensure assessors have consistent criteria for assessing

- For 30 program sponsees, it is suggested that there be at least 40 sponsees on the shortlist. Shortlisting also ensures a pool to draw on in case of impacts to program participation or poor matches

Preliminary matching

Tasks

- Lead assessor and program administrators complete provisional matching
- Compile preliminary matches for approval and any matches which require further panel discussion

Process notes and additional information

- Preliminary matches should be selected from the shortlist
- Cultural safety needs are paramount in matching, but also consider aspects of identity alongside work areas and career goals

Matching panel brief

Tasks

- Provide the shortlist to the matching panel, including any provisional matches

Process notes and additional information

- This should be at least one week prior to the matching panel session

Matching panel session

Tasks

- Program administrators present each proposed match to the panel for approval
- Senior expert facilitates the session, including bias correction of other panellists
- Matching panel discusses any concerns, insights, or comments of each match
- By the end of the session all program matches must be approved

Process notes and additional information

- The matching panel can be hosted online or in person
- The main objective for the match is whether the sponsor can drive career mobility or tangible career support for the sponsor during the duration of the program, in a culturally and psychologically safe manner

Program champion and/or agency head approval

Tasks

- Program administrators re-identify sponsor and sponsee matches
- Program administrators provide these matches to the program champion and/or agency head for final approval

Process notes and additional information

- Once the final matches are approved, refer to the communications plan for sharing this information
- Contact successful sponsees and sponsors first, providing sponsees a right of refusal in case of unknown conflicts or other issues