

INFORMATION FOR MENTEES

THE PURPOSE OF MENTORING

Mentoring helps people to learn and develop. Mentoring therefore has the potential to make a valuable contribution to staff in terms of their personal and professional development and to the overall development of the organisation. It ties in closely with the emphasis we place on personal and professional development, and it promotes knowledge sharing across the organisation.

Benefits for the Mentee can include:

- Increased confidence/self-esteem
- Increased sense of value within the organisation
- Help and support
- Safe learning environment (can be open about vulnerabilities)
- Increased understanding of the organisation
- Focus on specific skills (i.e. coaching from the mentor)
- Ideas about career opportunities
- Training in new skills (financial, staff management, committee membership etc)

The benefits are not all one-way. Mentors too can gain a sense of value within the organisation as well as satisfaction from passing on their skills and wisdom; also greater understanding of the organisation and its issues and problems, as well as improving one-to-one communication skills, coaching skills and management skills.

ATTRIBUTES OF A MENTEE

Being involved in a mentoring relationship requires effort. Anyone who wishes to improve their skills through the use of a mentor should ensure that they are:

Willing to learn

Successful mentees must have a willingness to learn from their chosen mentors. A mentoring relationship is interactive and requires the mentee to be committed to setting goals and working toward specific learning objectives.

Willing to self-evaluate

Mentees need to be willing to assess their skills objectively and evaluate potential opportunities for self-development. They should feel motivated to identify specific goals whilst remaining realistic about current realities. This self-evaluation is necessary for the mentee in order to be able to discuss and agree SMART goals with their mentor. Before the mentoring relationship begins, it is useful for the mentee to have considered what their aspirations are for the mentoring relationship. The more consideration that is given to this question in advance of the first meeting, the more productive this initial meeting is likely to be. Some areas for consideration may include:

- Understand what is important to you and what you value in your professional and personal life.
- Recognize areas which you perform well and identify some examples to demonstrate these.
- Identify specific areas in which you would like to grow and develop.

- Set tentative one-to-five year professional/career goals.
- Describe accurately the reality of work situations in which you are involved.

Aware of own preferred learning style

Different people learn new ideas and concepts differently: for example, some people learn through verbalization and others through reflection. Since mentoring is a tool for learning, it is important for mentees to understand what their preferred learning style is and identify how they will use this knowledge to aid and support the mentoring process. Take a free online quiz to quickly determine your preferred learning style <http://resources.eln.io/honey-mumford-learner-types-1986-questionnaire-online/>

Time-sensitive

Building a mentoring relationship takes time. Good mentees recognize that a mentor's time is valuable and ensure that they adequately prepare for each face-to-face meeting. It is recommended that mentees be prepared to commit a minimum of one hour per month, in addition to the time for meetings, for mentoring activities, including review and preparation. Finding time to do the many things required as a professional is often difficult. Time management is an acquired skill that comes with experience, but can be augmented with appropriate time-management training. If mentees have difficulty meeting the time commitments of the mentoring relationship, they could ask the mentor for advice on this.

Committed to building the mentoring relationship

Mentees must be committed to achieving the objectives of a mentoring relationship. Persistence is an important part of the process. The more the mentor is able to trust in the mentee's ability and willingness, the more committed they will be to the partnership. This trust develops over time as the mentor observes appropriate behaviors on the part of the mentee. To become trustworthy, mentees must:

- Keep confidences shared with their mentor
- Spend quality time together
- Listen well
- Refrain from criticizing their mentor to others
- Respect boundaries set by their mentor
- Admit errors and take responsibility to correct them
- When they disagree with their mentor, they should tactfully explain why. It is not productive to be a "yes-person"

Willing to apply active listening skills

Active listening is an important skill for both mentors and mentees. When mentees listen well, they demonstrate to their mentors that they are interested and understand what they are saying. Mentees can demonstrate their active listening by:

- Showing interest with encouraging responses such as "hmmm..." and "yes..." or by paraphrasing certain comments in their questions to show they understand
- Using nonverbal signs of understanding, such as nodding their heads, leaning forward, and smiling
- Avoiding the interruption of others when they are talking
- Showing interest and remembering comments made in previous meetings
- Summarizing key elements of conversations as the meeting draws to a close

Go to <https://www.training.cam.ac.uk/cppd/event/1873350> for skills training in Active Listening

Respectful of the need to maintain confidentiality

In order to build an effective and trusting mentoring relationship the details and particulars discussed with your mentor should be kept in confidence. However, any situation which you believe may impact the organization from employee relations, compliance, legal or regulatory perspective would override this expectation. Either party should report any such issue to the appropriate individuals in the correct way. In mentoring situations in which email must be used because of distance, it is very important to ensure the email messages go only to the mentor. Mentees should consider setting up a password on their mentoring email and should be sure that mentoring letters cannot be opened in error by someone else in their office.

It is important that the mentee protects the privacy of the mentor and mask any information that may identify him/her.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MENTEE

The role of the mentee is that of a learner and apprentice. As mentioned before, the scope of learning isn't confined to technical competence but also areas on career, general management, and other important skills and knowledge for success within the organization.

Mentee responsibilities include:

- Driving the relationship; scheduling time to meet with the mentor and maintaining an up to date record of their plan and progress
- Working proactively with the mentor to assess their areas of strength, development areas, career goals and personal objectives and expectations of the mentoring relationship
- Taking ownership for their own development and committing to the exchange of information including; ideas, development themes, actions, feedback
- Maintaining personal momentum and professional enthusiasm by seeking opportunities, following through on actions discussed with the mentor, gathering feedback and sharing personal learning
- Respecting the mentor's experience, ideas, guidance and time
- Interested in skills building and goal-setting, and a keen willingness to step out of their own comfort zone
- Committed to the process and willing to learn from all formal development activities (e.g. training, networking events)

ROLE OF A MENTOR

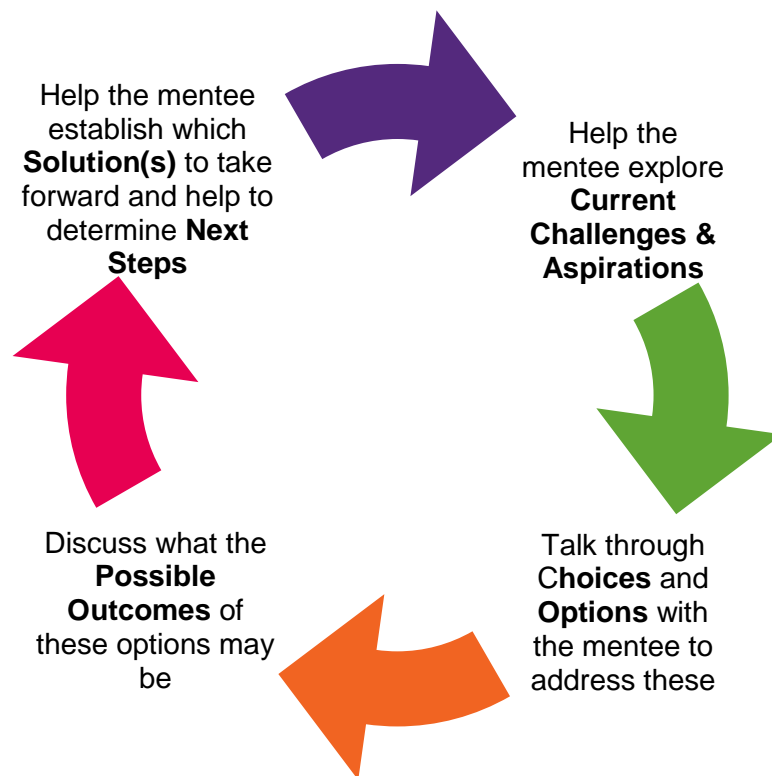
Mentoring is separate from the line management chain.

A mentor will not supplant the mentee's line manager or act as an instructor, tutor or personal friend. Instead they will provide an additional supportive resource and complement the professional relationships mentees have already developed within the organisation.

Mentors are volunteers. They can be either a peer or a more experienced and/or senior colleague within the organisation, offering knowledge based on their own experience of the organisation and the work they are involved in. They may offer insights into particular skills and areas of knowledge e.g. project management, change processes or leadership. They may offer support to the mentee in their professional and career development choices and aspirations.

A successful mentor is characterised by their sound judgment, ethical commitment and discretion.

Mentors can...



The role of the mentor can encompass any or all of the following depending on the specific needs of the mentee:

- act as a sounding board
- listen and challenge
- question
- provide professional and personal support
- encourage independent thinking
- keep to boundaries and principles – mentoring is not therapy
- encourage their mentee to come up with their own solutions to problems
- coach the mentee to make the most of their talents
- build the mentees self confidence
- act as a role model
- be someone to talk to outside the line management structure
- offer insights into the culture and values of the organisation
- share their experience and expertise
- give feedback
- provide advice where possible and relevant

PLANNING THE FIRST MEETING

As well as agreeing the practical arrangements and identifying objectives for the mentoring relationship, typically, first meetings allow two people to get to know a little bit about each other, attach a face to a name and gain a bit of familiarity and knowledge of each other. To do so, mentees need to think about what setting would feel comfortable for both of them. In addition, it may be useful for both of them to cover basic information such as personal background, business function, career history, etc. Mentees may also plan some conversation starters – knowing that these will be tools if they need them.

Useful questions include:

- Where might I meet with my mentor where we both would feel comfortable? List a few ideas.
- What are some things I could tell my mentor about myself that would help us get to know each other a little bit? What about me and my life story might be interesting and relevant to this mentor?
- What are some questions I could ask my mentor to get to know him/her a little bit without prying? (Write down some possible open-ended questions.)
- What do I hope to get out of the mentoring relationship – what are my objectives?
- What skills/knowledge/abilities do I hope to gain?
- What do I need from my mentor to help me to achieve these objectives (*see next section for more information on objective setting*)?
- What anxieties do I have about the mentoring relationship?
- How can I find out what my mentor hopes to get out of the relationship – what questions might I ask?

SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Before mentees can have that very important first meeting with the mentor, they need to be able to tell the mentor what they want from him/her. If mentees know what their goals and objectives are, they will be able to explain what they want and need from a mentoring relationship. These objectives guide the direction of the mentoring experience, therefore, not setting objectives or setting the wrong objectives will jeopardize the benefits that can be realized from effective mentoring relationships.

Objectives need to be distinguished from an expression of general direction. Objectives must be clear and achievable, and must provide a definition of success upfront. Clear and achievable objectives typically have five key characteristics:

Specific Clear, unambiguous and focused on specific deliverables

Measurable Include milestones and markers to measure progress over time

Attainable Realistic but requiring a stretch (not impossible)

Relevant Aligned with the overarching company and business goals

Time-based Include a time frame for achieving each specific objective

Examples SMART mentee objectives:

“Identify a direction of travel for my career and undertake activities to progress that.”

“Expand my network, to include both internal and external contacts, by the end of our mentoring relationship.”

“Develop effective negotiation skills that I can demonstrate effectively to my mentor, by the end of our mentoring relationship.”

MENTEE’S OBJECTIVE SETTING AND ACTION PLANNER

The template below is designed to help you document the activities you agree to undertake as part of your mentoring experience and track your progress through to its conclusion.

During your initial discussions with your mentor you should have identified a series of objectives that you wish to accomplish.

Track your progress against each objective and activity using the chart below. Come prepared with this to each meeting and be willing to review your progress with your mentor and discuss new and/or different activities to help you achieve your objectives:

Objectives:	Learning Activities: (e.g., assignments, projects)	Resources: (e.g., Readings, training)	People to Meet:	Success Indicators/ Time frames:
Objective #1:				
Objective #2:				
Objective #3:				

THE MENTORING CONTRACT

A mentoring contract is a simple, yet critical, means of stating the purpose and boundaries of a mentoring partnership. As part of your initial discussion regarding how you are going to work together you should agree the duration and frequency of meetings, ground rules, roles and responsibilities, mutual expectations, review points, duration of the mentoring relationship itself and the importance of confidentiality. Please use the below as a template for agreeing and documenting the output of this discussion:

Sample Mentoring Contract

Mutual expectations (i.e. what do we each expect from the other?):
When shall we review progress? How long will the mentoring relationship last?
How often will we meet? When and where will we meet, and for how long?
What will be the ground rules for our discussions (e.g. confidentiality, openness etc.)



Who will be responsible in driving the mentoring relationship?

What contributions will each party be committed to bring to the relationship?

If problems arise how will they be resolved?

Mentor Signature:

Date :

ADDRESSING DIFFICULTIES

Although a lot of consideration is given to identifying a suitable match, if after a series of meetings either the mentor/mentee, the mentee feels that the relationship is not going to be as beneficial as either party would wish, please take the following steps:

1. Discuss it

Talk to the mentor/mentee and discuss why you feel the relationship may not be working. In some circumstances, simply by discussing these concerns, the situation can be easily resolved. Also, discuss and agree a way in which mentee and mentor can work better together going forward.

2. Contact PPD

If these concerns are still not resolved, agree with your mentor/mentee that you will contact a representative from PPD. PPD will then work with mentor and mentee to agree if any action can be taken to enhance the relationship.

4. Bring the relationship to a close

If all efforts to restore the relationship do not work or it is deemed inappropriate to continue the relationship, PPD will work with the mentee and mentor to bring the relationship to a close and seek appropriate alternative mentoring opportunities.