

Hints & Tips for Mentoring Relationships

Expectations and Role Definitions

For Mentors

Mentors are additional support for someone committed to development. The mentor is not expected to have all the answers, but help the mentee arrive at their own answers. Their role includes;

- Respecting confidentiality
- Building rapport
- Clarifying goals and objectives, and monitoring progress
- Listening, learning, summarising and challenging
- Asking open questions and giving constructive feedback
- Being open and honest, whilst avoiding judgement
- Recognising strengths and weaknesses
- Encouraging innovative thinking and approach
- Helping with networking and gaining access to further support
- Sharing experiences and advising on organisational structure and culture
- Celebrating development and change
- Encouraging healthy reflection on mistakes made to encourage learning

For Mentees

Their role includes;

- Demonstrating commitment and being active in their own development
- Leading the mentoring agreement and goal setting
- Prioritising goals and discussing options openly
- Being brave and honest, including informing of issues or obstacles to success
- Listening and being open to challenge
- Reflecting on own strengths and weaknesses and development needs
- Making decisions about current goals and future career

The mentee should have the realistic expectations of their mentor. They're not supposed to have all the answers, and are also learning and developing. It's also important to use other ways to develop outside of the mentoring relationship; external networking at business events or further learning (including eLearning).

Meeting Virtually

It may not always be possible to meet face-to-face, so meeting virtually can be considered. This includes; Skype meetings, conference calls, or emails for progress updates or raising queries.

Advantages of meeting virtually

- No barrier in geography
- Easier to 'check in' and maintain the relationship

Disadvantages of meeting virtually

- More difficult to build rapport and trust. Less of a mentoring bond created
- Harder to read emotions and understand intent
- Can feel less personal and more transactional
- Can slow down process as less momentum and engagement

Recommendations for meeting virtually

- Give more time during the meetings to talk about how each person feels
- Pay attention to privacy and book yourself a meeting room to talk openly
- Build face-to-face time into the relationship
- Pay attention to your phone and online meeting skills, including pace and listening

Managing a Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring is based on a relationship, and the relationship will develop and mature as goals change and are met. It is important for both parties to review and reflect on the development and manage it accordingly. The following signs usually indicate a health working relationship;

- Making time to meet regularly
- High level of trust to allow support and challenge
- Making progress against objectives
- Feeling satisfied

Sometimes the relationship doesn't 'feel right' and it's best to be honest and raise concerns. It is both parties' responsibility to review the relationship and reflect on changes needed and when it may be time to end the relationship. A natural ending for a mentoring relationship is when goals have been achieved, but if the relationship is not supporting the development needs or the personality fit is not right, then be honest and end the relationship.

When reflecting on the end of a mentoring relationship, both parties can take learning forward to future relationships. We recommend the final mentoring meeting should be face-to-face. The following can be discussed;

- Review remaining goals/objectives.
- Reflect and celebrate what has been learned and achieved
- Discuss the future; development plans, career goals