

Introduction to mentoring for mentors and mentees

What Is Mentoring?

Mentoring is focused on professional development. Usually, the mentor has experience and achievements in an area the mentee is interested in; they act as a role model and advisor to the mentee.

During their relationship, the mentor helps the mentee to develop their skills, overcome barriers, and develop their careers. The relationship requires trust, confidentiality and mutual respect.

Coaching vs Mentoring

A coach facilitates progression by helping their coachee to explore their options and how to take action. They are unlikely to have relevant professional experience and will not offer specific advice. A coaching relationship also tends to be shorter, focused on a specific goal or outcome, whereas a mentoring relationship often looks at many aspects of development and growth.

However, mentors are likely to have **coaching conversations** with their mentees, where they offer themselves as a 'sounding board' for ideas rather than offering instruction.

Advantages of Mentoring

For Mentors:

- Improve your **communication skills** through active listening and constructive questioning
- Build **leadership skills** through motivating and developing others
- Learn **new perspectives** from colleagues with different backgrounds and experiences
- Review your own **career development** to date, and better understand where you might go next
- Achieve the **satisfaction** of seeing your mentee succeed and grow!

For Mentees:

- Gain a valuable source of **ideas, perspective and experience** – someone who knows what might work in your situation
- Have a 'critical friend' who can offer **feedback** on your ideas
- Identify ways to develop your **knowledge, skills and experience**
- Build your **network** of existing contacts and resources
- **Advance your career** – and pass this on to another 'generation' of mentees

Tips for mentees and mentors

How can mentees find mentors?

You might already have a 'role model' figure in mind to approach. If not, a good place to start is by looking at your current network of contacts (and *their* networks) for people whose careers are in a position that you would like to reach yourself. You might also want to specifically ask around to find out if anyone in your professional or academic circle is looking for a mentee.

Your first meeting with a mentor is to establish **chemistry**. A mentoring relationship can be long-term, and you'll need someone you can get along with and trust. You might choose to leave out altogether that you're approaching them as a potential mentor, and instead discuss their career development to date.

If, by the end of the meeting, you think that they're going to be a good mentor for you? Then you can start to talk about 'formalising' that relationship.

How can mentors find mentees?

Generally, it's better that mentees identify mentors – as a potential mentor, it's hard for you to know who might consider you a role model. The best thing for you is to make sure that people know you're looking for a mentee, and that you're prepared to make the commitments required of the mentoring relationship. This will make you a good person to approach.

Guidance and mentoring models

As you prepare to start mentoring, it's a good idea to start exploring the skills you'll need as a mentor. Subjects you should look into include **active listening**, **open questioning**, and **conversation models** such as GROW or the '5Cs of Mentoring' (see Further Research).

Contracting

Once a mentor and mentee have decided on a mentoring relationship, they create a contract together, defining elements like:

- The mentees' overall objectives
- How often you're going to meet, where, and for how long
- How you can contact each other between meetings
- How you're going to record progress
- How, and how often, you're going to review the mentoring relationship and make sure it's still serving its original purpose.

Keep in mind that these elements can change as your mentoring relationship develops; remember to record those changes, so that your contract remains up-to-date and useful to you both. An example is included as an appendix to this document.

Your first 6 meetings

These are some suggestions as to themes you might choose to explore when you first start meeting as mentor and mentee:

1. Building rapport, defining expectations, contracting
2. Mentee's motivations for career development
3. Discussing mentor's career
4. Confidence building and skill development
5. Networking and contacts
6. Career progression for the mentee, and barriers to it

Further Research

This is a brief introduction. The guides below will help you to get the most out of mentoring; you are also encouraged to do your own reading and research.

The Organisational & Professional Development team also runs an annual accredited course in Coaching & Mentoring; find out when this is available via their [newsletter](#).

Further Reading Links

- [CIPD Coaching & Mentoring Factsheet](#)
- [The 5Cs mentoring model](#)
- [Active listening](#)

Appendix: Mentoring Contract Example

You may use this contract as shown below, or adapt it to your own needs.

Mentor's name	
Mentee's name	
Date of first meeting	DD / MM / YY
Length of meetings	
Frequency of meetings (e.g. every 2 weeks, every month)	
Review date (To revisit contract)	DD / MM / YY
Mentee's initial goals for mentoring (e.g. career aspirations, development needs)	

In signing this agreement, both parties agree:

- To be honest and committed to the contracted activity
- To keep appointments and ensure rescheduling if cancellation is unavoidable
- To maintain confidentiality regarding discussions
- To have a 'no fault' ending if the relationship does not suit either party
- To be open to receiving and giving feedback
- That it is the mentor's responsibility to facilitate and inform, and the mentee's responsibility to decide and act.

Mentee signature: _____

Date: _____

Mentor signature: _____

Date: _____