

REACH

H

Mentoring Programme

A guide for mentors and mentees



HM Government

Saxton Bampfylde

GUIDE FOR MENTORS

Mentoring relationships flourish when clear ground rules have been established.

At the beginning of any mentoring relationship, it's important that all parties are clear about what to expect and how the mentoring will work. Taking time to consider the ground rules, boundaries and expectations with your mentee will help to avoid any misunderstandings and frustrations further down the line and gives the mentoring arrangement the best chance of success.

Things to consider

before you meet a prospective mentee

Your first meeting is vital because it will set the tone of the relationship. Ask yourself:

- What is my purpose for mentoring this person?
- What do I need to know about my mentee?
- What does my mentee need to know about me?
- Are there any barriers to me being an effective mentor? If so, what can I do to overcome them?

What to agree

in your first meeting with a mentee (contracting)

- When, where and how often you will meet and for how long
- How to communicate between meetings
- The criteria of success – setting goals and making an action plan
- How you will know whether the mentoring arrangement is working, and how to manage things if either party wishes to end the mentoring relationship prematurely
- How you will record and monitor progress
- What to do if one or more parties feel that it is not working
- Boundaries for your conversations:
 - what you will and will not discuss
 - any potential conflicts of interest, and how will these be managed
 - how to ensure mentor and mentee confidentiality – it works both ways and is essential for building trust and rapport

Key principles

in building a trusted relationship

Mutual trust and respect between you and your mentee should be key. Your mentee's trust in you will depend on your ability to show that your care, on your competence and integrity.

- Get to know your mentee. Talk about their role, organisation and their life outside it. Try to understand what they think and why. Value their viewpoint. Be aware of your and their body language
- Do what you say you are going to do. Agree what you are aiming to achieve through your mentoring sessions. Be reliable and always do what you say you are going to do.
- Communicate openly and honestly. Discuss issues as soon as they arise. Ask for and give feedback.
- Don't be afraid to challenge. Your open, honest relationship will allow you to challenge your mentee constructively to explore a wider viewpoint. Challenge inconsistencies and assumptions in a sensitive and appropriate way to open up possibilities – not shut them down.

Useful tools and techniques

for building the relationship between you and your mentee:

Set **SMART** goals and agree an action plan

The most effective mentoring conversation needs to focus on setting and achieving goals, exploring issues and making informed decisions. The process begins by getting the mentee to reflect on their current situation and experience and then move towards an informed decision on how best to progress. SMART goals will form the core of your mentoring journey and should be regularly reviewed to ensure progress is made:



A **SWOT** Analysis

A useful technique for understanding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

STRENGTHS

What are your mentee's strengths? e.g. technical knowledge, management, personal characteristics

What advantage do they have over other candidates?

WEAKNESSES

What are your mentee's weaknesses? What barriers are they coming up against?

What could they improve?

OPPORTUNITIES

What good opportunities can your mentee spot?

What interesting trends is your mentee aware of? e.g. changes in technology, markets, policy new roles on the horizon etc

THREATS

What obstacles does your mentee face?

What are other job applicants doing?

Are any of your mentee's weaknesses threatening their career?

Useful starter questions

The G-STAR model

can provide a useful structure to mentoring conversations, particularly if the mentee is facing a specific issue or has a specific goal they want to achieve:

G What are your mentee's **GOALS**?

S What **SITUATION** is your mentee facing?

T What is their **THINKING** at this time?

A What **ACTIONS** are they considering?

R What **RESULTS** do they expect?

- Offering support, not direction
- Listen without judgement
- Give your mentee space to outline the whole issue. However tempted you are to offer a solution, hold back. Jumping in too early might mean that you miss some vital information. Often just the act of articulating an issue out loud is enough to provide clarity for the mentee.
- Ask questions
- Try to draw ideas out of your mentee using insightful questions rather than immediately offering solutions. Use brainstorming techniques to get mentees to generate a range of options that they can select from.
- Explore a range of perspectives
- Get your mentee to imagine themselves from the perspective of others. Ask them, what would a close friend/colleague/manager say to you?

- "What will give you the most value from today's session?"
- "What do you want to focus on today?"
- "What is keeping you awake at night?"
- "What is the present situation in detail?"
- "What is happening now that is working well?"
- "What is happening now that tells you that you have a problem?"
- "What do you have control over?"
- "What strengths and resources do you bring to this?"
- "Where do you want to be a year from now? How will you measure your success?"
- "If you had to find a way, what would it be?"
- "What do you not know about this situation/project? How could you find out?"
- "If you improved one thing you do, what change would make the biggest improvement to your business's performance?"
- "What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?"
- "What do you enjoy about what you do?"
- "What might you be overlooking?"
- "Who else has done this before?"
- "What have you learned from this?"
- "What can you do differently next time?"
- "What did you do well?"
- "What will you do next?"

GUIDE FOR MENTEES

Mentoring is one of a range of options for supporting your career and professional development. It is important to have realistic expectations of what your mentor can and can't support you with. You may need to seek additional/ alternative mechanisms for your professional development if you require support or information that mentoring cannot provide.

Mentoring will not provide:

Direction or management

Mentoring is distinct from management in that you, as the mentee, direct the relationship. Your mentor should not direct you towards any particular course of action, the only agenda the mentor has is to support you in your development – wherever that may lead.

Specialist advice or training

Your mentor may be able to assist you in finding out where to access specialist information or support, but should not be expected to provide advice on areas beyond their expertise.

All the answers

Your mentor's role is to support you in developing your own ideas and solutions to overcome challenges and progress towards your goals. The best solutions to your challenges will come from within you. Your mentor will help you find them by listening to you, asking you questions, exploring a range of perspectives and, where appropriate, sharing their own experiences.

To give your mentoring arrangement the best chance of success, before you meet your mentor, it is worth spending some time considering your reasons for seeking mentoring and any particular goals or requirements that you have.

- Be clear of your reasons for seeking mentoring. Identify some development goals that you would like to work on with your mentor. Consider how you will use your mentoring sessions to support you in reaching your goals.
- Have a clear idea of the type of support you require from your mentor (e.g. sounding board, providing feedback, challenging your limiting assumptions, providing alternative perspectives...).

- Be clear and specific about your mentoring requirements to assist in the mentor matching process.
- In your first mentoring meeting have an open discussion about your hopes and expectations of mentoring. Agree practicalities such as meeting times, duration of relationship, contact between meetings etc.
- Be open and honest with your mentor, they can only help you based on the information you choose to disclose. Also provide honest and constructive feedback to your mentor about how the mentoring sessions are working for you.
- Keep to your commitments, follow through with agreed actions and be proactive in your development, both during and between mentoring meetings.

The following questions might be useful to consider when preparing to be mentored:

- What is my purpose for seeking mentoring? What am I hoping to get from the REACH programme?
- What do I need to know about my mentor?
- What does my mentor need to know about me?
- What type of support do I need from my mentor? Are there any particular agreements I need to seek from them (e.g. level of challenge, confidentiality agreements, meeting arrangements etc)?
- Are there any barriers to me getting the most from mentoring? If so, what can I do to overcome these?
- How will I know if the mentoring arrangement is working? What is a successful outcome?

Mentors will respect and understand the boundaries of confidentiality. Everything discussed between the mentee and mentor will be treated as confidential and will not be shared with another party. The only exceptions to this will be where the mentee has given their consent for information discussed to be shared or there is a safeguarding concern.

For more information please see www.saxbam.com/reach

The mentee's role is to:

- 1** Own and take responsibility for content. The purpose of mentoring is to work on your professional development. The mentor's role is not to solve your problems for you or provide quick fixes.
- 2** Be open to developing your self-awareness and to making changes.
- 3** Be open to what the mentor has to say and their advice; this does not mean you have to agree with it. It does mean you should receive it, reflect upon it and decide later whether you agree and whether to act on it.
- 4** Reflect between sessions on what has been discussed and make sure you follow through on any action points

Signs that a mentoring relationship isn't working

Hopefully you will find yourself in a productive mentoring relationship that is rewarding for both mentee and mentor. That said, occasionally mentoring arrangements encounter problems despite everyone's best efforts.

Things to look out for:

- mentee/mentor cancels appointments, fails to turn up or regularly rearranges last minute
- mentee/mentor consistently fails to make progress on actions identified in meetings
- mentee/mentor appears distracted in sessions or cuts sessions short