

## Contracting Conversation

The contracting conversation is an important part of mentoring. It is a conversation between the mentor and mentee that takes place **before** the mentoring begins. The purpose of contracting is to ensure a shared understanding of:

- The purpose of the mentoring.
- How the mentoring will work in practice.
- The roles and responsibilities of both parties.

Contracting involves reaching an explicit agreement that provides structure, guidance and alignment for both parties. This is important because a lack of shared understanding could lead to assumptions or misunderstandings later on in the mentoring relationship.

This template can be used to help structure a contracting conversation:

Confidentiality	The mentor assures the mentee that the content of their conversations is confidential. This is important in building trust. A mentor should only disclose the contents of a mentoring conversation with the explicit agreement of the mentee or if they believe that withholding information will harm the mentee, another person or put the University at risk. If a mentor believes they need to disclose the contents of a mentoring conversation they should make the mentee aware that they will be doing so.
Role and responsibilities of mentor	To help the mentee to learn and change, identify their strengths and development areas, act as a sounding board and to provide advice and guidance where appropriate, to be non-judgmental, to give their time to the mentoring.
Role and responsibilities of mentee	To actively participate in the mentoring, to commit to mentoring meetings, to do any preparation or follow-up work, to respect the mentor's time outside of the mentoring meetings.
Boundaries	To agree what both parties are comfortable to talk about (e.g. if the conversation should stray into personal issues). To agree the amount of contact and support in between mentoring meetings and how this may take place, e.g. phone calls, emails.
Conflict of interest	To have an open and honest conversation should any conflict of interest arising from the mentoring relationship be identified.
Postponement or cancellation arrangements	Agreement on how much notice both parties should provide if they need to cancel or postpone a mentoring meeting.
Duration of relationship	For example, 12 months.
Review arrangements	How and when learning and progress will be reviewed.
Desired outcomes	For both parties to understand what the mentee wants the mentoring to help them achieve.