

# Leadership and Management Development

## Mentor's Handbook for Leaders and Managers at Warwick



This Handbook is for leaders and managers who mentor other leaders and managers at Warwick. It aims to provide an easy-to-use reference guide that will support you at each stage of a mentoring relationship. It assumes a level of knowledge gained through completing the two mentoring training modules via Connectr, who we have partnered with to provide a platform to help manage our mentoring relationships. This training must be completed prior to commencing a mentoring relationship.

If you want to join the mentoring scheme for leaders and managers, as a mentor or mentee, or both, please fill in the registration form, which can be found at [Become a Mentee \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://warwick.ac.uk) / [Become a Mentor \(warwick.ac.uk\)](https://warwick.ac.uk), to start the process.

If you have any queries, please contact the Leadership and Management Development (LMD) team at [LMD@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:LMD@warwick.ac.uk)

This Handbook is divided into two sections:

**Section 1: Mentoring at Warwick**

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Provides information about best practice, ethics, and responsibilities.

**Section 2: Your role as a mentor**

(Page 8)

Takes you through your role at each stage of the mentoring relationship.



## **Section 1: Mentoring at Warwick**

“Mentoring is a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.”  
(EMCC, 2024)

Mentoring at Warwick provides leaders and managers with the opportunity to receive focused developmental support outside of their normal line management relationship. Mentors through this scheme are other leaders and managers who use their knowledge, expertise and experience to help enhance the performance and/or development of another leader or manager.

Being a mentor does not mean you are a coach; the University has a different provision for coaching. Find out more about coaching [here](#).

Leaders and managers may seek mentoring to help with any aspect of their development. Mentoring is often used to support:

- Talent development.
- Specific management and leadership skill development.
- Career development.
- New to the University/HE sector.
- New to the role.
- Specialist / subject matter support.

### **Best practice in mentoring**

- All mentors need to complete the two learning modules available through the Connectr platform. This platform is used to manage leadership and management mentoring at Warwick and access is only available once leaders and managers have completed this [form](#) to request to be a mentor.
- Warwick is a member of the [European Mentoring and Coaching Council](#) and ascribes to its Global Code of Ethics.
- Mentors require the ability to be non-directive, to listen actively, to be non-judgmental, to ask powerful questions, to commit their time, to share their experience and wisdom, and to have a genuine interest in the mentee’s learning and development.
- Mentors should consider how many mentees they can support at any one time.
- Either party has the right to end the mentoring relationship without blame or fault or detailed explanation.

- The initial meeting between mentor and mentee will be a 'no commitment' chemistry conversation, the purpose of which is for both parties to assess their compatibility and to establish a rapport.
- Mentors will hold a contracting conversation with the mentee before the mentoring begins. The purpose of this is to ensure a shared understanding.
- Mentoring meetings may take place in-person, online or on the phone. Mentoring meetings can take place in a meeting room or a public place, e.g. a café, as long as both parties are in agreement.

### **Mentor's Responsibilities:**

- To comply with the Code of Ethics (see p4).
- To act with integrity regarding meetings with mentees, including arriving on time and being prepared.
- To ask for, receive and reflect on feedback from their mentee.
- To adhere to the University's values and guiding principles
- To give honest feedback to the mentee in a constructive and respectful way.

### **Mentees Responsibilities:**

- To commit to actively engaging in the mentoring process, accepting personal responsibility for the outcomes.
- Act with integrity regarding meetings with mentors, including arriving on time and being prepared.
- To undertake any actions identified during a mentoring meeting by the agreed deadline.
- To be honest with the mentor about how the relationship is working.
- To provide feedback on your mentoring experience to the mentor, if requested.
- To respect the mentor's time, to not impose beyond what is reasonable and to not ask for excessive support from the mentor in between mentoring meetings.
- To respect the position of third parties (e.g. their line manager).
- To adhere to the University's values and guiding principles.
- To arrange a suitable location for the mentoring meetings if they are taking place in person.

### **Code of Ethics**

The University recognises its responsibility in ensuring that all mentoring provided and received by staff is ethical. The University is a member of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and ascribes to its Global Code of Ethics.

Mentors are expected to adhere to this Code of Ethics, which has been adapted from the EMCC Global Code of Ethics:

- Mentoring is a confidential activity in which both parties have a duty of care towards each other. The mentor will only disclose information when explicitly agreed with the mentee or

when they believe there is a serious danger to the mentee, other people or the University, if the information is withheld.

- Mentors may keep notes about their mentoring meetings. All notes/records should be stored and disposed of in a manner that ensures confidentiality, security and privacy and complies with [GDPR and the University's Data Protection Policy](#).
- Participation of both parties is voluntary. Either party may break off the relationship if they feel it is not working. Both parties share responsibility for the smooth winding down and proper ending of the relationship. See further details of this later in this document.
- Both parties will be honest with each other about how the relationship is working. The mentor will not impose their own agenda on the mentee, nor will they intrude into areas that the mentee wishes to keep off-limits.
- Mentors will be aware of their own level of competence and ensure they operate within the limits of their competence. Mentors should be aware of, and should signpost the mentee to, other support services within the University, if appropriate.
- Mentors are responsible for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate, and culturally- sensitive boundaries with mentees.
- Mentors should be aware of the potential for unconscious bias and seek to ensure they take a respectful and inclusive approach.
- Mentors will be aware of any potential conflicts of interest arising through the mentoring relationship and address them quickly to ensure that there is no detriment to the mentee, themselves or to the University. If the conflict cannot be managed, the mentor will end the mentoring relationship.
- Both parties will respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring they do not impose beyond what is reasonable. Both parties will also respect the position of third parties (for example, the mentee's line manager).
- Mentors will raise any ethical dilemmas arising from their mentoring with the LMD team.
- Mentors will evaluate the quality of their mentoring through feedback from mentees. Mentors understand that their responsibilities continue beyond the end of the mentoring relationship in terms of confidentiality, secure storage and disposal of records, conflict of interest, and avoidance of any exploitation of the former mentoring relationship.

## **GDPR**

Confidentiality is fundamental to a mentoring relationship. Mentors may find it helpful to keep a record of the mentee's goals, topics discussed and actions. If you take notes or keep a record of any aspect of your mentoring conversations, you should store them securely and in accordance with GDPR and the [University's data protection policy](#)

### **Conflicts of interest**

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a mentor or mentee is in a position to gain unfair advantage / benefit from the mentoring relationship, or where there is a clash between their job role and their mentor or mentee role. An example is where a mentor is also a member of an interview panel, for a job for which the mentee is a candidate.

Consider the impact of a mentoring relationship on your other working practices, processes and relationships. If either party perceives an actual or potential conflict of interest, they should have an open and honest conversation about it. If a conflict of interest exists, you may need to set boundaries around what you can or cannot discuss. Don't take the mentoring forward if you feel that entering into a mentoring arrangement will compromise you or your mentee in any way.

### **Wellbeing and Signposting**

As noted above, Mentors will be aware of their own level of competence and ensure they operate within the limits of their competence. Mentors should be aware of, and should signpost the mentee to, other support services within the University, if appropriate.

Support for staff can be found on the 'Your health and wellbeing' section on [Insite](#) and also here:

#### [Staff Wellbeing Hub](#)

[Psychological and emotional wellbeing at the University of Warwick](#)

### **Using the Connectr System**

- Once you have completed the registration form to become a mentor for other leaders and managers the LMD team will send your details to Connectr to provide you with access to the system.
- Once you have access, the LMD team will contact you to advise that you are able to create an account on Connectr and you can start building your profile.
- When you open the Connectr site, you will see a link at the bottom left to the 'privacy policy' which contains both Connectr's privacy policy and Warwick's privacy policy in one document – please read both before registering and then click 'register' to sign up if you wish to proceed.
- When you sign up to the Connectr platform, you will be automatically subscribed to the mailing lists providing general reminders, new learning content alerts, and surveys pertaining to your experience. You can opt-out of each of these mailing lists in Connectr Settings, accessed via your profile in the top right corner of the screen.
- To support the management of the process and evaluation of the mentoring scheme, Connectr will share data with the LMD team.

- Once you have drafted your profile bio, this will go through Connectr's approval process. If Connectr feel that your profile might need further information or adaptations, they will contact you.
- You will then have access to two training modules ('Getting started with Mentoring on Connectr for Mentors' and 'Deeper dive resources for Mentors') within Connectr. These modules will need to be completed before your profile is approved.
- You can organise meetings via Connectr which will appear in your calendar – or you can arrange these meetings outside the Connectr system on Teams or via university email.
- Although there is a file upload facility on Connectr we would suggest that, should you wish to share documents with your mentee, you do so on the University system rather than via Connectr. If you do choose to use the file upload system on Connectr, please ensure that you do not share anything that is confidential, commercially sensitive or that contains other individuals' personal data. If you are unsure, please get in touch with the legal team at [infocompliance@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:infocompliance@warwick.ac.uk).
- There are certain emails from which you cannot unsubscribe. These will come from Connectr at Warwick, [no-reply@notifications.connectr.co.uk](mailto:no-reply@notifications.connectr.co.uk) and include account confirmation, notification of a new message on the platform and notification of a mentee requesting to meet.



## **Section 2: Your role as a mentor**

This section explains the key stages during the mentoring relationship. The Connectr system will display a number of mentors that may be a good match for each mentee. The mentee will then contact the mentor via Connectr to request a meeting. The first meeting should be a chemistry conversation.

### **Chemistry conversation**

A chemistry conversation is the first contact between the potential mentor and mentee. It is an informal, friendly discussion which enables both parties to get to know each other, build rapport and to assess whether they are a good match and can work together.

A chemistry conversation is a 'no- commitment' conversation. This means that either party can decide not to go ahead with the mentoring relationship, without blame. It simply means that they feel they are not the right match. This chemistry conversation can take place online, in a meeting room or, if both parties are comfortable, in a public place such as a café.

You should also explain that if the mentee decides to go ahead with you as their mentor, you will have a 'contracting conversation' with them before the mentoring begins and explain the purpose of this conversation.

During the chemistry conversation you should use your mentoring skills of active, empathic listening, skilled questioning, being non-directive and non-judgemental. This is a chance for your potential mentee to experience your mentoring style, which will help them to decide whether you are the right mentor for them.

### **Topics you might want to discuss during the chemistry conversation:**

- Find out about the mentee – ask them open questions about their career, role, interests.
- Find out what the mentee is looking for in a mentor.
- Why you have volunteered to be a mentor and what you hope to gain from it.
- Previous mentoring experience as a mentor or mentee and what you gained from this.
- Your career and professional experience.
- A little about you as a person, family, interests etc. – within the boundaries that you are comfortable to share.

### **Contracting conversation**

The contracting conversation is an important and essential part of mentoring. It is a conversation between mentor and mentee which is led by the mentor. It takes place before the mentoring begins or at the beginning of the first mentoring meeting. The purpose of the contracting conversation is to ensure a shared understanding of:

- What mentoring is and isn't.
- The boundaries in which the mentoring relationship will operate.



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

The contracting conversation should not be framed as a 'chat'. It involves reaching an explicit agreement that provides structure, guidance and alignment for both the mentor and mentee. A lack of shared understanding could lead to assumptions or misunderstandings later on in the mentoring relationship.

#### **Topics to cover during a contracting conversation:**

- Confidentiality.
- Role and responsibilities of both mentor and mentee.
- Boundaries.
- Conflict of interest.
- Duration of mentoring meetings.
- Frequency of meetings.
- Postponement or cancellation arrangements.
- Duration of mentoring relationship.
- Record keeping.
- Review arrangements.
- Mentee's goals.
- Mentor's goals (if appropriate).
- Feedback.
- Completion/ending the mentoring relationship.

#### **Goal setting**

Setting goals is an important part of mentoring. Goal setting is also powerful. It helps people to:

- Create a sense of purpose.
- Have a clear focus.
- Overcome procrastination.
- Foster better time management.
- Hold themselves accountable.
- Measure their progress.

The mentee should determine their own goals and what they want to achieve through the mentoring, although the mentor may help the mentee to shape and define the goals. Goals will be discussed during the contracting conversation, so that both parties know what they are working towards and what success looks like. As far as possible encourage the mentee to develop goals which are SMART.

The mentee may have already given some thought to their goals and detailed this on the Connectr system. A mentee can draft their goals on the Connectr system and share these with their mentor. Or they may just talk it through during meetings.

## **SMART Goals**

- Specific – is the goal clear?
- Measurable – how will you know when it has been achieved? Encourage the mentee to use an active verb or action word to help make the goal measurable; for example: complete, publish, plan, produce, develop, design, install, observe, identify, investigate, propose.
- Achievable – does the mentee have the resources and time to meet the goal? Is it realistic?
- Relevant – does the goal align with the mentee’s development needs and/or career?
- Time-based – does the goal have a deadline or series of milestones?

If goals are SMART, it will be easier to review progress made towards achieving them.

## **Mentoring meetings**

The first meeting - Having had a chemistry conversation and a contracting conversation, you should have been able to get to know your mentee and to build a rapport with them. You will have established goals with your mentee during the mentoring agreement conversation.

At the first mentoring meeting it is recommended that you review the goals with your mentee, just to check they are still relevant. You can then move into your first mentoring conversation, using the skills discussed in the training modules.

## **Asking for feedback**

It is good practice to ask your mentee for feedback regularly throughout the mentoring relationship. This will help you to adapt your approach to each mentee, and also to improve your mentoring skills. You are encouraged to build this into each mentoring conversation, and to reflect on any feedback you receive

## **Reviewing progress**

Reviewing the mentee’s progress towards the goals that they identified is important;

- It is motivational for both parties.
- It provides an opportunity to acknowledge achievements and progress.
- It is helpful in evaluating the overall impact and value of your mentoring.

## **When a mentoring relationship doesn’t work out**

Hopefully you will find yourself in a productive mentoring relationship that is rewarding for both parties. Occasionally mentoring arrangements don’t work out, despite everyone’s best efforts. Sometimes there is a mismatch on an interpersonal level, or miscommunication between mentor and mentee. Not every pair is a good match, and that’s okay.

### **Signs that a mentoring relationship may not be working:**

- The mentee cancels appointments, fails to turn up or regularly rearranges at short notice.
- The mentee consistently fails to make progress on actions identified in meetings.
- The mentee appears distracted in sessions.

The first step is to raise your concerns with the mentee. Next time you meet, be honest and tell the mentee that you feel something isn't working; for example, "I'm sensing that you aren't sure about our next meeting...is that right?" Avoid blame and be clear and objective, for example "I would like to offer you some thoughts on how I feel the mentoring is going. It seems that when we meet you come across as distracted and are keen to leave. Is that right?". "Is there anything I could do differently?"

Give factual examples, for example dates of meetings that have been cancelled. Ask open questions to explore this and find out possible reasons. Jointly explore whether there are things you could both do to get the relationship working more effectively.

Don't feel guilty or a failure if the mentoring arrangement isn't working out. It is better to acknowledge this as soon as possible and explore why you're feeling this rather than carrying on regardless. You might find that this process is a valuable learning opportunity in itself.

### **Ending the mentoring relationship**

Ideally the ending of a mentoring relationship is anticipated and will have been planned for by agreeing to the duration of the relationship during the contracting conversation. Arrange a date for the final meeting and remind your mentee of this in the penultimate meeting so that you can both prepare for it.

### **Tips to support the ending of a mentoring relationship:**

- Reflect on the mentoring – what have you both learned?
- Celebrate your mentee's successes – review the goals they set at the beginning of the relationship and any subsequent goals identified. Have a discussion about progress they have made towards meeting these goals and how they feel about this.
- Support the mentee to continue their learning; open up a discussion with them about how they can continue their learning and development post-mentoring.
- When thinking about possible future contact, be realistic about the extent of your contact with each other. Although you will probably continue to have some form of interaction, it should be on a more informal basis where you consider each other as equals.
- Thank and acknowledge each other's contributions.
- End on a positive - share what you have learned and enjoyed during the mentoring.
- If both parties would like to carry on with the mentoring beyond the term initially agreed, you should hold a new mentoring agreement conversation to ensure a shared understanding for the continuation of the relationship.

## **Evaluation**

As part of the process the Leadership and Management Development team will work with Connectr to review the mentoring scheme. This may involve contacting you for your input as well as reviewing data provided by Connectr.

If you have any immediate feedback you wish to provide, please do so via [imd@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:imd@warwick.ac.uk)