

MENTEE'S HANDBOOK

Helping you to get the most from your mentoring



WARWICK

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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is for colleagues who have a mentor. It aims to provide you with an easy-to-use guide that will support you at each stage of the mentoring relationship and to get the most from the mentoring experience.

MENTORING AT WARWICK

Mentoring is defined as:

A developmental relationship in which one person draws on their experience, expertise and knowledge to advise and guide a less experienced person in order to enhance their performance, discover more about themselves and develop their potential capability.

Mentoring is often used to support:

- Talent development
- Management and leadership development
- Diversity and inclusion
- Career development
- New to the University/HE sector
- New to the role
- Secondments
- Specialist/subject matter support

Mentoring enables University staff to receive focused developmental support outside of their normal line management relationship. The mentor is another member of staff who uses their knowledge, expertise and experience to help enhance the mentee's performance or development.



MENTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- To commit to actively engaging in the mentoring process, accepting personal responsibility for the outcomes.
- To 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 your 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 (for example, your 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.



THE STAGES IN MENTORING

1 Finding a mentor

Speak to your manager and discuss your reasons for wanting a mentor. Think about what you are looking for in a mentor. Your manager will help you to identify a suitable colleague. You will then need to contact the potential mentor to ascertain whether they would like to be your mentor. You may want to contact more than one potential mentor.

2 Chemistry conversation

A chemistry conversation is an informal, friendly discussion between the mentee and potential mentor 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 mentor/mentee.

You may want to have a chemistry conversation with more than one potential mentor.

3 Mentoring agreement conversation

Once you have agreed to enter into a mentoring relationship, your mentor will arrange a mentoring agreement conversation (also called 'contracting'). This is a conversation led by the mentor, which takes place before the mentoring begins. In practice it may be combined with your first mentoring meeting. The purpose of the mentoring agreement 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 mentoring agreement conversation 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.

THE STAGES IN MENTORING

4 Mentoring meetings

After the mentoring agreement conversation has taken place, mentoring meetings can begin. Meeting approximately every 6-8 weeks for an hour is recommended, but this can be flexed depending on your development needs and you and your mentor's availability. There are tips in the next section on how to make the most of your mentoring relationship.

5 Progress reviews

Progress reviews are valuable as they help both you and your mentor see and acknowledge your progress towards achieving your goals. A suggested timeframe is to review progress after every 3 mentoring meetings. Your mentor will discuss this with you during the mentoring agreement conversation.

6 Feedback

It is good practice for mentors to ask their mentees for feedback. Mentors are committed to developing their mentoring ability and therefore your honest feedback is very important.

7 Ending the mentoring relationship

During the mentoring agreement conversation, you and your mentor will discuss the anticipated duration of the mentoring. It is good practice for your mentor to review your progress and achievements during the mentoring, so you may want to think about this before your final mentoring meeting.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MENTORING

Identify your goals

Identify what you want the mentoring to help you achieve. Think about your goals and write these down as SMARTER objectives:

- Specific – is the goal clear?
- Measurable – how will you know when it has been achieved?
- Achievable – do you have the resources and time to meet the goal? Is it realistic?
- Relevant – does the goal align with your development needs and/or career?
- Time-based – does the goal have a deadline or series of milestones?
- Engaging – do you feel motivated to achieve the goal?
- Reviewed – arrange a date to review progress with your mentor

Share your goals with your mentor at the start of your mentoring relationship and discuss what you want to work on during the mentoring.

Be open and honest

Be open about your needs – tell your mentor what you need from them. Think about how much challenge you want and are comfortable with, and share this with your mentor. Be honest if you need something to change. Mentors will be open to receiving feedback.

Build rapport and trust

Be prepared to work at the mentoring relationship. The most successful relationships are based on trust, and both parties will need to work to establish trust at the beginning. Building rapport is a great start towards building trust; you can build rapport by sharing a little about yourself and finding areas of mutual interest or similarity.

Be aware of different types of support

Mentoring support can be broadly categorised as 1) providing advice and guidance, and 2) challenging your perspectives and helping you to think differently. Be prepared for both types of support. Mentors will not be able to provide all the answers and often the most effective solutions are those you come up with yourself.

Do your preparation

Come to each mentoring meeting with an idea of what you want to focus on. This might be a challenge at work or a goal you have set yourself. It may be helpful to share this with your mentor before the meeting.



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MENTORING

Ask questions

Be curious and use different types of questions to gain information, generate ideas and test your understanding.

Commit to actions

Mentors will guide you towards identifying actions that will help you to make progress. Write down any actions you identify and make sure you commit time to carry out the actions before the next mentoring meeting or within the timescale you set yourself.

Review progress and reflect

Periodically reviewing your progress through the mentoring process is helpful.

Thinking about your mentoring goals, outcomes of discussions, actions and reflections can help to bring about insights, build self-awareness, and consolidate learning. You can find links to resources for capturing meeting notes and for reviewing progress on page 9.

Leave your comfort zone

Mentoring is an opportunity to test out ideas and seek feedback in a safe environment. Your mentor can help you to remove barriers and take you out of your comfort zone; use your mentor as a sounding board. Leaving your comfort zone is often where real learning happens. Try new things, do things differently and allow yourself to make mistakes.

Be respectful

All our mentors are very supportive of the mentoring process. However, they are all busy people and the mentoring is in addition to their normal role and workload. Be respectful of their time and give them plenty of notice if you need to cancel or reschedule a mentoring meeting.

Mentoring chemistry

Inevitably some mentoring relationships don't work out. The mentoring can be ended by either party with no blame, at any point.



RESOURCES

The following resources are available on the [Leadership and Management Development Mentoring webpages](#) in the 'Mentee's Resources' box:

Record of mentoring meeting template - to keep a record of the outcomes of your mentoring conversations.

Progress review template - to track and record progress towards goals.

Contact

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