Organisational Development
& Professional Learning

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Inspire
Learn
Practice

Mentor

Leadership

Develop
Coach
Success:

Improve
Method
Mentoring

Workshop
These guidance notes have been designed to provide you as a member of staff with some basic information about mentoring – whether you are taking part as a mentor or a mentee – to ensure that your mentoring relationship is effective and successful. The notes are therefore quite extensive for use as a resource, to dip into at any stage of the mentoring process.

Those who have been both mentee and mentor often describe it as one of the most rewarding experiences they’ve ever had and it can provide a constructive and mutual learning opportunity, allowing the mutual growth of pertinent skills, recognition of excellence and building of relationships across and beyond our University community.
Definitions of Mentoring

Mentoring has become recognised worldwide as a highly effective developmental process for employees in many diverse organisations. To be most effective, mentoring needs to be a voluntary activity with the primary purpose of supporting the mentee’s learning and development. It is a relationship – rather than a management activity – that guarantees a safe and non-judgemental environment in which to learn. Some definitions are:

Mentoring is a relationship between two parties, who are not connected within a line management structure, in which one party (the mentor) guides the other (the mentee) through a period of change and towards an agreed objective, or assists them to become acquainted with a new situation. (Kay, 2012)

Mentors provide a spectrum of learning and supporting behaviours, from challenging and being a critical friend to being a role model, from helping to build networks and develop personal resourcefulness to simply being there to listen, from helping people work out what they want to achieve, and why, to planning how they will bring change about. (Clutterbuck, D, 2004)

Mentoring is a developmental process in which a more experienced person shares their knowledge with a less experienced person in a specific context through a series of conversations. Occasionally mentoring can also be a learning partnership between peers. (European Mentoring & Coaching Council, 2013)

Most mentoring partnerships operate at a senior to more junior colleague level to tap into the experience of the more senior mentor. However, as the final definition states, there are different models of mentoring that can sit alongside more traditional, hierarchical arrangements:

**Peer mentoring**
This is when a mentee selects someone at the same level in the organisation to aid communication and collaboration for effective learning. This pastoral role can involve the mentor providing a ‘fresh pair of eyes’, emotional support and a strong sense of collegiality.

**Group mentoring**
When mentees with very similar learning needs are all matched with one mentor, who will work with them all at the same time. This model is often utilised when there are not enough mentors to meet the high demand for one-to-one mentoring. Its benefits can be extremely positive, with mentees beginning to replicate the peer mentoring process and mentoring one another when their experience is greater in a particular area.

**Network mentoring**
This approach describes a mentee with more than one mentor, usually when they have diverse learning needs that are unlikely to be met by just one mentor.

**Task-specific mentoring**
Occasionally someone may require assistance with a particular task: for instance, completing a submission for HEA accreditation. This individual may wish to see an experienced person just once or twice, to help them with the process.

**Informal or off-radar mentoring**
Informal mentoring is very common and often takes place between a mentor who is only a little more experienced then the mentee but someone who shares certain personal characteristics with them. This kind of mentoring is not usually recorded or evaluated, due to its informal nature.

These guidance notes were written for and intended to support the University’s ‘formal’ mentoring schemes that are accessed via the SUMAC (University of St Andrews Mentoring and Coaching) system. As such, people interested in the mentoring approaches described above will need to find their own mentors. For further guidance, see the ‘Mentoring at Leeds’ section, which gives some guidance for those who wish to find their own mentor.
Terminology

The following terms will be used throughout these guidance notes:

- **Mentor**
  
  More experienced member of staff who is voluntarily sharing their expertise, knowledge and experience for the benefit of the mentee.

- **Mentee**
  
  An individual who is seeking support, information, advice or challenge from a more experienced colleague, who may be within or external to their faculty or service.
Benefits to the University

There are several benefits to having thriving mentoring relationships across the University:

- Enhancing the leadership skills vital for future leaders of research, teaching and other faculty and service activities
- The learning curve can be reduced by tapping into people's experience directly and helping them develop at an accelerated pace
- An increase in overall performance, as people apply their learning back in the workplace for the benefit of all
- Tangible and measurable gains if work tasks and projects are used as a development tool
- Demonstrates a commitment to training and development in a high trust, academically-led working environment
- Effective succession planning, as talent is both recognised and utilised
- An opportunity to engage with and encourage the fresh ideas of new members of staff

Our approach to mentoring

We encourage a flexible method to arranging mentoring as staff may wish to approach finding a mentor in different ways.

There are two ways to access a mentor at the University:

Finding your own mentor

You may wish to find your own mentor (indeed, you may even already have someone in mind that you believe you could work well with). If this is the case, you may find the following points important ones in helping you to identify the right person.

To be a successful match, your mentor will need to be:

- An experienced colleague, with expertise or knowledge of the topic that you wish to receive mentoring on
- Able to help you resolve a difficult situation at work
- A person that you can trust, who displays appropriate behaviours in the workplace
- Someone who will support (and maybe even challenge) you to forge new networks, ways of working or pursue an agenda that is a slightly out of your comfort zone
- A person who will encourage you to identify and take actions as a result of any learning
- Able to support you whilst encouraging actions that could involve a degree of risk
- Someone who can help you to link your learning in both a professional field and your day to day experience with your wider personal development aims

In some cases, the nature of the mentoring objectives may dictate the characteristics of the mentor, with some mentees preferring to work with a mentor from a particular ethnic background or gender: for instance, a female academic who wishes to explore how to balance progression to a senior role with caring responsibilities may well benefit more from having a senior, female, academic mentor with relevant experience. The fact that there are fewer senior female academics than men means that the 'pool' of mentors she can choose from is smaller and she may have to wait longer for her ideal mentor to be available. Conversely, the gender of a mentor might not be important to a mentee who wishes to explore their leadership skills and it is possible that their search for the right mentor will be shorter.
Having a mentor assigned to you
The University-wide Mentoring Scheme is open to all University staff, regardless of job type or grade, who would like to be matched with another staff member and aims to support the majority of people wishing to access mentoring, with a wide range of topics to choose from.

Mentees sign up – in September and October of each academic year – and are matched in the following month with a mentor from outside of their own faculty or service.

This approach enhances collaborative working, as well as providing a ‘safer’ environment in which to have honest and confidential discussions about your work.

Mentors can sign up at any time.

To sign up to the scheme, please visit Organisational Development & Professional Learning’s website.
The role of the mentor
The role of mentor can be a demanding one, as you will need to be flexible with your approach and skills in order to offer the best support for your mentee. You can expect to take on diverse roles and practice different skills and behaviours within the mentoring relationship and your mentee is likely to see you as someone who is:

An expert with a rich source of subject knowledge at your fingertips
A role model who actively promotes the development of others
An experienced professional with a mine of organisational knowledge to help negotiate the University’s culture, politics and values
A well-connected colleague who can facilitate introductions and even flag up opportunities for career development
Someone who will offer realistic and objective feedback on their ideas
An adviser who will freely give support, guidance and advice
An empathic individual who can offer reassurance and comfort when things go wrong
Able to give positive and constructive feedback to facilitate their growth in the workplace
A natural motivator who can help them to feel good about themselves and their goals
Someone to challenge their thinking and encourage new ways of working

Attributes of an effective mentor
To be able to carry out this role, you will be:

- Enthusiastic about mentoring and its benefits
- Successful in your professional role
- Able to build rapport with your mentee and reassure them that their confidentiality will be respected
- A strong communicator, possessing key interpersonal skills such as actively listening to others and offering positive and constructive feedback
- Generous in sharing your own experiences with your mentee to help them progress
- Passionate about your own and others’ learning and development
- Able to offer between 60-90 minutes every 4-8 weeks to work with your mentee

Benefits for the mentor
It is common to think of mentoring as primarily of benefit to the mentee but there are several advantages for the mentor, too. These include:

- Increased challenge and stimulation in sharing your expertise and experience
- Learning from your mentee; learning is a two-way process and it is highly likely that your mentee will give you a different perspective
- Satisfaction at the increased success of your mentee
- University recognition of your interpersonal skills
- The rare opportunity to gain insight into your mentee’s working environment, whether that be at another level within the same faculty or service or an entirely different area of the University
What can a mentor expect?
As a mentor, you will be somebody with knowledge and experience to draw upon and are likely to be mentoring somebody who is less experienced. Your role is to provide practical and objective guidance and support to help your mentee to progress; you may also need to highlight blockages that are hindering their progression and encourage them to take action to address these issues. Your insights and views could prove invaluable at times of change in life as well as career.

The exact duration and regularity of your meetings should be agreed with your mentee but, as a rough guide, you can expect to make yourself available for meetings lasting between 60-90 minutes, every 4-8 weeks, at times that suit both you and your mentee. New mentors are asked to attend a half day Mentoring Others session, which will explore the key skills of an effective mentor and highlight the University’s approach to mentoring.

To support you in your mentoring role, SDDU will provide regular networking lunches to allow you to meet with other University mentors and share good practice.

Five tips for successful mentoring – if you’re a mentor:

1. Every mentor and mentee is unique and there is no such thing as a perfect mentoring style. Trust yourself to develop your own style, monitor your effectiveness as a mentor and ask your mentee for feedback on what does and doesn’t work. Draw on your professional knowledge and ask other mentors for support. Mentoring is a learning opportunity for both partners.

2. Encourage your mentee to approach you only with questions they really can’t resolve themselves and encourage them to discuss their own thinking with you so they learn to trust their own judgement and become more confident, self-reliant and motivated to move forward. Choose when to share your expertise and when to withhold it for the benefit of the mentee.

3. Time spent getting to know one another at the beginning of the mentoring relationship is time well spent. Build in time at the start to agree your professional boundaries and the way you will work together, check each other’s expectations, agree confidentiality and define the learning objectives; you will find by the end of this conversation that you know a lot more about your mentee and will have begun to build rapport.

4. Be clear about what you can and cannot offer as a mentor and challenge the mentee if their expectations of you or their professional progress are unrealistic. Ensure that you agree exactly what kind of support you can offer your mentee so that you are both clear about the other’s expectations.

5. Being a mentor is a helping role, yet it is important to ensure that there is also a healthy balance of what you as a mentor give and gain. Being clear about what you want to get out of mentoring is paramount to monitoring the progress of your own professional development and to maintaining your motivation.
Are you ready to be a mentor?

Use this self-assessment tool to help you think about what the role means in practice.

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you have knowledge, skills and attitude that you wish others to develop?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Do you enjoy learning from others who have less experience than you do in the University?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Do you recognise the potential in individuals beyond what they see in themselves?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Do you appear patient when teaching something to another person?</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Do you have the interpersonal skills to be a mentor?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Do you encourage others by giving them praise and positive reinforcement?</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Do you give positive and constructive feedback in a way that doesn't discourage or defeat the person?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Can you willingly help someone without receiving the thanks or compliments you deserve?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Do you maintain strict confidentiality in a professional relationship?</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Could you provide between 60-90 minutes of your time every 4-8 weeks to meet in person?</td>
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If you scored ‘yes’ in all boxes:
Welcome to the mentoring role! Your experience and skills will be invaluable

If you scored ‘no’ in any boxes:
Identify what steps you need to take in order that this can be ticked. What would you need to do to change your ‘no’ to a ‘yes’? Who can help you with this?

If you scored no in more than six boxes:
Mentoring is not for you at this stage
The role of the mentee

In order to have a successful relationship with your mentor, it pays to think about both what you would like to achieve as a result of the mentoring and what you will need to contribute to the relationship in order to achieve a successful outcome.

As the mentee, you are primarily responsible for ensuring that there is a successful mentoring relationship. It is up to you to determine your priorities and seek the impartial support and guidance of an appropriate mentor.

For instance, you may wish to access mentoring in order to:

- Achieve clarity around your role or potential career path
- Build networks to boost your career
- Develop greater self-confidence
- Find a healthier work-life balance
- Achieve greater success in obtaining research funding
- Solve problems more effectively
- Manage your time better.

In order to achieve any one of these ambitious goals, your mentor will ask you to:

- Clarify your expectations about the mentoring relationship and what you would like to accomplish
- Commit to the agreed way of working together (such as sticking to the agreed time and date for meeting)
- Identify when you have successfully dealt with challenges in the past
- Reflect on times when you have been less successful in dealing with challenges
- Commit to a different way of doing something
- Undertake reflection or action in the time between meetings in order for you to make progress.

Benefits for the mentee:

There are many benefits for the mentee, including:

- Planned access to senior people (who may otherwise be outside of your work sphere) as part of your personal development
- Accelerated induction into the formal and informal culture of the University
- Help in clarifying and setting development or career goals
- Increased self-awareness following positive and constructive feedback from your mentor
- Support and challenge in formulating a clear sense of personal direction
- Learning, understanding and working with organisational politics
- Ring-fenced time with a role model to help you develop skills in a practical manner
- Having a confidential sounding board for voicing any concerns

What can a mentee expect?

If you ask for a mentor to be assigned to you, you will be paired up with someone who is judged as being able to help your development. In order for this to happen, it is important that you clearly state what your objectives are when completing the online form, as this information will be used to select a mentor who has expertise in the area you are seeking guidance on. Typically, your mentor would be in a role that is senior to yours. They may be a highly experienced mentor but it is also possible that you will be their first mentee. It is therefore important to realise that both of you will learn and develop as a result of the mentoring experience.

The exact duration and regularity of your meetings should be agreed with your mentor but, as a rough guide, you can expect to make yourself available for meetings lasting between 60-90 minutes, every 4-8 weeks, at times that suit both you and your mentor. In order for you to progress and learn, your mentor may also ask you to do work outside of both mentoring and working hours.
Five tips for successful mentoring – if you’re a mentee:

1. Mentoring is a two-way learning partnership. If you are proactive and take full responsibility for your own learning, you are likely to gain the most benefit from mentoring.

2. To get your mentoring relationship off to a good start spend quality thinking about your first meeting: what would be useful for your mentor to know about you; how you can work best with your mentor; what your key objectives, hopes and aspirations are; and what else you would like to discuss at the outset.

3. Accept that the point of mentoring is for you to learn to find your own solutions, with support and guidance from your mentor. An effective mentor does not have all the answers but expects to help you to find your own answers.

4. Respect the agreements that you and your mentor have made regarding access and frequency of contact and follow-through on action points. You are a busy professional and so is your mentor. Reserve your precious face to face meeting time with your mentor for the real issues you want to discuss and try to resolve less important problems independently first.

5. Keep a learning log so you can record and appreciate your progress. Writing down your challenges, your actions and your results will keep you motivated and appreciative of your progress. A learning log will also help you make the transition to becoming a future mentor, as your notes will be a valuable reminder of what it is like to be in the mentee’s place.
The Mentee’s Line Manager

What can a line manager expect?
Mentoring is a valuable source of support for staff and a legitimate use of work time. By encouraging those within your team to access mentoring, you are helping their professional development and enabling them to:

- Gain an understanding of the wider University community and how things operate elsewhere
- Generate possible solutions to work-related issues
- Access an impartial viewpoint
- Discuss career development
- Formulate new ideas and find the answers to challenging questions

You can encourage mentoring by:

- Communicating to your team that mentoring is a valuable development opportunity
- Encouraging your team members to consider what they might gain from mentoring
- Agreeing mentoring as part of the SRDS developmental plan
- Respect the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship and make it clear the content of the sessions remain confidential
- Encouraging the mentee to share any learning which is taking place and encourage them to carry out any actions they have agreed in the mentoring sessions
- Reminding the mentee that they have your full support in arranging mentoring sessions

If you have a member of staff who has expressed interest in receiving mentoring, it is your decision whether to support this request as part of their ongoing development; it is important to remember, however, that improving the provision for mentoring is a key University objective.

If you agree, you can expect that the mentee will be:

- Out of the office for around 90 minutes per month
- Paired up with a mentor at a senior level
- Encouraged to share their mentoring objectives with you - but the decision to do so will remain with the mentee
- Asked to undertake reflection or tasks to enhance their own learning but not affecting the overall function of their role
- Entering into confidential mentoring discussions, the content of which will not be made available to you (unless the mentee wishes to do so)
The Mentoring Relationship

It is essential, for the mentoring relationship to be successful, that both mentor and mentee work together to build a supportive and confidential learning environment which is based on mutual trust and respect.

For this to happen, it is vital that:

- Both mentor and mentee agree to keep the content of their discussion wholly confidential
- Access to sensitive information – such as who is accessing mentoring and mentoring matches – is available only to trained scheme co-ordinators
- When asked to provide statistics for reporting purposes, scheme co-ordinators only provide information on the number of mentoring relationships and mentoring hours recorded, along with broad factors such as role type (whether academic or professional and support staff) and gender of mentors and mentees
- If asked by a manager, the scheme co-ordinator should not share information on the content of the mentoring relationship, only the process and time commitments involved

The following points cover particularly important parts of the mentoring relationship.

Planning for your first meeting

Before meeting for the first time, you will need to consider the following:

YOUR OBJECTIVES

What do you want to get out of mentoring, as a mentee or mentor?

What would make it successful for you?

MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

How often can you meet?

For how long?

Where can you meet that will feel like a neutral and safe environment for both of you?

THE MENTORING CONTRACT

Look at the Mentoring Contract on page 19 and think about what you would need to put in those boxes for the mentoring to be successful for you

You are signing up to having a confidential mentoring relationship; what situations could possibly arise where you would need to forego the confidentiality? You would need to cover this with your mentor or mentee at the first meeting
What to cover at your first meeting

The first meeting will be a process of exploration: of you getting to know the other person, your respective objectives for the mentoring and how you are going to work together. It is the formalising of what you have already thought about in your preparation for your first meeting, with the other person’s perspective to consider.

One of the most vital aspects of this meeting will be establishing a set of ‘ground rules’. Whilst this sounds very formal, in practice it is essential to set out your joint expectations, agree how you will work together and how much time you are honestly willing to commit to the relationship. There is a blank Mentoring Contract on page 20, covering all the basics for contracting successfully.

GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

What has brought you both to mentoring?
What have been the highlights of your careers so far?
What common ground do you share?

YOUR JOINT OBJECTIVES

What do you both want to get out of mentoring?
What would make it successful for you?
What are the measurable outcomes that will tell you that the mentoring relationship has been successful?

MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

How long is the mentoring relationship likely to last?
How often are you going to meet?
How long is each meeting going to last, ideally?
Where can you meet that will feel like a neutral and safe environment for both of you?
Is interim contact (between meetings) appropriate? If yes, how much contact is acceptable? Would you have contact via email or telephone?
When is the date of your next meeting?

THE MENTORING CONTRACT

Share your thoughts on the Mentoring Contract: what do you both want to put in place?

For the mentoring relationship to be successful and based on trust, both of you need to sign up to strict confidentiality but this can mean different things to different people. For instance, would it be acceptable for the mentee to discuss elements of the mentoring with their line manager? What would happen to the confidentiality clause if either party revealed illegal activity or discussed harming themselves or other people? Even though these circumstances are highly unlikely and irregular, the contract is essentially there to manage expectations and it is important to cover what would happen in these events.

Discuss your boundaries: for example, the mentor may wish to specify that they can help the mentee with a range of work-related or career issues but would not feel comfortable discussing issues of a more personal nature. In cases such as these, the mentor may wish to refer the mentee to the University’s Staff Counselling and Psychological Support Service.
The Mentoring Relationship

What to cover at each meeting
Before meeting for the first time, you will need to consider the following:

REVIEWING THE MENTEE’S OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS
Discuss the mentee’s successes and challenges since the last meeting
Review progress against the objectives
What reflection or actions will the mentee carry out to make the next meeting a successful one?
Identify and discuss emerging development needs

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP
Check that the mentoring relationship is proving effective
What could you both reflect on to make the next meeting even more useful?
When are you next going to meet?

Concluding your mentoring relationship

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS
Review the progress of the mentee’s objectives from the start to the end of the mentoring
Identify next steps for the mentee as they move out of the mentoring relationship
Review the progress of the mentor’s objectives
Identify and discuss emerging development needs

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP
What has worked particularly well?
If you were to conduct the mentoring again, what would you both do differently?
What would have made the experience even better, for both mentor and mentee?

PRACTICALITIES
After the meeting, inform the scheme co-ordinator that you have concluded your mentoring relationship
Evaluating the success of the mentoring

Once the mentoring relationship has been concluded, the success of the relationship can be evaluated using:

- Subjective outcomes – such as the mentee’s career satisfaction and level of engagement at work
- Objective outcomes – such as the mentee’s career advancement, research income and grant success, salary progression and discretionary pay awards

In addition, the SUMAC system has its own evaluation mechanism built in, which can be used to gauge the success of the mentoring relationship from the mentee’s perspective. When used in conjunction with more informal feedback from mentors and line managers, these evaluation strategies can be very valuable.

Whilst the mentoring is underway, both mentor and mentee can reflect on both the relationship and process and how it is meeting the needs of both parties. An effective mentoring pair will openly discuss how they can work together more effectively. In a few cases, however, some problems can arise.

What happens if problems occur?

Mentoring relationships are not always successful and literature suggests that several key issues can have a negative impact:

- Time pressures on the mentor and/or mentee
- Unrecognised additional workload on the mentor and/or mentee
- Aims and objectives of the mentoring have not been clearly defined
- Disappointed expectations of either the mentee or mentor
- The mentee is not taking overall responsibility for their development or believes that the mentor is responsible for their (the mentee’s) progress
- The mentor is lacking interest in the mentee or their relationship
- Lack of commitment from the institution
- A simple clash of personalities

Problems can usually be ironed out with an honest and open conversation, but if this does not resolve the issue then both parties may agree to dissolve the relationship. It is essential that this is accepted as a no-blame option on either side.

In the extremely unusual event that the mentor considers that something is seriously wrong – for example, that the mentee’s immediate health, safety or wellbeing is in danger - then the mentor may need to explain to the mentee that they have a duty to report this to an appropriate person. If in doubt, seek confidential advice from Human Resources.
# The Mentoring Contract

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<th>Mentee</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Our initial learning objectives are:

We have agreed the following 'ground rules' for our mentoring:

We have agreed that the following circumstances would annul our confidentiality agreement:

The mentee is responsible for:

The mentor is responsible for:

Others who can support our mentoring are:

We will review this mentoring contract on:

At this review we will feed back on progress and discuss future learning objectives. We have agreed that either of us can dissolve the mentoring relationship at any time with no blame attached, following a mutually agreed discussion.

Signed by:

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<th>Mentee</th>
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Notes