



A Mentor and Mentee's Guide to

Mentoring

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Introduction

Have you ever wished you had someone that you could talk to about the challenges that you are facing; ideas that you want to implement or how to develop your career?

Or do you have a desire to help others to develop and grow; do you have experience and knowledge that you want to share with others?

Mentoring can support your learning and development throughout your career. It can be useful at the start of a career or when you take on new challenges and roles, and many senior leaders rely on mentors to help them think through their strategic decisions. Its benefits include improving your understanding of the working environment, skills development, increased motivation and boosting confidence.

You may wish to consider mentoring if you are:

- A newcomer to the University or Higher Education sector.
- Taking on a new role and/or responsibilities, such as management / leadership.
- A lecturer during your probation period.
- A researcher, requiring support with research management activities etc.
- Returning to work after a period of absence, e.g. sabbatical, research leave, maternity or paternity leave or sickness.
- Facing a specific challenge or change or you are in a particular minority group, e.g. women in science and engineering etc.



What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a process that supports and encourages the mentee to develop their knowledge; skills and confidence to achieve the goals that they have set for themselves.

It is a supportive, one to one relationship, where the mentor acts as a sounding board and encourages the mentee to clarify their thoughts and feelings and helps them to develop approaches to achieve their goals, within a confidential and supportive environment.

A mentor is a more experienced individual who is willing to share their knowledge and experience with someone who is less experienced, in a relationship of mutual trust.

Mentoring is about helping someone to develop over a longer period of time and addresses different issues which impact on them in their professional life and/or career development as they arise.

What it isn't – the myths

'Managers make good mentors' – line managers are not ideal candidates to act as mentors to staff reporting to them (whether or not they possess the characteristics of a good mentor). Mentees are unlikely to be fully open with their managers because they are likely to have different interests in the outcome of mentoring.

'A mentor has to be older than the mentee' – whilst younger mentors may not possess the same number of years experience as older mentors at a similar hierarchical level, there is no reason why they should not be as competent overall.

'Mentors are teachers or trainers' – mentoring is not about training someone to do the specifics of their day to day job. The purpose of mentoring is to facilitate learning in a way that mentees 'learn how to learn'.

"Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be."

Eric Parsloe,

Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring

"Having a mentor will increase your promotional potential" – having a mentor is likely to increase your performance and ability to network but there are no guarantees that a mentor will enable you to gain promotion faster.

'You only need one mentor' – different mentors can provide different learning for different purposes at different times during your career.



Roles and Responsibilities

Mentor

The mentor's role is to:

- Support the mentee in defining their own development needs and setting objectives; fostering independent learning.
- Allow the mentee to raise and talk about their issues and to listen, clarify, reflect back, challenge and give appropriate feedback.
- Help the mentee to reflect on their beliefs, feelings, thoughts and behaviours, and to view issues from multiple perspectives.
- Guide and encourage the mentee in their own analysis and to reach solutions to their problems and opportunities by asking questions.
- Enable the mentee to become an effective decision maker.
- Share stories from their experiences, both successes and failures.
- Help the mentee define precise objectives and commit to action points.
- Help monitor the mentee's progress towards their objectives.

“When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change”

Mentee

The mentee's role is to own the relationship. Whilst the mentor is interested and supportive, the mentee's development is their responsibility and they need to manage the relationship by:

- Taking the initiative and arranging the meetings.
- Managing the agenda.
- Setting objectives to work to and reviewing these regularly with the mentor.
- Taking action based on what they agreed during the mentoring discussion.
- Reviewing the action that they have taken and the results with their mentor.
- Being open to feedback.

Mentoring is...

Voluntary

Temporary

Career / Business / Life Supportive

Orientated towards Personal Growth

Mutually Beneficial

Why Mentoring? What are the benefits?

For the mentee...

- Individualised development and support.
- Improved self-confidence and motivation.
- Broadening horizons and experience.
- Raised achievements and aspirations.
- Access to experience, knowledge and a sounding board.

For the mentor...

- Satisfaction from developing others.
- Deeper and broader knowledge of their own working environment.
- Development of self knowledge and self awareness.
- Opportunity to build wider networks.
- Personal development.

For the organisation...

- Shared learning and shared good practice.
- Sustained, long-term organisational success.
- Enhanced transfer of skills.
- Cost-effective method to enhance staff .
- Development and retention of quality staff .
- Enhanced performance and contribution.

Mentoring in Practice - Key Stages



Matching

Matching is the process of selecting a mentor. Having reviewed the profiles of available mentors, the mentee would then contact a potential mentor to have an initial, informal discussion or meeting to explore the purpose of the mentoring relationship and consider whether they can work together. This does not necessarily mean that you need to be similar in your approach, in fact mentees are encouraged to work with a mentor who has a different style to themselves in order to maximise the learning.

Although the mentee ultimately would ask a mentor to work with them, the mentor also needs to consider whether they are best placed to support the mentee and whether they have the capacity to do so.

Building the Relationship and Setting Direction

After the mentee and mentor have agreed to work together, it is important to take time, in the early stages of the relationship, to get to know each other and set direction in order to mutually clarify the purpose of the mentoring relationship and expectations of each other. Building the relationship and developing trust does take time but by doing this and by agreeing a contract (see contract template on page 15) will enable the mentor and mentee to build an effective mentoring relationship.

It is important that both parties are clear of what the other expects. Different or unrealistic expectations can be the cause of the mentoring relationship failing or problems arising, so the clearer you both are at the start the better.

Progression

The following flowchart outlines a recommended process for the discussion to follow at each meeting:

Exploration



In this stage the mentee talks about what has happened since their last meeting and what they want to talk about and achieve from this discussion.

The mentor should listen carefully to the mentee, without interruption and summarise what the mentee has said to check their understanding.

This is an important stage, as it enables the mentee to reflect on what action they have taken since the previous meeting and what has happened as a result. It also allows them to set the agenda for the current meeting and to describe what they want to achieve during it.

New Understanding

One of the benefits of mentoring is that it gives the mentee access to someone outside of their management hierarchy, with whom they can build trust and discuss issues in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

In this relationship it is important that the mentor does not take ownership for the problem or take actions (such as talking to someone) on the mentee's behalf. Nor should the mentor offer advice or provide all of the answers.

In developing 'New Understanding' the mentor will:

- Listen actively and challenge assumptions.
- Ask open questions to explore the issue.
- Provide constructive feedback.
- Help the mentee to identify all options.
- Share relevant experiences.
- Provide any facts or information.
- Explain any background to a situation, that the mentee may not be aware of.
- Signpost the mentee to further information, or sources of support.

The mentor should encourage the mentee to view situations from multiple perspectives. This can sometimes be challenging and the mentee may need time to reflect.

The mentor should also help the mentee to reflect on the discussion and learning and to articulate the implications of their decisions.

Action Planning

In this stage the mentor helps the mentee to identify what actions they are going to take, as a result of the meeting.

The mentee should make a note of the actions, so that they can be reviewed at the next meeting.

Winding Up the Relationship

When the mentee has achieved the larger part of their goals and feels confident to continue 'under their own steam' is a good time to agree when the mentoring will end. Aim to end on a positive and take some time to review the benefits and developments that the mentee has achieved overall.

Moving On

When the mentoring relationship does end, it is not uncommon for it to be reformulated, typically becoming a friendship, where both parties may continue to meet on a less frequent and scheduled basis.



Becoming a Mentor

The primary requirement of a mentor is to have a desire to support and develop others to benefit themselves and the University. Be honest with yourself – is this something that you want to do and can commit to doing?

Role of the Mentor

As a mentor your role is to help your mentee to find their own solutions rather than tell them what to do, based on how you would tackle the problem or issue. You need to commit to regular meetings and encourage the mentee to drive the relationship by planning meetings dates and topics to discuss, so that the relationship is productive.

What makes a good Mentor?

A good mentor, has certain experiences and qualities, ask your self “Do I ...”

- have a strong desire to help others to grow and develop?” Ideally, you will have experience in developing others.
- have a strong understanding and experience of the context that you can offer mentoring in?” This might include:
 - An understanding of the University and how it works (formally and informally), knowing and understanding the key players.
 - Leadership and Management experience and success, e.g. experience of improving a department or leading it through a period of significant change. This may also be interpreted as leadership and

management of specific staff groups e.g. technical staff or of being in a minority group e.g. women in science and engineering etc.

- Winning research grants and managing research projects.

In addition, you also need to consider the practicalities of being a mentor. You will be the experienced one in the mentoring relationship, and there are some practical considerations required in order to optimise the return on your and the mentee’s time. Before you agree to mentor anyone, make sure that you can:

- Make yourself available and accessible to your mentee. You will contract to meet every so often and you should ensure that you can honour that commitment.
- Provide some initial structure to the mentoring relationship, particularly where the mentee is relatively inexperienced. For example, you may ask them to identify some objectives which they wish to achieve, and ask them to suggest a review and evaluation process to monitor ongoing progress.
- Follow through on any actions you pick up in your meetings, thereby demonstrating to the mentee your commitment and your professionalism: ‘do as I do’ is a good motto for the mentor.

Joining the Mentor Network

If you answered yes to most of the questions posed on the previous page, it is likely that you will make a good mentor and we would encourage you to get involved with mentoring through the Mentor Network.

The Mentor Network has been established to enable mentees to access mentors from across the University. To register to become a mentor please complete a short profile, accessed via the following link: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/mentoring/>.

Your profile will be made available to potential mentees, via the Mentor Network portal, which you will also be given access to once you have submitted your profile.

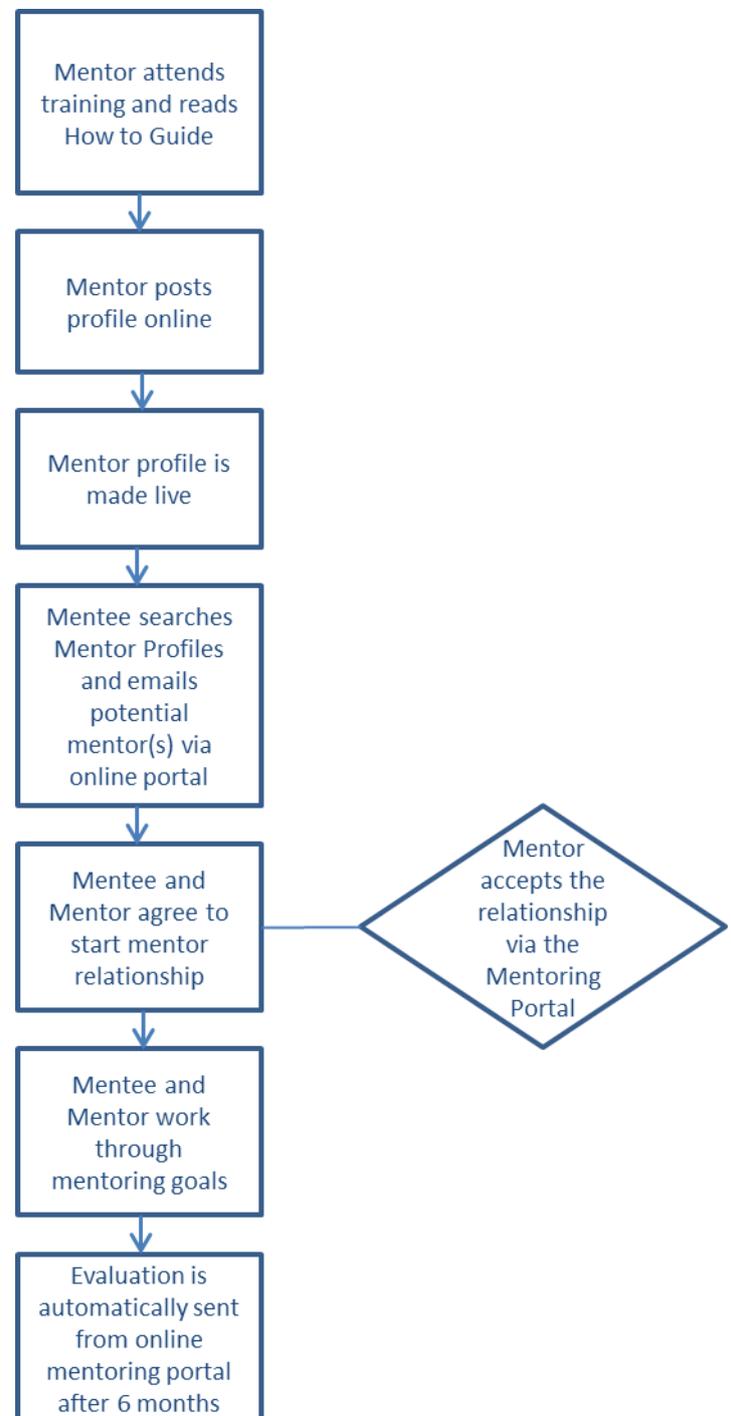
You will then be asked to attend a mentor training session, which will provide further information about the network and how it operates; your role as a mentor; your mentee's role and give you the chance to develop mentoring skills and techniques.

Potential mentees will make contact with you directly, if they think that you would be a good 'match', based on the information in your profile. They will then arrange an initial meeting or telephone call with you to discuss their mentoring goals and whether you would be able to support them.

If you both then agree to start a mentoring relationship, the Mentor will notify us that they have accepted the relationship via the Mentoring Network Portal.

You will then receive an evaluation form to complete during or after the mentoring is complete to ask you if you found it of personal and professional value.

The following diagram outlines the stages involved.



Mentor Skills Set

The most important skills you need to be a good mentor are advanced communication skills. You will need to adapt your communication style to the person you are mentoring and as the relationship develops and according to the issue you are addressing at any one time. Advanced communication skills include:

Listening

Arguably listening is the most important skill required for successful mentoring. Active listening requires the mentor to be sensitive to the mentee and concentrate on what they are saying for sustained periods of time. This is not easy!

The aim of listening is to fully engage with and understand what the mentee is saying, this may also mean 'reading between the lines' in order to discover the underlying issues. Also, asking relevant questions to help to move the mentee closer to understanding and achieving their goals.

To achieve this consider the environment that you create for the mentee; they need to feel

safe and relaxed so that they can be open about their situation. This means suspending judgement and giving them your undivided attention. You may also want to make notes of specific things that the mentee raises that you want to re-visit later in the discussion or as ideas come to mind.

By quickly noting them down you can be reassured you won't forget and you don't interrupt the mentee's 'flow'.

Never interrupt the mentee, when they have finished speaking it is often useful to summarise or paraphrase what has been said in order to check your understanding and to ask questions to clarify any points or to probe for further information.

Questioning

Asking questions to guide and explore the issue being discussed will help your mentee to explore their situation in depth, to gain a greater understanding of it, reflect and draw conclusions and actions to move forward. Examples of different types of questions are provided in the table below:

Type of question	Aim of question	Example
Reflective	Getting the mentee to say more about an issue and to explore it in more depth	"You said... can you explain in more detail why you think this?"
Hypothetical	Introducing new ideas and/or to get the mentee to consider how an action would be received by others.	"What about...." "What if...." "How do you think xxxx would react?"
Justifying	Obtaining further information on reasons, attitudes and feelings	"Can you describe what makes you think/say that?"
Probing	Discovering motivations, feelings and hidden concerns.	"What do you perceive is the cause of this?" "When did you first experience that?"
Checking	Establishing whether the mentee has understood clearly	"Are you sure about that?" "Why do you feel this way?"

Feedback

Giving feedback to your mentee is a vital skill. Giving feedback is the process of holding a mirror up to your mentee, to enable them to see how they are received by others so that they can improve and develop their skills.

Feedback should not be confused with criticism; when giving feedback always ensure that:

- The intention of the feedback is to be helpful – consider your motives.
- It includes a positive reinforcement of strengths.
- It describes behaviour – not personality.
- It concentrates on areas of behaviour which can be controlled.
- It is specific.
- It avoids generalisations.
- It describes, but does not judge.

Why Advice is Unhelpful

The usual reaction to hearing someone describe a problem is to offer advice, after all, isn't that why they're telling you? This might be the case in the minority of cases but most of the time the mentee just needs time to explore the issue and come to their own conclusion about a way forward.

When a mentor gives advice to a mentee, it can often be to avoid being drawn into the person's confusion or pain. It is also a way of saying "I know better than you, you cannot find a solution for yourself, you don't know how", therefore having a detrimental effect on the relationship. Generally the conversation then focuses on the mentee explaining why they cannot take that particular course of action, rather than focusing on what they can do.

Consequently advice tends to belittle and frustrate the person who is offered it and to increase the givers own sense of importance. Often the person has already thought of the advice but cannot follow that path because it feels wrong for one reason or another.

Always remember that you don't know the full picture: there is always something that holds people back. What holds them back may be the most important thing.

Also if they act on your advice and it all goes wrong who gets the blame?



Becoming a Mentee

As described earlier, mentoring has the capacity to support you with a variety of scenarios, i.e. career planning and development, learning and developing new skills, coping with a significant change, gaining a wider perspective of the University to name a few.

Before you embark on a new mentoring relationship it is important to take some time to consider why you need a mentor and what you hope to achieve through a mentoring relationship:

Do you need a Mentor? What do you need to learn or develop?

As a potential mentee, you need to be clear about what it is that you need to develop or learn. The clearer you are about this, the more focused you will be with whatever development activity you undertake.

It is important to discuss this with your line manager or PDR reviewer, as part of ongoing PDR discussions, and to decide together whether mentoring is the most appropriate activity to support this development need or whether some other form of development would be a better option.

Choosing a Mentor

Once you and your line manager have agreed what your development needs are and that mentoring is the best activity to achieve these needs, you then need to select an appropriate mentor. You may already have someone in mind, in which case you can approach them direct or you can access the [Online Mentor Portal](#) to view the profiles of potential mentors who are able to provide mentoring in the area that you require. The Mentor Portal can be found at:

www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/mentoring

It is a good idea to consider two or three potential mentors and arrange to have an informal meeting or telephone discussion to explore whether they can support your development needs.



This will give you both the opportunity to discuss your expectations of the mentoring relationship. You can find out more about what they can offer and learn more about them, their background and area of expertise etc. You should also discuss how a mentoring relationship might work in terms of frequency of meetings, expectations (yours and theirs) and how long you anticipate working together overall.

Once you have had an initial meeting(s) you will then be able to decide who is best placed to act as your mentor. Try to be open to working with someone who has a different style and approach to you. You might feel most comfortable working with someone who you feel is similar to you but ask yourself how much you will learn from them.

Having decided who you want to act as your mentor, contact them to ask whether they are happy to do so and also, as a matter of courtesy, contact anyone else that you met with informally to let them know your decision.

Starting the Mentoring Relationship

Having selected your mentor, it is important that you spend time at your first meeting to agree a 'contract'. This is a set of ground rules which cover how you both agree to engage in the relationship as well as what you want to achieve overall. (A recommended template is available on the next few pages). The clearer you and your mentor both are about each others' expectations the more likely the mentoring will be successful.

Your mentor will also complete a 'Mentor Relationship Form', that informs us that you are now working together and, depending on the anticipated duration of the relationship, we will periodically send you an evaluation, to check progress overall.

Also, to help your mentor to understand your situation and context, give them some background to your current position and your experience to date. This will help them to understand how they can best help you.

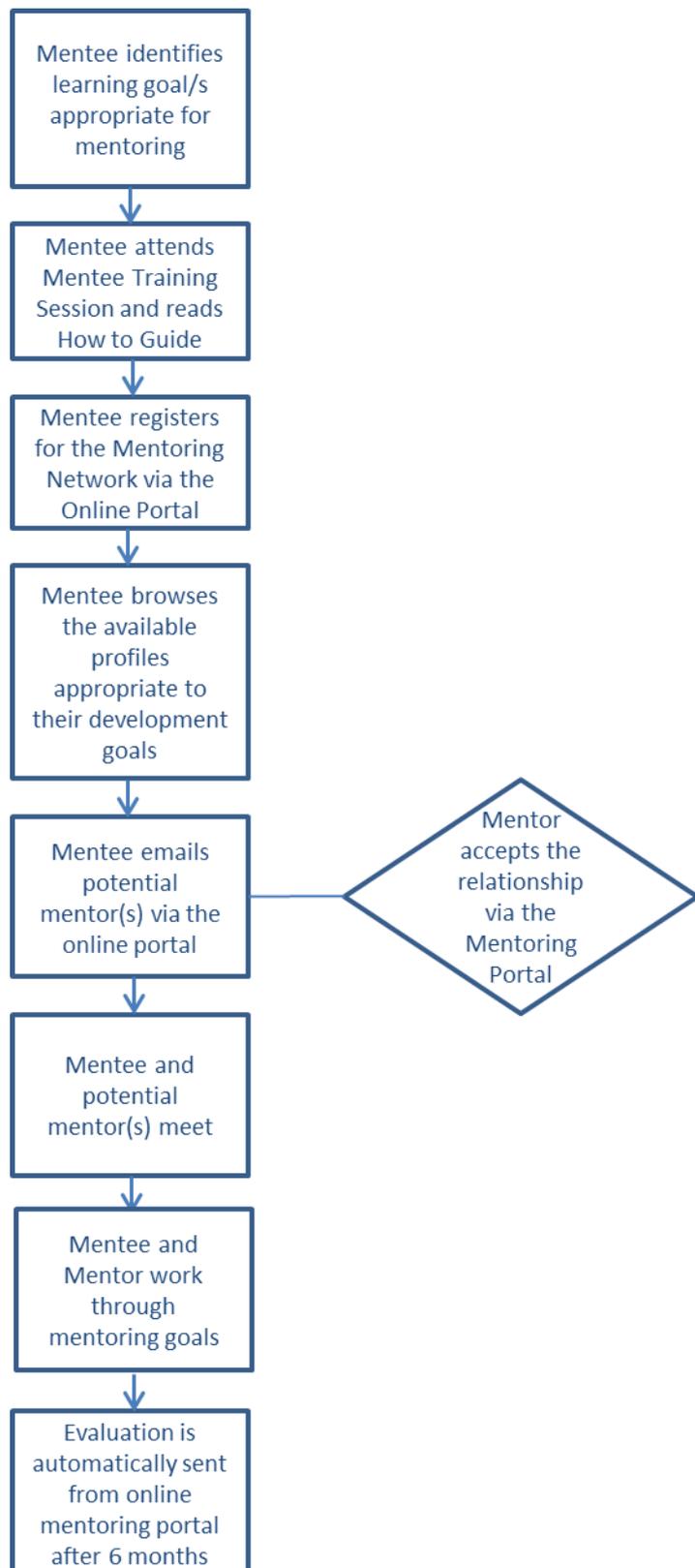
As the mentee it is your responsibility to 'own' the relationship. This means arranging regular meetings and preparing for them by thinking about what you want to discuss and achieve overall and at each meeting. Be specific rather than generic about issues that you are currently facing. The aim of the meetings is to agree action that you will then carry out rather than to have a chat or moan!

What can you expect from your Mentor?

The role of your mentor is to help you to come to your own conclusions about your issue. They should do this by asking you questions to fully understand and explore your situation,

challenging any misconceptions or assumptions you may have; sharing stories; providing feedback and helping you to identify actions to take forward. They are not there to solve the problem for you.

The following diagram outlines the stages



Mentoring Contract Template

Mentor:

Mentee:

Start Date:

Anticipated End Date: *mentoring tends to be a long term commitment (i.e. 1 year or so) both parties can review this; however it is a good idea to be clear of the expected duration at the start.*

Mentees Goals for the overall Mentoring relationship: *i.e. the high level objectives e.g. the development of strategic thinking; to develop leadership skills.*

Success Measures: *i.e. how will you know the mentoring has been successful? What will have changed/improved as a result? E.g. confidence in leading people through change and improved communication and engagement through change.*

Ground Rules in the Relationship: this might include:

- **Confidentiality** *applying to both mentor and mentee (e.g., information provided by the mentor/mentee will be treated in complete confidence and will not be discussed outside meetings unless expressly agreed by both parties).*
- A statement about **proactivity**, *i.e. that the mentee will and drive (project manage) the relationship.*
- The **scope** of the mentoring *(e.g. immediate job, career development, personal development); you may want to be explicit about what is not included.*
- **Tracking and review** of the mentoring against the goals. *This may also include reporting back to a third party (if appropriate – this may be more likely to be required where the mentoring is taking place as part of a structured programme).*
- **Ethics** – *these might be External e.g. provided by a professional body or Internal i.e. provided by the mentor which tend to be situationally specific. Consider, ‘What do my values tell me about this situation?’*

Logistics: *e.g. accessibility and contact between scheduled meetings and whether there are any boundaries to this.*

Venue:

Mentoring Contract

Mentor:

Mentee:

Start Date:

Anticipated End Date:

Mentees Goals for the overall Mentoring relationship:

Success Measures:

Ground Rules in the Relationship:

- **Confidentiality** (see Code of Conduct confidentiality statement)
- **Proactivity** the mentee will accept responsibility for managing the relationship.
-
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-
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Scope of the mentoring:

Tracking and review:

Ethics:

Logistics:

Venue:

Frequency and Duration of meetings:

Roles and Responsibilities:

Signatures of Mentor:

Date:

Signature of Mentee:

Date:

Mentoring Code of Conduct

Both mentor and mentee will abide by the following code of conduct and act in a way which respects diversity and promotes equality of opportunity.

- The mentor will respond to the needs of the mentee and not impose their own agenda.
- Mentors and mentees will respect each other's time availability, as agreed in the Mentor Contract, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is acceptable to each other.
- Either party may end the relationship at any time.
- The mentor will not pry into areas that the mentor wishes to keep private. They should help the mentee to recognise how these areas may impact on professional areas.
- Mentors and mentees will share the responsibility for the smooth winding down of the relationship, once it has achieved its purpose.
- The relationship should not be exploitive in any way.
- Mentors should never work beyond the bounds of their capability, experience and expertise. Where appropriate, mentors should seek advice or refer mentees to another point of contact.

Confidentiality Statement

The successful partnership between the mentor and mentee is based on trust, honesty and confidentiality. Both mentor and mentee agree that they will:

- Keep any information shared between themselves confidential (unless any issues are raised which may place either party in a vulnerable situation).
- Immediately pass on any information which makes either party concerned about the personal safety of the other or another individual.
- Maintain confidentiality about all personal issues discussed, both during the relationship and also once it has ended.
- Understand that if either party chooses to end the relationship, that both parties are still expected to keep shared information confidential at all times and must never discuss the details of any mentoring relationship in which they have been involved.