



MET Mentoring – Best Practice Guide

Mentoring allows the transmission of knowledge, skills and experience in a supportive and challenging environment. It is about building a relationship of trust with an individual who has a different background, knowledge base or experience than the mentee.

What's expected of a mentor?

Good mentors can identify the most appropriate and useful support for their mentee. They also aim to learn from the relationship and are open to new perspectives. A mentoring relationship should be mutually beneficial. They work best when there is a sense of equality where both parties are open to learning from one another.

As a mentor you will bring:

Experience

Draw on your own experiences to give guidance and advice. Be aware that something that has worked for you may not always be the right approach for your mentee.

Knowledge and relationships

You'll be able to put your mentee in touch with your wider network, if appropriate.

Confidentiality and friendship

You'll be able to support your mentee by acting as a confidential sounding board for them. At times they may just want an impartial opinion.

Constructive challenge

You'll sometimes be able to offer different perspectives on issues that your mentee might be struggling with, and you'll be able to offer support by pushing your mentee to think about their goals, and the best way of achieving these.

Positivity

Mentees may lack confidence at times, or even have low self-esteem. They may need you to take an objective view and help them to approach a situation from a different angle so that they can face it with renewed confidence.

Reliability

You should set the standard in the relationship by always doing what you have agreed to do.

Sometimes filling the role of a 'critical friend' may be the most important asset for your mentee. And remember that it will make it easier for them to hear your advice if they know that you're on their side.

As a mentor you are not there to:

- give academic instruction
- get the mentee their next job
- delegate any of your work to the mentee
- be the undisputed expert
- do all the talking
- encourage dependency

- provide counselling

What's expected of a mentee?

A mentee takes responsibility for getting the most out of the mentoring opportunity. They give thought to what they'd specifically like to achieve from the relationship.

As a mentee you will:

- Recognise that your mentor's time should be respected, appreciated and used carefully
- Listen to your mentor's opinion but take responsibility for making your own choices
- Offer your mentor honest feedback about the relationship and the help you are receiving from them
- Take responsibility for managing the relationship: set up and plan meetings, and follow up on action points.

How does the programme work?

It is up to mentor and mentee to agree the frequency and duration of meetings/calls, as well as how long the mentoring relationship will last.

As a guide most mentoring programmes are set up to last between 6 months to a year at the start, with some relationships continuing longer if both mentors and mentees agree. In most programmes mentors and mentees meet/have a call once a month or couple of months, for a duration of 1-2 hours.