

## The background to mentoring

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## Welcome

Thank you so much for agreeing to be one of our IAgrE mentors. We rely on the support of our volunteer members and are very grateful to everyone for the help and time you put into our Institution.

These workbooks will help you and your mentees to get the most out of your mentoring relationship and some of the do's and don'ts associated with the process.

## Will I get anything from it?

Not only will you be helping someone else develop their skills but you'll get a lot from it too. Mentoring can give you new skills and allow you the opportunity to develop your existing skills.

## Getting in touch

We are always here if you have got a question or if you want to tell us what you've been up to! Please contact Sally Wood, [projects@iagre.org](mailto:projects@iagre.org) who will be happy to help.

And last, but not least, we hope you enjoy your mentoring experience!

Best wishes

Alastair Taylor  
Chief Executive Officer, IAgrE



## What is mentoring?

The word 'mentor' comes from the Greek myth in which the legendary king Odysseus went off to fight in the Trojan Wars, entrusting the care of his son to a friend called Mentor. The word actually means "enduring" and is usually used to describe a sustained relationship between an experienced person and someone who is in the initial stages of their development.

'Mentoring' describes a relationship supporting someone through a learning or developmental journey. It's about reflecting, encouraging and supporting the individual.

Mentoring is about mutual trust and respect. It is a two way relationship - you both get the chance to learn new things. You will both further your personal development. You have probably got lots of life experiences that your mentee can learn from. It is also a great way for them to develop and improve communication and planning skills too.

As a mentor, you are the person who guides and supports your mentee. Your mentee is the person that is supported and encouraged to achieve their goals.

We recognise that for our members mentoring generally falls into two categories - Engineering Council/Society for the Environment registration specific and personal development/career progression but mentoring can also cover:

- Moving into a new industry sector
- Returning from maternity/paternity leave
- adapting to new responsibilities at work

*Every mentoring relationship is different, but each will present the opportunity for both mentor and mentee to learn from each other*

## More Information



[DOWNLOAD - 'Alternative Forms of Mentoring' by David Clutterbuck](#)

## What should a mentor do?

A mentor is normally someone who has more experience and who acts as a trusted confidante over a flexible period of time. It is a closer and more meaningful relationship than is seen in coaching. A true mentoring relationship is a mutually beneficial learning experience where the mentor shares their personal knowledge and experiences and promotes a self-discovery approach.

A mentor **should**:

- Help by sharing their own experience of both failures and successes
- Give friendly, unbiased support and guidance
- Provide honest and constructive feedback
- Act as a sounding board for thoughts and ideas
- Provide a fresh/new perspective
- Acknowledge achievements to help build confidence
- Facilitate decision making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience
- Provide ongoing support and encouragement
- Be interested in the mentee as an individual
- Offer advice but only when asked for it!

## What is mentoring *not*?

It is important to keep a clear focus, otherwise a lot of time can be wasted on activities that are not strictly part of the mentoring brief. It is not just a matter of time – it is the mentor's responsibility to perform a very specific role for the mentee and to be aware of what is and is not part of that role. The style of process (formal or informal) is very much up to the mentor and mentee. However, there are somethings that are definitely NOT part of the mentor's role:-

**Acting as a parent** –the responsibility lies with the mentee and not the mentor.

**Acting as a counsellor** – the mentor is not the person to 'fix' things

**An excuse for the mentee to moan** – you are there to listen and provide support but not to spend all your time listening to a list of woes!

**Dispensing discipline** – if the mentor notices the mentee is not pulling their weight, they should tell them so. The mentee's success or failure is not the mentor's responsibility – it is their own.

## *More Information*



[DOWNLOAD - 'Roles and Responsibilities' by David Clutterbuck](#)

## Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring is beneficial to both the mentor and mentee

### Benefits to a Mentor

- Enhances your developmental toolkit: the mentoring relationship allows time to practice and develop key mentoring and coaching skills
- Develops your learning – mentoring is a two-way learning process and mentors report that they also learn a great deal from their mentees
- Opportunity to build more relationships across the sector
- Sense of satisfaction in sharing knowledge and being a small part in someone else's success

### Benefits to a Mentee

- Opportunity to be more effective in their role
- Provides a different perspective
- Improved strengths leading to a growth in confidence
- Having a mentor can lead to a faster progression in an organisation and the development of a wider skill set
- Safe/offline and confidential space to explore ideas

### *Mentee Activity*



[ACTIVITY 1 – Ask your mentee to fill out our Activity 1 worksheet to see what benefits they wish to gain from their mentoring and also what benefits they can see for you](#)

## Boundaries

All relationships need boundaries (even though you might not have thought about them) and a mentoring relationship is no different. It is down to you both to be consistent and respectful. You should think about:

**Time** - mentoring works best when you've talked about how many hours you'll undertake and when it's best to meet. That way, you are both clear about timings.

**Getting in touch** – it is up to you both to decide how it is best to keep in touch. Let your mentee know which number or email address is easiest to get hold of you on. Don't forget to chat about which times you would both prefer to be contacted.

If your mentee is behaving inappropriately or anything happens that you are unsure about, then contact Sally Wood, [projects@iagre.org](mailto:projects@iagre.org). We are here to help.

## Confidentiality

It is really important that you respect each other's confidentiality. Remember that anything you talk about when you meet up is between the two of you so you should not talk about it to someone else. Four things to think about:

**Concerns** - if you have got any concerns contact the IAgrE Office

**Secrets** - don't promise to keep secrets. Make that clear from the beginning and remember to ask your mentee if situations arise that may involve you sharing confidential information with anyone else.

**Information** - keep any information about your mentee, like a phone number, somewhere secure. Do not share any financial details.

**You** - confidentiality works both ways. Be aware of which personal areas of your life you are prepared to share with your mentee.

### *More information*



[DOWNLOAD - 'Confidentiality in Mentoring' by David Clutterbuck](#)

## How do I know if I'm being a good mentor?

You might wonder before you start if you will be any good at it. Don't worry, remember, you don't need to be an expert to be a good mentor. You just need to be patient, open-minded, good at listening, positive and enthusiastic.

Unfortunately, there is not a test that can tell you if you are getting it right, apart from your mentee telling you that you are. You are probably getting things right if:

- Your mentee is meeting up with you.
- You have good rapport.
- You feel like your mentee has opened up about their goals and objectives.
- Your mentee has learned new things from your sessions.
- You are really listening to them.
- Your mentee appears to be developing both personal and business skills.

## Is it working?


Don't worry if meeting some of the goals seems to be going slowly. This does not mean you are not a good mentor. Things take time, often it takes a while before you see a change. Concentrate on the little things and remember they can make a big difference.

Reviewing your initial plan to see if you can agree more tangible or realistic goals.

## What happens if it is not working out?

Although every effort will be made to ensure a close match between you and your mentee, sometime this may still not work out. This may be no reflection on either party, and either party may finish the relationship.

Both parties will be contacted to confirm the situation. If required another suitable Mentor/Mentee may be arranged for both parties going forward.



*"I became a mentor because I wanted to give.  
The thing I didn't realize is how much I'd get."*