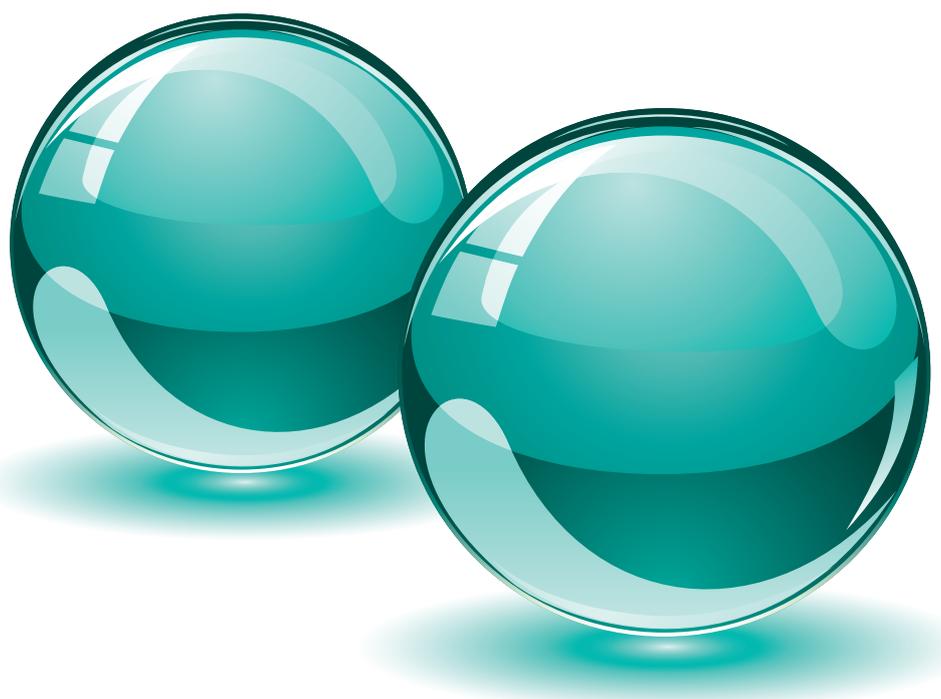
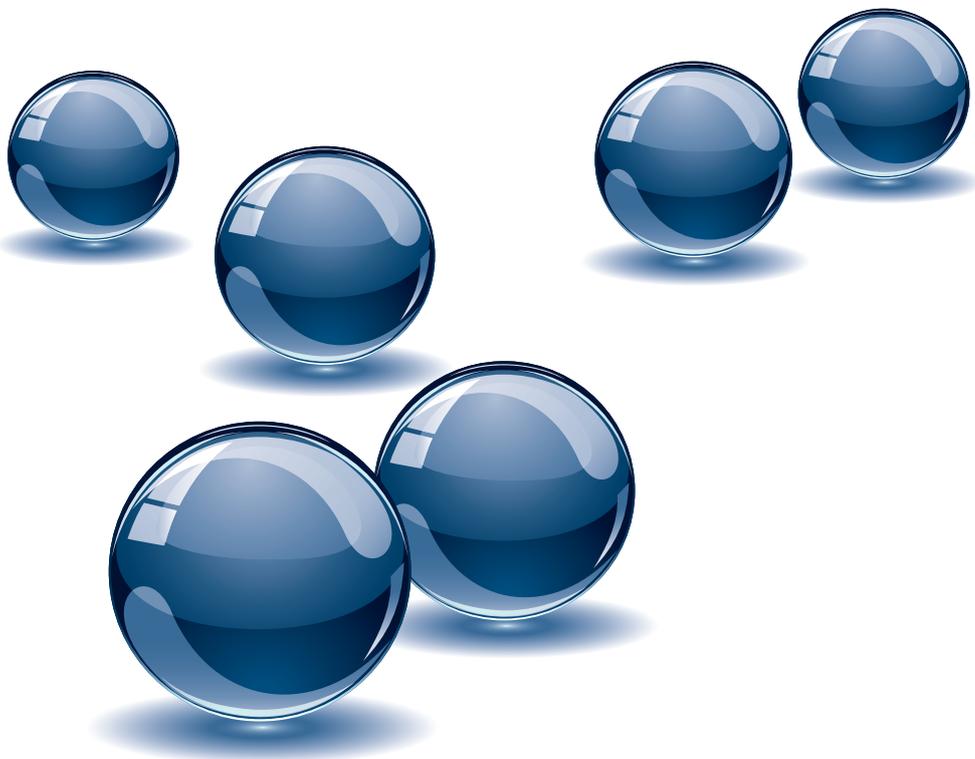


Working together

Making the most of mentoring



The Institute of Physics is a leading scientific society. We are a charitable organisation with a worldwide membership of more than 50,000, working together to advance physics education, research and application.

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This booklet was written by:

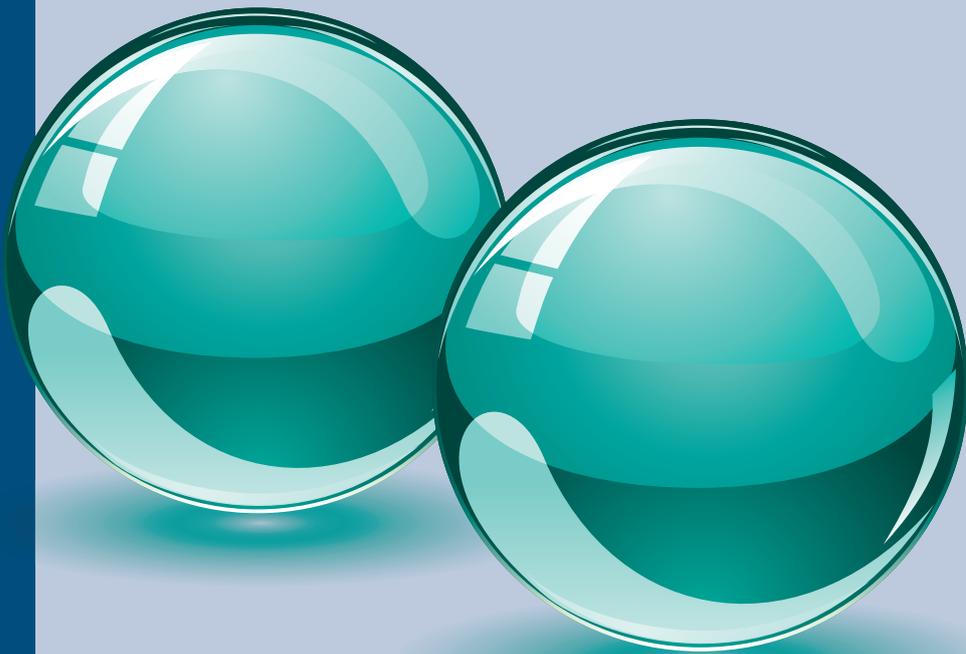
Nicola Stanton, CPhys FInstP,
from the Ministry of Defence,
on behalf of the Institute of Physics.
E-mail nicola.stanton@gmail.com

Contents

Section 1: Introduction	4
Section 2: The art of mentoring	8
2.1. What is mentoring?	9
2.2. What mentoring isn't	10
2.3. The mentoring contexts	11
2.4. Beneficiaries of mentoring	12
2.5. Does scale matter?	12
2.6. E-mentoring – to meet or not to meet?	12
Section 3: Understanding the roles	14
3.1. Understanding the mentoring role	15
3.2. Understanding the mentee role	18
Section 4: Making it happen	22
4.1. The mentoring lifecycle	23
4.2. Mentoring models and approaches	24
4.3. Developing integrative dialogue and active listening	26
Section 5: Building the relationship	30
5.1. The first meeting	31
5.2. The “steady state”	32
5.3. Moving on	32
Section 6: Taking it forward	34
6.1. FAQs	35
6.2. Troubleshooting potential issues	38
6.3. Ethical guidelines for mentors and mentees	39
6.4. What next?	39
Section 7: Case studies	40
Section 8: Summary	48
Section 9: References	50

Section 1

Introduction



Mentoring has never been as useful, or as popular, in the workplace as it is today. For many of us, the workplace has become more challenging and unpredictable as we aim to deliver more with less. For some, recent economic conditions have necessitated a change in career direction, bringing a different set of new challenges and learning curves. We want to plan our next career step, but it isn't clear which move to make.

We become focused on delivering in a complex world, and can lose sight of the bigger picture, leaving us unclear about how to make changes. We aim to achieve work-life integration, meeting the demands of our employers and our friends and families, but sometimes we just need to step outside of the environment to gain perspective and refocus. We want to develop and grow, but don't always know what skills will be valued. And in the volatile employment market of today, it isn't always a conversation you want with your boss.

This is where mentoring comes in. It offers a safe environment where the hard questions can be asked: what do I want from my career, is this the right place for me, how do I grow and develop, what do I want from the future? Through providing independent perspectives, sharing experiences, and challenging assumptions and views, mentors can provide a helping hand in the career journey.

Mentoring has been described as one of the best methods to enhance individuals' learning and development. The Institute of Physics (IOP) recognises the benefits of mentoring and is

committed to promoting and facilitating the process. IOP can support you as a mentor or a mentee, and an online mentor-matching service can be a great way to start your mentoring experience and begin to build your mentoring networks.

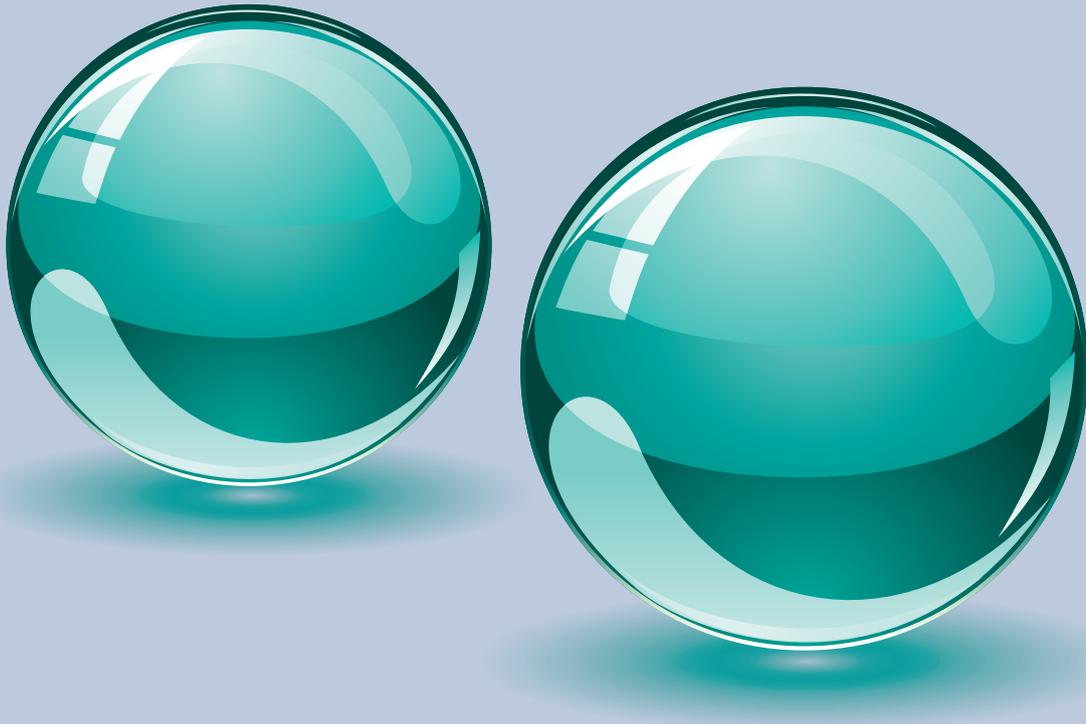
This booklet aims to help you:

- Gain an overview of mentoring and what the benefits are
- Understand the roles, consider your own approach and identify your needs
- Understand how to get the most from the mentoring process
- Identify the support that IOP can offer
- Set off on a good track

Throughout the booklet there are opportunities for personal reflection, to consider the key points and to provide an opportunity to capture your own ideas.

We hope that you will find it useful and look forward to welcoming you to IOP's mentoring scheme.

What do I want from my career, is this the right place for me, how do I grow and develop, what do I want from the future?



Section 2

The art of mentoring

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”

(Steven Spielberg)

2.1. What is mentoring?

Mentoring is not a new concept, but despite its widespread use across the employment landscape, if you ask two people what mentoring is and how it works, you may well get two similar, but subtly different, answers. This reflects a key point of mentoring – it is an evolving learning relationship driven by the needs of the mentee at that point in time.

There are many definitions of mentoring, and some of the most widely accepted are included below. These are based on years of research and it is worth considering which definition you feel most comfortable with. This will have a large influence on your style and expectations from the mentoring relationship.

“Offline help from one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.”

(Clutterbuck and Megginson, 1995)

- An equal relationship
- Confidentiality is key
- “Help” can take many forms
- The outcome is a change of behaviour

“Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee’s life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.”

(UK Home Office)

- A voluntary long-term relationship
- Confidentiality not specifically highlighted
- Outcome is successful change

“A learning relationship that helps people to take charge of their own development, to release their potential and to achieve results that they value.”

(Connor and Pokora, 2007)

- A mutually beneficial relationship
- Confidentiality not specifically highlighted
- The outcome is realising potential and becoming more self-aware

Mentoring – it is an evolving learning relationship driven by the needs of the mentee at that point in time.

So while there may be a range of different definitions of what mentoring is, there are a number of common themes that are an integral part of any mentoring arrangement. These include:

The learning partnership: Mentoring is a partnership between two people. Generally, an experienced person (the mentor) facilitates the development of another, less experienced, person (the mentee).

The “contract”: The relationship between mentor and mentee is built on trust and respect. For the best results, discussions must be open and candid, and this means two conditions must be satisfied. First, to avoid any conflicts of interest, the mentor must not be in the line-management structure. Second, everything discussed must be treated in the strictest confidence.

Roles: Mentoring is a voluntary process requiring preparation and dedication; both mentors and mentees must be self-directing. The mentor is there to help the mentee identify and analyse issues, and support the mentee in finding ways forward. The mentee is responsible for setting their goals, and for being proactive in making realistic evaluations and in leading their own development. The mentor will spend a lot of time asking probing questions, listening to the mentee and assisting the mentee in seeing things from different perspectives and with different insights. Mentees will gain more from the process, becoming more self-confident, when they are encouraged to find their own solutions and lead their own development.

Focus: Mentoring is about the personal and professional development of the mentee, and is a long-term view based on the goals the mentee establishes with the mentor. Knowledge acquisition and reflective practice is key to success.

The new approach: Mentoring has developed in recent years, from the traditional view of the experienced, senior staff imparting their knowledge to the younger, junior employees, to a much more balanced relationship where both parties are equal learning partners. This paradigm shift has allowed mentoring to evolve, opening up peer mentoring, team mentoring and distance mentoring as developmental possibilities.

The mentoring lifecycle: Over what period mentoring takes place is set by the mentor and mentee, and is determined by the goals set and how the relationship develops; while early career mentoring is often focused, lasting as long as induction or development programmes, or until professional memberships are achieved, it is not uncommon for

mentoring to extend beyond these shorter terms and last several years. However long the relationship is maintained, there are essentially four phases to the lifecycle as described by Zachary (2000) (although other models consider a five-stage model), with the length of each phase determined by the relationship and the organisational culture.

- Preparing – self-preparation and relationship preparation, with training and a mentoring process framework or structure to support getting off on the right foot.
- Negotiating – developing well defined learning goals, understanding the boundaries of the relationship and establishing a mentoring agreement are key in this phase.
- Enabling – where most of the activity takes place; this is generally the longest phase of the process and is where the learning and development happens. It is also where the relationship may evolve, leading to redefined boundaries and goals.
- Closing – with development goals achieved, the relationship is redefined and learning turns into application and integration. Sharing lessons learned ensures that both parties benefit from the experience.

The mentoring lifecycle is not rigid and linear – as relationships develop and evolve, and personal circumstances change, it may be necessary to revisit earlier phases. A variety of tools and models to support the mentoring lifecycle are described later in the booklet.

2.2. What mentoring isn't

Mentoring isn't coaching. Or consulting. Or counselling. Mentoring is about supporting, challenging and guiding the mentee, sharing experience and lessons learned to help mentees find their own solutions. It isn't about providing solutions or fixing specific problems, although shared experience should help highlight options and possibilities. However, as the mentoring relationship develops, it is likely that issues or questions will be raised requiring skills outside of the mentoring toolkit. It is worth considering some of these scenarios and how best to deal with them now.

Mentoring vs consulting

As a mentor, your role is to ask the right questions, whereas consultants are expected to provide the right answers. Mentoring requires a balance between offering advice and suggestions, and providing challenge to the mentees thought processes. It is important to remember that the goal of mentoring is development to build self-reliance,

and giving solutions can lead to a counter-productive dependence on the mentor. As a mentor, resisting the “quick-fixes” can sometimes be difficult, but it is in the best interests of the mentee to take ownership of the challenges that they face, learning from their experiences and becoming more confident and independent in the process.

Mentoring vs counselling

Counselling focuses on addressing emotional and psychological issues from the past that are impacting the present, whereas mentoring is focused on using the information from the present to affect the future path. Counselling is a specialist activity, and it is important to understand the boundaries between counselling and mentoring, and when counselling would be a more appropriate approach for the mentee.

Although the skills of counselling – active listening, mirroring and summarising – are also relevant to mentoring, it is essential that, as a mentor, you are aware of your limitations. While some aspects of personal life may enter into mentoring discussions, such as interpersonal relationships at work or work–life balance, it is important to recognise when issues would be better dealt with by professionals. In these situations, encouragement to seek professional help is called for, and enables the mentoring relationship to focus on issues that you are equipped to deal with.

Mentoring vs coaching

While many of the skills needed for mentoring and coaching are common, there are clear differences in the focus and approach, and it is worth highlighting the major distinctions. Coaching is centred on specific skill development in the short term and is led by the coach. Mentoring, on the other hand, is a more holistic developmental process, over the long term, with the mentee steering the direction of personal growth.

Coaching is often a specific intervention, brought about to address weaknesses and improve performance in a targeted area, and can be thought of as a task-based activity. Mentoring is process-based, with self-reflection, learning and personal growth being the key attributes.

2.3. The mentoring contexts

Mentoring is becoming more common, and there are a range of environments in which it can take place. Some of these are highlighted below, but remember – no two mentoring relationships are the same, so tailor mentoring to meet your needs.

Induction programmes: A key component of most graduate-entry schemes is an established mentoring programme, typically time-limited by the duration of the scheme, or until professional membership is achieved, and often focused at “learning the ropes”, with the mentor acting as a guide to corporate or institutional culture.

Development schemes: For larger organisations, where “talent management” is more common, mentoring is often used to give mentees insight into senior leadership perspectives, with the mentoring providing guidance on developing the mentee to improve competences or acquire new skills.

Career mentoring: Established to help mentees understand their capabilities and assess options for future career paths, or make the transition to different roles or careers.

Succession planning: Mentoring based on nurturing in-house expertise, aimed at retaining and preparing employees for future roles.

Continuous professional development: Focused on developing in specific areas, for example, gaining chartered or professional certifications, with the mentor supporting the mentee in building experiences to support evidence needs. If you are interested in development to support CPhys and CEng charterships, or even later in your career when considering Fellowship of the IOP, mentoring can be invaluable in identifying areas for development. The IOP mentoring service can match you with mentors and mentees at the right stage in their careers to offer you the best support.

Developing the learning organisation: Recognised as a key strategic benefit in many businesses and institutions, mentoring is a cost-effective learning tool based around promoting knowledge sharing and improving expertise across an organisation.

No two mentoring relationships are the same, so tailor mentoring to meet your needs.

2.4. Beneficiaries of mentoring

The benefits of mentoring extend beyond just the mentor and mentee, which is part of the reason that so many employers now consider mentoring a key part of staff development, putting in place structured and well resourced programmes across their organisations to promote a commitment to learning and build a sustainable workforce. Higher motivation, improved skills, greater confidence and a better understanding of business strategies and operations all impact employee performance, and line managers, colleagues, customers and suppliers will all benefit from a well executed mentoring arrangement.

2.5. Does scale matter?

Many large employers view the opportunity to be mentored as an essential part of the employment package because of the wide range of benefits it brings across the organisation. While these bigger companies and institutions can draw on a large pool of resource to deliver structured mentoring schemes, this does not mean that there is no advantage for smaller companies developing their own arrangements. We have already highlighted that mentoring should not be undertaken within line-management chains, and this may make it difficult for some smaller enterprises to provide a mentoring environment. However, we will discuss later on the different approaches to mentoring and the range of options that are available.

As an example, mentoring is most effective when the mentor and mentee both understand not only the specialism of the mentee (the capabilities needed), but also the context in which the skills are applied (the job). But that does not mean a mentee cannot benefit from being mentored by someone in a different organisation but with similar skills and expertise, or from someone who understands the mentee's organisation, but not necessarily the specifics of the role. Professional institutions and industry groups can both be a source of mentors for those in smaller organisations, and the increase in e-mentoring opens up the possibilities even further. It really is for the mentee to work out what they want to gain from the mentoring process, and choose the right people to provide the mentoring.

2.6. E-mentoring – to meet or not to meet?

Mobile technology has revolutionised communications, both in the workplace and in our personal lives. In the same way that distance learning has been transformed by the widespread use of mobile communications, the prevalence of multichannel environments has made e-mentoring an effective option as much as the traditional face-to-face approach.

There are a wide range of applications that make e-mentoring straightforward, from simple e-mails to FaceTime, Hangout or Skype. There are some clear advantages to e-mentoring, and it is for the mentee to consider which approach will work best for them.

For some people, e-mentoring by e-mail offers additional advantages because perceived potential barriers such as gender, race and power are removed from the interaction. Scheduling difficulties are also removed, and this asynchronous nature allows for deeper reflection, with more considered responses to questions and challenges. However, there are issues with this approach. It is important to be aware of how the lack of non-verbal signals will impact the relationship-building stage. Without the visual signs, it is likely that it will take longer to build a strong relationship. Also, while some people may be uninhibited by the detachment that e-mentoring offers, being more willing to discuss difficult or sensitive issues, others may be more uncomfortable committing thoughts and ideas to e-mail. Finally, e-mail can be fraught with issues of interpretation, with people quick to infer tone. It is essential that any potential miscommunication is quickly addressed.

E-mentoring using real-time online chat (such as Gmail Chat), video conferencing or VOIP applications (FaceTime, Google Hangout, Skype) offer a more traditional mentoring approach, and allow for a better interactive approach without the constraints of location.

Evidence suggests that e-mentoring is just as effective as face-to-face mentoring and can be advantageous for some people. E-mentoring can be expected to gain in popularity in the future, as the traditional employment model evolves to provide work–life integration.

Time to reflect...

Re-assessing your thoughts

Having read the last section, your views on mentoring may have changed.

Understanding your own perspective will influence the approach that you favour and how you interact with your mentor or mentee.

Which definition came closest to your view on mentoring?

What part of that definition appealed to you?

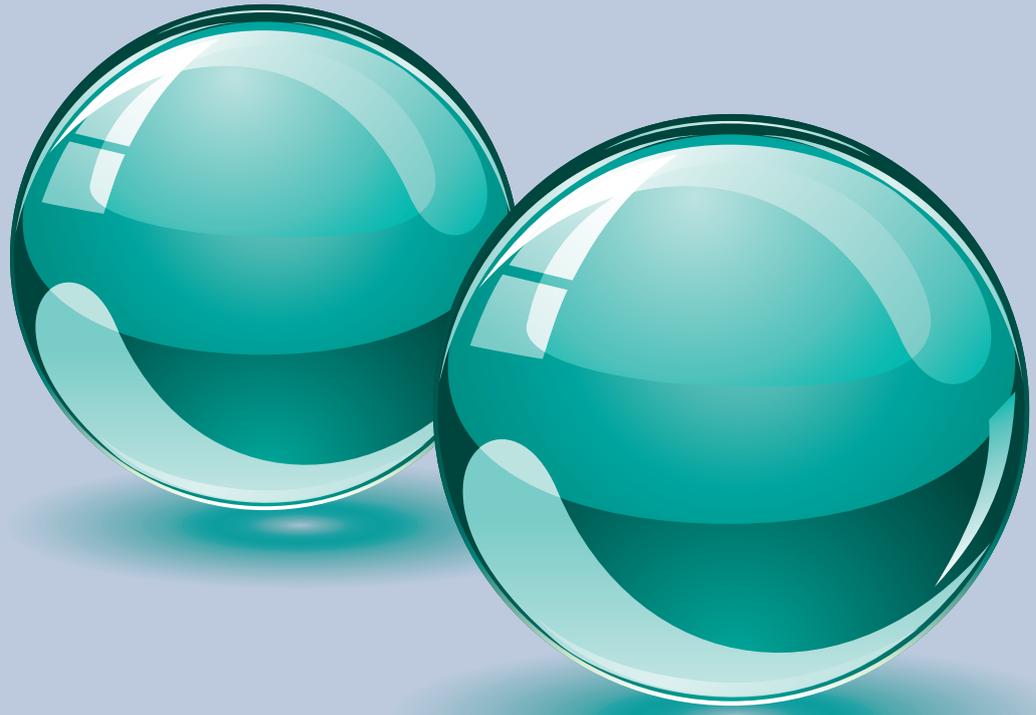
How would you define mentoring?

What do you think the role of the mentor is?

- facilitator
- guide
- senior
- expert
- learning partner
- role model
- authority figure
- none of the above – more as a

What do you think the role of the mentee is?

- learner
- partner
- apprentice
- novice
- trainee
- protégé
- none of the above – more as a



Section 3

Understanding the roles

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being.”

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

This section focuses on the individual roles of the mentor and the mentee. We look at the reasons for becoming a mentor or a mentee, what you need to do and the skills that you will likely develop during the process, some of the practicalities of the role and how you determine when is the right time to enter into a mentoring relationship.

3.1. Understanding the mentoring role

Why become a mentor?

As discussed earlier, mentoring is the offering of advice, information or guidance by a person with useful skills, experience or expertise to support the professional and personal development of another. Mentoring requires providing time – possibly over the long term – and enthusiasm to supporting someone as they develop.

So what does the mentor get in return? While some organisations and companies will offer incentives for taking on a mentoring role, it is more likely that you will be considering mentoring for other reasons. Some of the frequently quoted benefits are mentioned below.

- Improved motivation and sense of achievement
- Feeling of giving something back
- Renewed enthusiasm
- Enhanced status at work
- Improved networks and influence
- Opportunity for self-development
- Improved skills across a number of areas: communication, leadership, coaching, active listening, providing constructive feedback and motivating as a minimum
- Ability to see things from a different perspective
- Helping shape the future of your organisation

What makes a good mentor?

Being a good mentor is not just about giving time. It is about having a genuine interest in helping others develop, and requires a diverse set of skills and attributes. Effective mentors are committed to their own learning and development, and while every mentor is unique, there are some common basic mentoring principles that make mentors successful.

Know yourself: As a mentor, part of your role is to provide challenge, asking sometimes difficult questions of the mentee. If you can't do the same to yourself, then it is unlikely you will add much value to the mentee. Critical self-reflection on your own strengths and weaknesses, and an ability to assess your own options, are skills that will ensure you can support the same process in your mentee.

Understand your limitations and boundaries:

You aren't expected to be an expert on everything. Sometimes mentees can raise issues that are better addressed by a trained professional. A good mentor can identify when the mentee needs specialist advice and where ethical boundaries are.

Putting the mentee centre stage: The mentoring process is about developing the mentee. It is essential that mentors refrain from imposing organisational agendas. Remember that the mentee has their own goals and aspirations – the skill is in illuminating new possibilities that can help them meet their own ambitions.

Mentoring is the offering of advice, information or guidance by a person with useful skills, experience or expertise.

Be adaptable with your mentees: Every mentee is different, and a good mentor can be flexible in their approach to meet the different development needs and learning styles of their mentees. As the relationship evolves, a good mentor will be able to tailor the approach to ensure the mentee continues to develop.

Help mentees help themselves: Although it sounds clichéd, the mentee only learns by doing, and achieving improved self-awareness and confidence are only achieved if the mentee takes the lead. The mentor must provide the space and time for the mentee to take ownership of their development and find their own solutions, guiding only when beneficial to the mentee.

Seek and listen to feedback: The best person to provide feedback on how you are as mentor is your mentee, and feedback should be an integral part of the mentoring

process. It builds your understanding of how others see you, and provides a useful viewpoint that you won't get from your primary role. Many larger organisations will also provide some form of mentoring training on a regular basis to allow mentors to share experiences and practices.

In summary, the following list provides a good starting point for developing as a good mentor:

- Make sure you have the time and enthusiasm
- Resist the temptation to solve the problems
- Make sure suggestions are realistic and actionable
- Critique the behaviour, not the person
- Challenge the mentee to develop a roadmap for success
- Create a foundation of support
- Don't let the mentee depend on you
- Get off to a good start
- Know when you are done

Time to reflect...

Understanding your own motivation

The role of mentor has the potential to have a significant impact on the career and personal development of the mentee. It is not a role to be taken lightly, but equally, it is not a vocation that you spend your own career preparing for. Understanding your own motivations and skills is an essential part of deciding when you are ready to take on a mentoring role. These questions are aimed at helping you understand what you want as a mentor.

Why do I want to be a mentor?

What did I learn from my mentoring experiences?

What commitment am I able and prepared to make to the mentoring relationship?

What do I think my main strengths are? Do I know where my limitations are? How can I improve?

Who should I mentor?

Having established that mentoring is something that you want to do, the next question is who to mentor. Most mentors will not select their mentees; in the workplace, scheme managers or mentees will generally select mentors based on skills, profiles and experience, and many mentors enjoy the process of getting to work with new people from a range of backgrounds with little prior knowledge of the person. If you're planning on becoming an IOP mentor, you can register with IOP's mentoring service by visiting www.iop.org/membership/prof-dev/tools/mentoring/index.html.

Mentoring is a big commitment, and it is important that you can support and add value to the mentee. It is worth thinking about the type of person you are, and what your expectations of the relationship are, so that you can be of most benefit to the mentee. Learning styles and personality types, as well as career anchors and perspectives on work-life integration can all impact how effective a relationship will be. The list of characteristics below could all be factors in being a good mentor for a mentee.

- Professional background or experience
- Grade or seniority
- Career stage
- Industry
- Specialisms
- Geographical location

When is the right time to become a mentor?

Mentoring is most effective when the mentor can combine a broad range of skills, a wide experience of an organisation or profession and a desire to support the development of colleagues. You know you are ready when you:

- Feel you can give something back to your organisation or profession
- Are happy to give time to helping someone else develop
- Recognise your own strengths and limitations
- Can ask probing questions and give constructive feedback
- Can listen and are non-judgmental
- Understand how your organisation works
- Want to gain a different perspective and have insight from someone else

How could mentoring change me?

While the focus is on the development of the mentee, as a mentor, you will develop or enhance a wide range of skills of use in your day-to-day role. Some of the key attributes you can expect to improve include:

Time management: Making the commitment to mentoring on top of your day job, being able to respond in a timely manner to mentee requests.

Relationship management: Building an atmosphere of trust, supporting a learning environment, setting boundaries, gaining buy-in to the mentoring process, resolving conflicts.

Communicating and influencing: Active listening, non-verbal communication skills, being supportive and non-judgmental, providing (and receiving) feedback and critique of plans, speaking with clarity and authority.

Analysing evidence: Assessing information and challenging assumptions, questioning skills, self-reflection skills, applying a different viewpoint in understanding options, think on your feet.

Setting realistic objectives: Helping the mentee identify and articulate realistic goals, supporting the mentee in owning their own development.

Leadership and developing people: Understanding the differing needs of mentees, providing adequate challenge to foster development and improving self-confidence, being adaptable and flexible in your mentoring approach, ability to offer encouragement and support for self-directed development, improving self-awareness, encouraging networking, motivating people and celebrating success, supporting creativity in the approach to problem solving.

Mentoring is a big commitment, and it is important that you can support and add value to the mentee.

3.2. Understanding the mentee role

Why become a mentee?

Making the decision that you would benefit from mentoring is a positive first step in recognising your own need for development. During the course of your career it is likely that you will undertake many roles, have to adapt to evolving working environments, need to develop new skills and possibly even change your core functional specialism. And all of this will be set against a backdrop of advancing

through an organisation, gaining seniority and becoming more involved in the leadership roles. At all of these points, you may benefit from having a mentor.

As a mentee, you will gain the most benefit if you have a clear view of what you want to achieve from the relationship. Not only will it be easier to decide what kind of mentor would be the best match for your needs, it will also make establishing and articulating your goals and expectations much easier, leading to a productive relationship.

Time to reflect...

Understanding your own needs

There are many reasons for seeking a mentor, and as your career develops, the goals of mentoring will adapt as your goals and ambitions change. Some of the main reasons that people look for mentors are listed below.

It is worth revisiting this list periodically to assess whether your needs as a mentee are changing. Which ones apply to you?

- To get advice
- To build networks
- To have a sounding board
- To talk through issues and challenges
- To improve career progression
- To “learn the ropes”
- To achieve professional recognition
- To have my assumptions and plans challenged
- To improve self-awareness
- To identify training and development opportunities
- To see the bigger picture
- To improve self-confidence
- To hear someone else’s story
- To develop specialist knowledge and skills

What is the most important thing that you want to achieve from mentoring?

What do I do as a mentee?

The most important thing to understand is that it is the mentee's responsibility to drive the process; the whole mentoring relationship is built around the needs of the mentee. However good a mentor might be, there will be no progress without effort and commitment from you as the mentee. Some of the mentee's key responsibilities are highlighted below.

Drive the relationship and the mentoring agenda:

The mentoring process is the vehicle for you to challenge yourself, develop and seek guidance on issues relevant to you. Being clear about your learning goals and expectations, and communicating those to your mentor, are essential for a productive experience. You don't have to agree with everything that your mentor says – listening, reflecting and challenging are all part of the process, and a good mentor will expect some challenge from you.

Think for yourself: While your mentor may be more experienced or senior, mentoring is not about being given answers. Your mentor will guide you, but it is for you to challenge your own assumptions and views, and to identify the things that you need to do to develop.

Be open and honest: The relationship is built on trust and confidentiality. It is vital that, as a mentee, you are able to talk openly about your aspirations, likes and dislikes, and any other factors that influence your day-to-day activities. There are generally many paths to the same endpoint, and you will only identify the route that will work best for you if you are clear about your own expectations from your career.

Listen and take action: Mentoring is not just about meeting and talking through issues. It is about setting a new direction, identifying objectives and working towards achieving them. Seeking feedback and constructive criticism is an essential part of the process. You will get more from the process if you are flexible and committed to acting.

Maximise the benefits: The time spent with your mentor is valuable. Plan and prepare for meetings, and try to resolve what you can yourself, saving the real issues for the mentoring time. If you have specific items, or are looking for in-depth discussion, give your mentor time to think and prepare as well – remember, the mentoring relationship is a learning partnership, and both parties will gain more by having time for reflection and consideration of ideas and thoughts.

Take time to reflect properly: Keep a record of your experience. What do you cover during meetings? What actions did you take away and how did you tackle them? What is going well and what isn't working? How do you feel about your career path? What new skills are you developing? These self-reflections may seem trivial, but the time spent considering your real thoughts are critical to personal growth and clarifying future directions.

When is the right time to become a mentee?

Becoming a mentee means that you have a desire to improve your capabilities and build a long-term plan for your career development. This necessitates a good deal of self-awareness, and to achieve the maximum benefit requires an honest assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses, which can be harder to do than a lot of people think.

You know you are ready when you:

- Have time to devote to your own development
- Are open to critique and comments on your assumptions or plans
- Are willing to learn
- Can accept (and give) constructive feedback
- Are willing to challenge yourself
- Can identify goals
- Want to gain a different perspective and have insight from someone else
- Can articulate your own strengths and opportunities for improvement

Who should I choose as a mentor?

Some organisations allocate mentors to mentees through development-scheme managers or heads of profession. Generally, the organisation will take great care in matching mentors and mentees, and will provide support and guidance if the relationship is not working as well as it could. The IOP mentoring service enables you to choose a mentor based on your situation.

If you are in the position to input into your mentor selection, it is worth considering carefully what you want from the relationship. You should consider what criteria matter to you in a mentor: seniority, professional experience, qualifications or breadth of roles within an organisation. Because of the time commitment involved, it is also worth thinking about some of the practicalities of particular mentor candidates. For example, a senior person may provide excellent insights but be difficult to actually spend time with, while someone with wide experience may lack the detailed knowledge of a specific career anchor. If mentoring is focused on professional registrations, you should also consider their membership grade.

There are pros and cons of choosing someone as a mentor that you already know. On the one hand, familiarity with your set of circumstances can be advantageous at the beginning of the mentoring process, but generally, familiarity can lead to difficulty in setting boundaries and creating an atmosphere of challenge.

Choosing a mentor who is very different can be rewarding if you enjoy being stretched and are willing to invest the time taken to communicate your goals and develop yourself. It will provide an alternative perspective and offer a challenge. However, it is important that you can work together in a productive way. Too much challenge and difference would lead to a more adversarial (and counter-productive) relationship.

If you are seeking professional membership, then find a mentor who is in the same institution, and preferably someone who is fairly current in the requirements and expectations. Remember that IOP requires supporters for chartership applications to be chartered themselves.

How might being a mentee change me?

Most mentees agree that one of the main goals is to learn from the mentor's knowledge and experience. While this undoubtedly will happen, it is worth recognising that there are more tangible benefits to be gained. Some of the more obvious skills that are developed as part of a mentoring relationship are below.

Time management: Committing to your CPD, honouring the commitment to the mentoring process, making time for self-reflection.

Communicating and influencing: Learning active listening skills, articulating your requirements (development needs, expectations from the relationship), self-assessment, giving and receiving feedback.

Analysing evidence and problem solving: Being able to suggest and assess options, seeing things from a different perspective, using different tools to solve problems.

Continual development: Demonstrating a commitment to learning, being able to self-analyse, assess your own strengths and weaknesses, prioritise development needs.

Taking the initiative: Take responsibility for your own progress, improve confidence and knowledge, adapt for successes and setbacks, lead the development of working relationships.

Setting objectives and making plans: Identify realistic goals, understanding what it takes to deliver, driving change, utilising a variety of resources, managing your own development.

Choosing a mentor who is very different can be rewarding if you enjoy being stretched and are willing to invest the time taken to communicate your goals and develop yourself.

Time to reflect...

Understanding your skills

Having read the previous sections, it should be clear that mentoring requires a wide range of different skills, and consequently offers the opportunity to develop across a broad set of competences. Larger mentoring schemes may offer mentor training sessions and many mentees may have an introduction to mentoring as part of their induction process. Taking time to consider where your strengths are, and where additional focus is needed, will help you gain the maximum benefit from mentoring as quickly as possible. You may be able to tailor initial training to meet your needs more effectively.

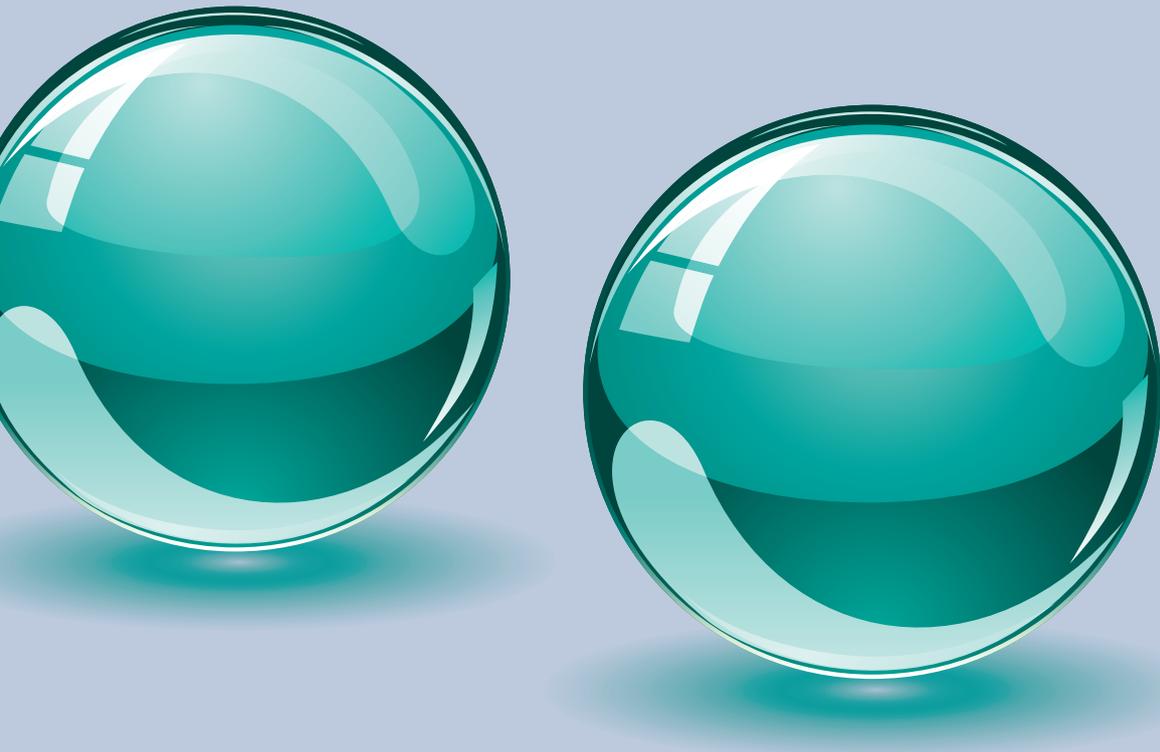
Which skills do you feel competent in?

And which are you less strong in?

Which skills are most important in your current role?

And which do you think are needed for future roles?

What would you like to develop during mentoring?



Section 4

Making it happen

“Performance, learning and enjoyment are inextricably intertwined.”

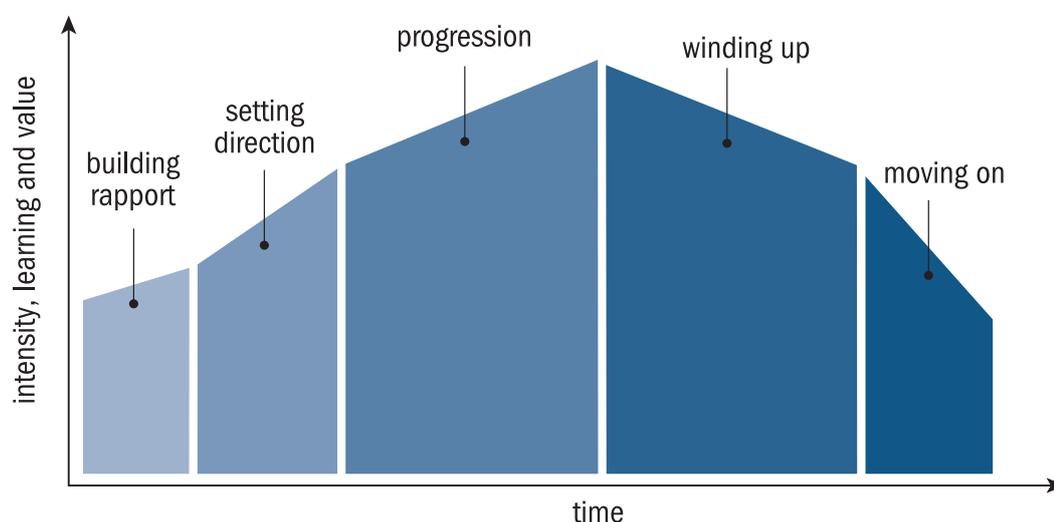
(Sir John Whitmore)

Sometimes it can seem that there are as many different approaches to mentoring as there are mentors, but there are some widely used models that can help provide structure to the mentoring process. This section looks at some models and frameworks applicable to mentoring, but it is by no means exhaustive. There are numerous websites, books and factsheets from professional institutions, universities, industry and personal-development professionals that discuss different approaches, and it is likely that larger organisations will have their own guides and techniques as well. The models discussed briefly here are a good starting point.

4.1. The mentoring lifecycle

While the length of mentoring relationships can vary widely, from a couple of years of a graduate scheme to decades as people move through their careers, the mentoring process goes through four or five phases in the lifecycle. The four-phase model of Zachary was discussed in an earlier section; the five-stage model developed by Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) is described here. The durations of the stages vary, and it is possible to revisit earlier phases if the expectations or nature of the relationship changes.

Five-stage model (Clutterbuck and Lane, 2004)



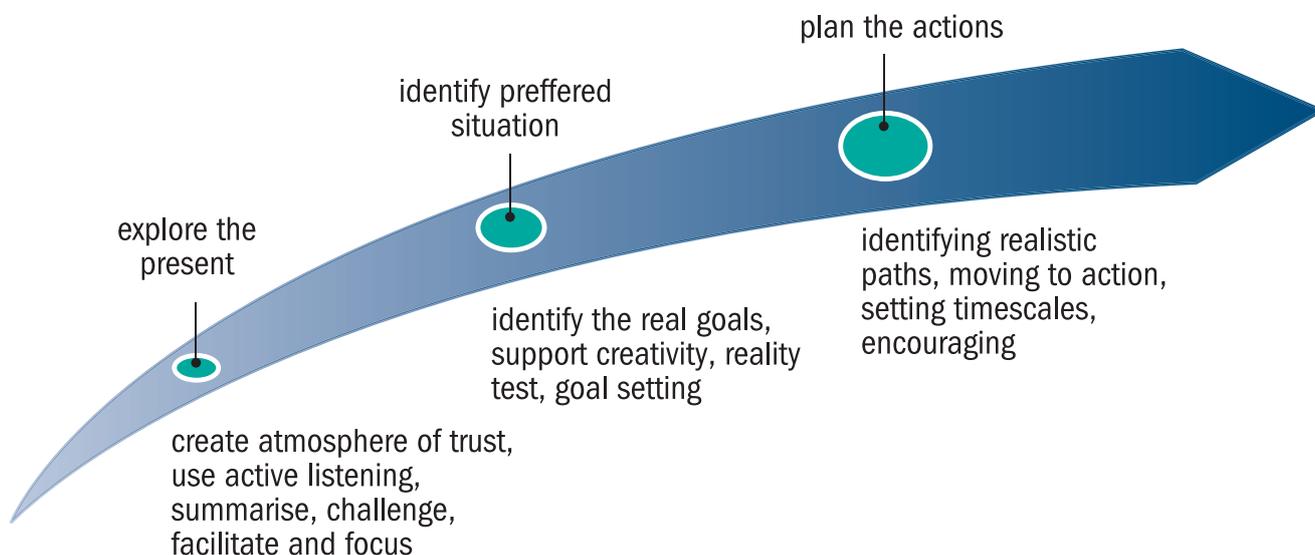
The mentoring process goes through four or five phases in the lifecycle.

- **Building rapport:** The initial phase is based around getting to know each other, understanding the motivations and drivers for mentoring, the expectations from the process and setting the ground rules.
- **Setting direction:** A more detailed approach to gaining clarity on the aims of the mentee and mentor, with the mentor helping the mentee to assess and articulate their skills, knowledge, current situation and what they aspire to. Initial goals are developed, and are likely to be revisited many times during the mentoring relationship.
- **Progression:** The stage where most time is spent, discussing themes, patterns, approaches and options. The mentee should develop plans and contingencies, supported by a mentor who is challenging and supportive.
- **Winding up:** When the mentoring relationship has achieved its goals, it is time to either move the goalposts or move on. The mentee may have outgrown the mentor, or the relationship may just have become unproductive. Having regular reviews of progress and discussing the vision for the future will help plan an effective and positive end, or a renewed approach.
- **Moving on:** Even when mentoring has achieved its aims, the mentee and mentor may maintain a good professional friendship, meeting less frequently and supporting each other on an ad-hoc basis.

4.2. Mentoring models and approaches

There are a number of approaches to mentoring, and many draw on coaching techniques. Egan's "Skilled Helper" model is one such example, and is a useful three-stage framework for helping mentees to focus on self-awareness and long-term growth.

Egan's "Skilled Helper" model (2013)



The mentoring wheel is another tool that can provide a “big picture” view of mentoring. The primary purpose of mentoring is always to help the mentee change something and develop, and the journey is represented in the mentor wheel below (after Mike Munro Turner, 1999).

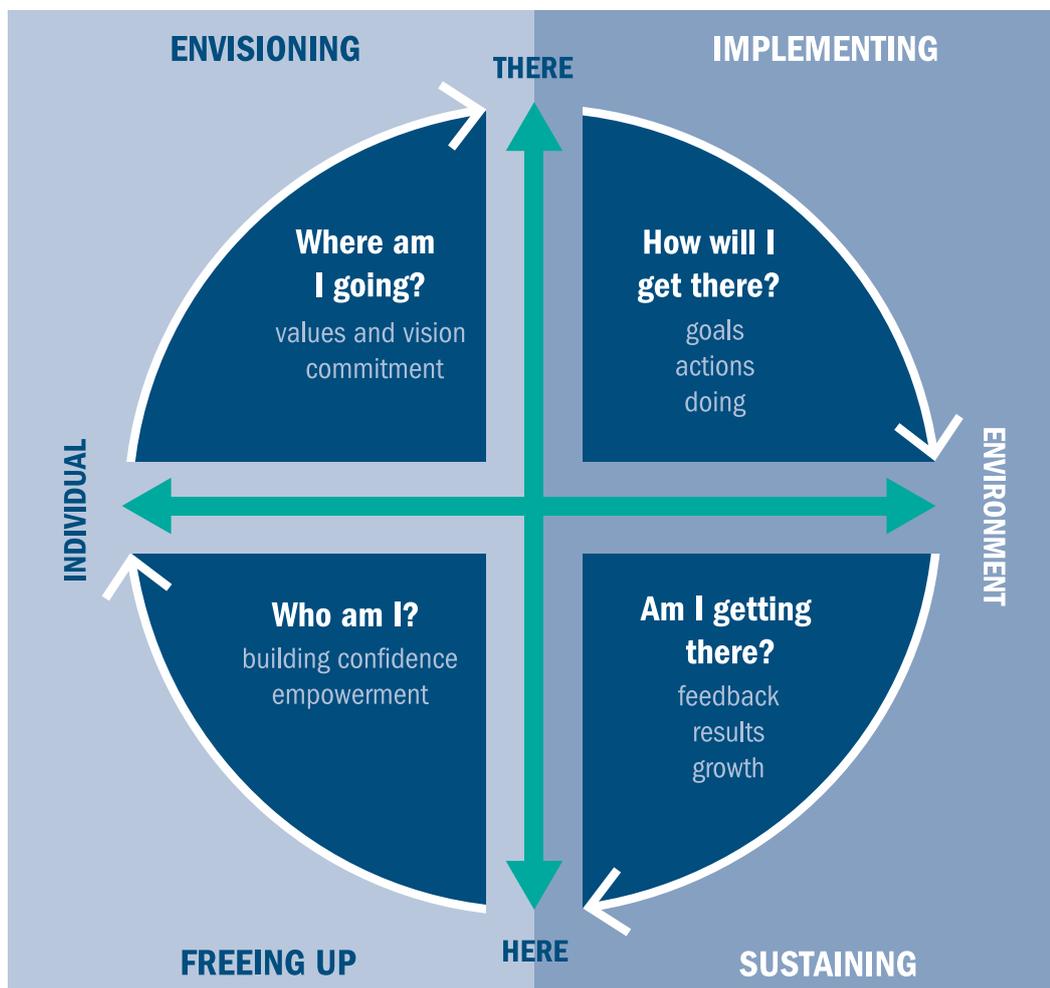
The four quadrants represent different perspectives, and it is likely that the mentee will be thinking about all of these questions at any given moment, although one perspective may be dominant.

- “Freeing up” – understanding the influences of the mentee, the role of the mentor is to encourage self-awareness and help the mentee build confidence through understanding their own capabilities.
- “Envisioning” – the aim is to encourage the mentee to create the vision of where they want to be, and the challenge is to ensure that the mentee is stretched and committed to pushing themselves.

- “Implementing” – translating the vision into goals, strategies and plans, and making the objectives measurable and focused. The mentee needs to drive the target setting and be prepared to work on actions.
- “Sustaining” – through a process of analysing outcomes and seeking feedback, the mentee can see the impact of their actions on their environment. The test is to ensure that actions are having a positive influence on the ability of the mentee to achieve their vision, and to learn from their experiences and re-plan accordingly.

The model provides a useful framework for ensuring that the purpose of the process is not lost. It can be useful to revisit these questions regularly, to make sure the direction is still appropriate.

The mentor wheel (Mike Munro Turner, 1999)



Whitmore's GROW method was developed as a coaching tool, but the framework is easily adapted to provide a longer-term perspective useful for mentoring conversations. The technique again follows a four-stage approach.

Here the focus is on the mentee to contribute openly. The mentor's skill is in the questioning and challenging of assumptions.

Finally, the 5C framework (challenge, choice, consequence, creative options and conclusions) for analysing issues and developing solutions can be a useful tool, and the skill of the mentor is in supporting the mentee to become more self-aware.

GROW model (Whitmore, 2009)



4.3. Developing integrative dialogue and active listening

A successful mentoring relationship is built around two key skills – the ability to communicate effectively, challenging and questioning in a supportive style, and the ability to actively listen.

“Integrative dialogue” is the term given to the approach of analysing opposable arguments, and the technique can be useful in mentoring discussion to help mentees see all sides of an argument. The key elements of integrative dialogue are:

- Exploring multiple, often radically different, perspectives
- Switching between the big picture and the immediate issue and back again
- Asking and answering profound and naïve questions (and the difference isn't always clear)
- Developing a broad picture of the situation
- Analysing issues to find common themes and connections
- Finding the contradictions and inconsistencies in values and behaviours
- Making choices about what to keep and what to ignore
- Becoming more self-aware, through understanding backgrounds and journeys

As the relationship develops, the ability to have effective dialogue should improve, and the integrative approach ensures mentees never lose sight of their goals or become too narrow in their thinking.

“Active listening” is, as the name suggests, about listening actively, creating a positive environment for open discussions by listening with all of the senses, and allowing the speaker the space to focus on delivering their message. It is important to show interest in what is being said, through verbal and non-verbal signals, and so encourage the speaker to keep going. Often, the simple act of talking through an issue completely can be the catalyst to resolution, but many people will struggle to find an active listener to share the process with. As a mentor, understanding the power of active listening and developing your skills are essential for your effectiveness.

Active listening requires making a conscious decision to listen and understand the message, not just the words, of what is being said. Listeners must be non-judgmental and avoid forming opinions, especially early on in conversations. Patience is essential, as is the ability to leave time for the pauses and silences without jumping in. A key part of active listening is waiting until the mentee has finished speaking before considering what response to make.

Non-verbal signals, such as maintaining appropriate eye contact, periodic nodding and sounds of agreement are straightforward, along with mirroring and a positive posture. The skill is in the verbal signals, some of which are described below.

- **Questioning:** Asking relevant questions to build and clarify what has been said shows that the mentee is being listened to and reinforces interest. Avoid closed questions (which require simple yes/no-type answers) and use open questioning to explore issues fully. A common approach is through funnelling, starting broad and gradually narrowing in to specifics, although in a mentoring relationship, reverse funnelling is also appropriate.
- **Reflection:** Repeating or paraphrasing what has been said demonstrates comprehension, and is a powerful tool for building rapport. It allows the mentee to hear their own thoughts, focus and encourages more dialogue. However, take care not to add meaning or context.
- **Clarification:** Using open questioning to ensure the correct message has been communicated, the technique allows the mentee to expand on points as necessary.
- **Summarisation:** Providing a logical and short reiteration of key points gives the mentee an opportunity to correct or restate information as required.

One of the benefits for the mentee is simply being allowed to talk through issues without interruption. That process alone can have profound impacts on the mentee's ability to formulate the next steps.

Time to reflect...

Where are you now?

Having read through the information so far, have a think about your observations and conclusions.

What I've learned about mentoring

What excites me about mentoring

What concerns me about mentoring

What I have decided to do

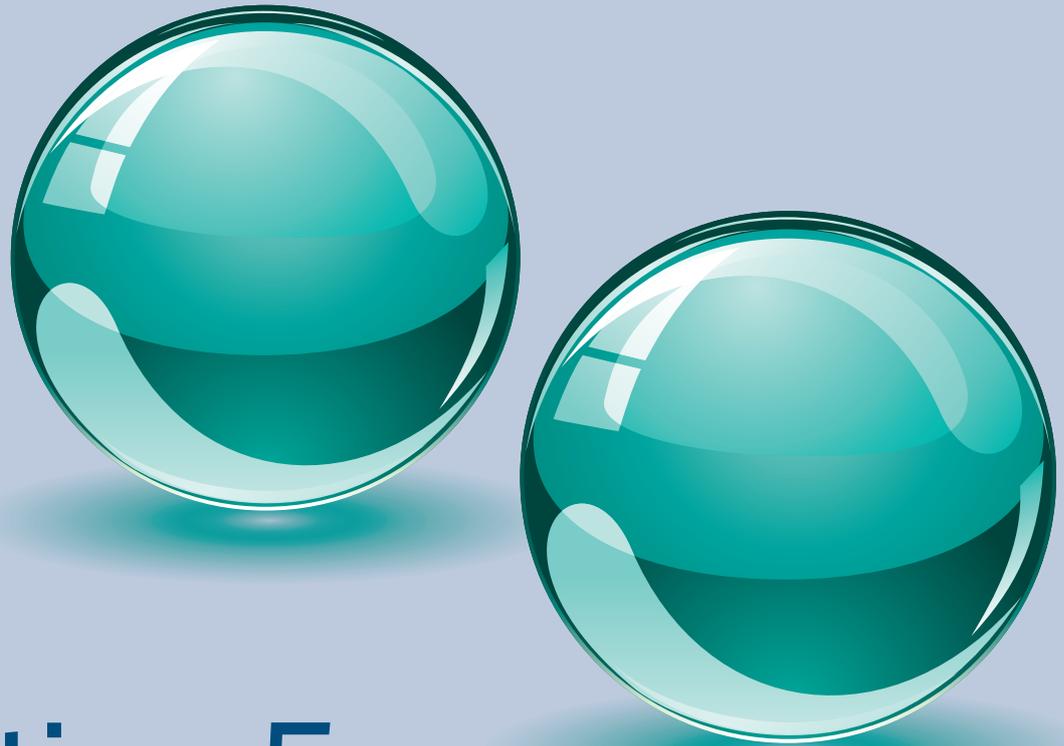
What I need to do next

How ready are you to become a mentor or mentee?

On a scale of 1–10, with 1 being the lowest score and 10 the highest, how do you rate your willingness or ability to take mentoring forward?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What would you need to do to feel comfortable increasing the score by 1, 2 or 3 points?



Section 5

Building the relationship

“Everything we do begins with thinking. If our thinking is good, our decisions are good, our actions are good, our outcomes are good. One of the most valuable things we can offer each other is the framework in which to think for ourselves.”

(Nancy Kline)

This section covers some of the practical aspects of mentoring, and provides some ideas for how to develop the mentoring relationship.

5.1. The first meeting

The initial step is to schedule the first contact; even if you are planning an e-mentoring approach, most recommendations suggest that the first meeting should be face to face if possible, ideally in a neutral setting away from everyday work distractions. The first meeting should focus on a number of areas, including setting the

“mentoring agreement”. There is often a lot of ground to cover at the beginning of the process; make sure you are prepared, allow enough time to discuss things properly, as this meeting will set the tone of subsequent interactions.

A good starting point for a meeting plan might look like the table below.

The context	Depending on what type of mentoring you are involved in (e.g. graduate-development programme or professional development), this meeting is an ideal opportunity to discuss the organisation and how it works, as well as previous mentoring experiences (“what worked well” and “even better if” approach).
Discuss the big picture	The main purpose of mentoring is to support the mentee in their career development. Discussing background, aspirations and current working styles are all relevant to providing context to future discussions.
Addressing the basics	How often will you meet? Will you communicate between meetings? How formal are the meetings (will there be an agenda or a more spontaneous approach)? Where are the boundaries for discussions (wholly work-focused or not)?
Managing expectations	Discuss the goals of the mentee, and what each can and can't do.
Set a timetable	Identify short-term objectives to test the agreement and provide early focus.
Agreeing to review	Commit to reviewing progress and the health of the relationship, being open if progress is limited. Discuss options and alternatives if things don't work out.

Allow enough time to discuss things properly, as this meeting will set the tone of subsequent interactions.

5.2. The “steady state”

Most of the time in the mentoring process is spent in the “steady state” of progressing and winding up. These stages are where the majority of activity and effort occurs, and time will be spent discussing development, goal achievement and obstacles, future directions and changing aspirations as the mentee grows in confidence and gains experience within their working environment. Using the models and frameworks discussed in the previous section will help maintain focus and provide continuity to the meetings. It is also important to regularly review the relationship and share learning points while they are still current. Learning from experience is a key part of development, and both the mentor and mentee will benefit from timely and focused assessment of progress and key mentoring skills.

5.3. Moving on

It is for the mentor and mentee to decide when the relationship has reached a natural endpoint – for some, this will be after a relatively short period of time, maybe just the length of an induction programme, while others may find themselves being mentored by the same person after two or three decades. However, there are some obvious reasons to end the mentoring relationship, including:

- The mentor is in the same management chain
- The mentor or mentee changes organisation
- The mentor and mentee just don't get on
- The mentee outgrows the mentor

A final reflection...

Becoming better

Mentoring is a two-way learning process, and every mentoring experience offers the opportunity to find out where your strengths are and where you can improve your skills. By regularly reviewing how the process is progressing, you should be able to see which aspects of mentoring you find easy, and where you are challenged, and so make the next experience more beneficial. Thinking about your previous (or current experience)...

What do you find easy as a mentor or mentee?

1

2

3

What did you find difficult and why?

1

2

3

List three things that you learned from your last mentoring role

1

2

3

Which three things do you want to keep doing as a mentor or mentee?

1

2

3

Which three things do you want to do differently?

1

2

3

Which three things do you want to gain from your next mentoring relationship?

1

2

3

Complete the following sentence:

For me, the mentoring relationship will have been a success if...



Section 6

Taking it forward

“The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.”

(Benjamin Disraeli)

This short section considers some of the common questions asked by mentors and mentees, and also some of the ethical issues that may come up during the course of the relationship.

6.1. FAQs

By mentors...

“I want to become a mentor but have no mentoring experience, what should I do?”

The main question to ask yourself is “where can I add value?”. Do you have strong skills, or expert knowledge and experience? Speak to other mentors in your organisation, and if your employer has a graduate-development programme, speak to the scheme managers. They will be able to give some insight into the mentoring process. IOP also runs workshops to help develop the necessary skills.

“How long is the mentoring process?”

It depends. Sometimes the process is focused on a specific period of activity (for example, a graduate scheme), but otherwise the length of time is determined by the mentor and mentee, the objectives agreed and progress made. If the relationship is beneficial to both people, it may well be refocused several times and last several years. Remember also that it takes time to build rapport – mentoring, unlike some coaching, is not a quick-fix process.

“How much time does it really take?”

Again, it depends. Anywhere up to a couple of hours is a realistic planning assumption, but it is all determined by the individuals involved and the goals set. How frequently you meet is also up to you and the mentee, but at least quarterly is a reasonable aim – any longer and you never build rapport, but too frequent may result in too much dependence from the mentee. It is very important to prioritise mentoring time, ensuring you honour the commitment made to your mentee. As a mentor, you are a role model and how you behave will impact your mentee’s perceptions of acceptable behaviour within the organisation. It is also important to expect some ad-hoc contact as mentees challenge themselves and look for support.

“How much planning is involved?”

It varies according to context, but having made the commitment to the mentee, it is your responsibility to make sure the time is valuable to both of you. Being familiar with professional membership guidelines, your organisational training opportunities, current promotion and appraisal practice, and core competences is a good starting point. It is also a sensible idea to keep a record of key points and actions from previous meetings, to enable you to challenge activities that may be slipping.

As a mentor, you are a role model and how you behave will impact your mentee’s perceptions of acceptable behaviour within the organisation.

“What if the mentee keeps asking things that I don't know about?”

It happens. The best approach is to acknowledge that you can't provide the guidance they need, and bring the relationship to a close. There is no shame in being able to help a mentee articulate clearly what they need, and by acknowledging your own limitations, you allow them to find a more suitable mentor but also maybe identify some areas for your own future development – one of the benefits of any mentoring relationship is the two-way learning partnership.

“As a mentor, should I speak to the line manager about issues?”

No – and the only time it might be considered reasonable is if the mentee has requested that you do, but even then, understanding the boundaries of the relationship is vital. Your relationship is with the mentee, and you should maintain the confidence that the relationship needs to foster the openness and trust essential for candid discussion and progress.

“How much time outside of the planned sessions will it take?”

There are no set rules; some mentees won't contact you at all, others will “keep you in the loop” with what they are doing. Sometimes the contact is for information, and sometimes there will be a request attached. It is something that you should discuss in the very first meeting, to ensure an appropriate level of contact for your relationship, but the important part is to make sure you understand the mentee and their needs.

“How many mentees should I take on?”

You need to be able to commit the time, and that means fitting it in around your day job. You should consider how valuable mentoring is viewed within your organisation, and talk it through with your line manager. Until you gain experience, one mentee is best. It will allow you to develop your skills, and give an indication of your own style and preferences in approach. With more experience, you may feel you can support more than one mentee. Just make sure you have the time available to prepare adequately and support them all at the same time. You will be letting them down if you rush the process.

“What should I do if I start to struggle as a mentor?”

First, it is useful to keep a log of what is going well and where things are difficult – it will help identify where there may be real issues. If you do feel that you have weaknesses, talk it through with other mentors. Seek out development opportunities and take advantage of any courses or workshops. If you don't think you can continue as a mentor, bring the relationship to a close, explaining to the mentee why and offering support in finding a new mentor.

Having made the commitment to the mentee, it is your responsibility to make sure the time is valuable to both of you.

By mentees...

“Will I get on with my mentor?”

There is no reason why you shouldn't, providing you set clear expectations from the start, respect the boundaries and follow through on your actions. Mentors have volunteered because they want to help, so have already bought into the process. That said, there are many types of mentor, and if your learning styles clash, you may not make as much progress as quickly as you otherwise could. The best route is to discuss with your mentor.

“Is there really something in it for me?”

Hopefully having read this far you will think the benefits are clear. Mentoring can be an incredibly effective route to self-development, but you need to commit to the process.

“Will it entail a lot more work?”

No more than you should be doing for your own CPD anyway. The difference is with a mentoring relationship, you have support and guidance at hand, and a wider experience to draw on.

“Will it get in the way of my work?”

It shouldn't. Mentoring should be part of your ongoing CPD activity, and setting aside some time for reflection and focusing on the future should be part of everyday working life. If you find it is getting in the way of work, then your goals are unrealistic and you should revisit expectations and timescales for action plans with your mentor. An over-ambitious plan is likely to be counter-productive if you feel you can't make enough progress.

“I am worried my mentor will discuss issues with my line manager. What should I do?”

One of the benefits of mentoring through IOP is the ability to establish mentoring relationships outside of the workplace. IOP's mentoring service can help you find mentors with the right expertise and experience, but without direct involvement with your industry or place of work. However, if you are mentoring in the workplace, then one of the first things to establish in the mentoring agreement is confidentiality. As we have discussed, to get the most from the relationship, there needs to be an open atmosphere and honest discussion. If your mentor does discuss things with anyone else without your permission, it is a breach of confidentiality and you may need to consider changing mentor. You should talk through your expectations and clarify their understanding of your confidentiality agreement. You may also feel it appropriate to discuss the matter with the scheme leader, if your organisation has one.

“Do we really need to review so much?”

Yes. Self-development and awareness are key aspects of the mentoring process, and will only be achieved through regular feedback on progress against goals and the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. Not only is it essential for professional development, it also builds self-confidence in the mentee.

“How do I find the right mentor?”

Finding the right mentor really depends on what your goals are. If you are being mentored in the workplace as part of a graduate- or new-entry scheme, then you may have a mentor assigned to you. In this case, it is likely they have been paired with you because of similar experience, work area, professional qualifications or outlook. If you are able to choose your mentor, as discussed in earlier sections, then make sure you are clear about what you want to achieve and how you want the relationship to work. You might not find all your criteria in one person, so be flexible and realistic, prioritising your needs so that your key requirements are met. IOP can help you find the right mentor if you want mentoring outside of your workplace, or if your main focus is on building the competences needed for chartered and senior grades of IOP membership. More information can be found on the IOP website at www.iop.org/membership/prof-dev/tools/mentoring/index.html.

“Can I have more than one mentor?”

Yes, but don't over commit yourself! Having different mentors for different parts of your life is not uncommon; internal career progression, broader personal skills development and professional qualifications are all areas where mentors with different experiences may be useful. IOP can help with mentoring and professional development. Visit the website for more information.

6.2. Troubleshooting potential issues

Not all mentoring relationships get off to a great start. Sometimes it is just a matter of clarifying expectations and revisiting the mentoring agreement; other times, it will be a more fundamental difference that might hinder progress. Some of the common problems and possible ways to address them are listed below. The most important thing to remember is this process is about development and learning, not a forced interaction. If it doesn't work for either party, then it is better not to continue.

<p>Our discussions are shallow and superficial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you both have the same understanding of the expectations from the relationship? • Have you set aside enough time to explain the issues and allow for exploration and discussion, as well as real-time thinking? • Have you both prepared adequately?
<p>Meetings keep getting postponed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you both still committed to the mentoring process? • Check to see if anything has changed with either party, and review progress to date • Try e-mentoring to see if the enthusiasm for support is still there • Change the duration and frequency of meetings and see if that helps – less time more often might be easier to schedule, or the converse may be true
<p>We don't seem to have built up much rapport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge this in a meeting and spend more time explaining motivations and goals • Openly discuss options if it doesn't improve
<p>We run out of steam in the mentoring sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the sessions too long? Did you cover things effectively or is the discussion limited. Consider revising the agenda and don't be afraid to suggest an early close. Consider reviewing the timing of meetings • Check that goals and expectations are still aligned • Make sure the environment allows open and honest discussion, without interruptions
<p>My mentor won't stop talking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a rough guide, your mentor shouldn't be talking more than 20% of the time. Make sure you have enough to discuss that your mentor doesn't feel the need to fill the time • It can be a sign of a lack of active listening, where the mentor shifts the discussion to their experiences. Discuss your expectations, reiterating that pauses and silences are part of the thinking and evaluating process for you
<p>My mentee is very demanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of a relationship, this could be enthusiasm or a desire to impress, but whatever the reason, the boundaries need to be clear • Talk through expectations and contact with your mentee • Offer alternative modes of mentoring if this is appropriate • Encourage your mentee to prioritise issues for your mentoring discussions
<p>Should I be talking through things with my line manager?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roles of mentor and line manager are very different, and while both should show interest in your development, the line manager focus is on day-to-day outputs, whereas the mentor is concerned only with your long-term career development

6.3. Ethical guidelines for mentors and mentees

Confidentiality is a fundamental part of mentoring and it is essential that the trust is never compromised. Discussing career aspirations, motivations and preferred roles and responsibilities can be stressful, especially if the mentee is not happy in their current role. Supporting the mentee as they develop their self-awareness may involve some significant critique of the organisation as well as themselves, and it is important to remain non-judgmental and supportive of the process, even if you disagree with the views. Also, as obvious as it may sound, people grow and their opinions change over time. What a mentee thought six months after joining may not be representative of their views at the end of a development programme.

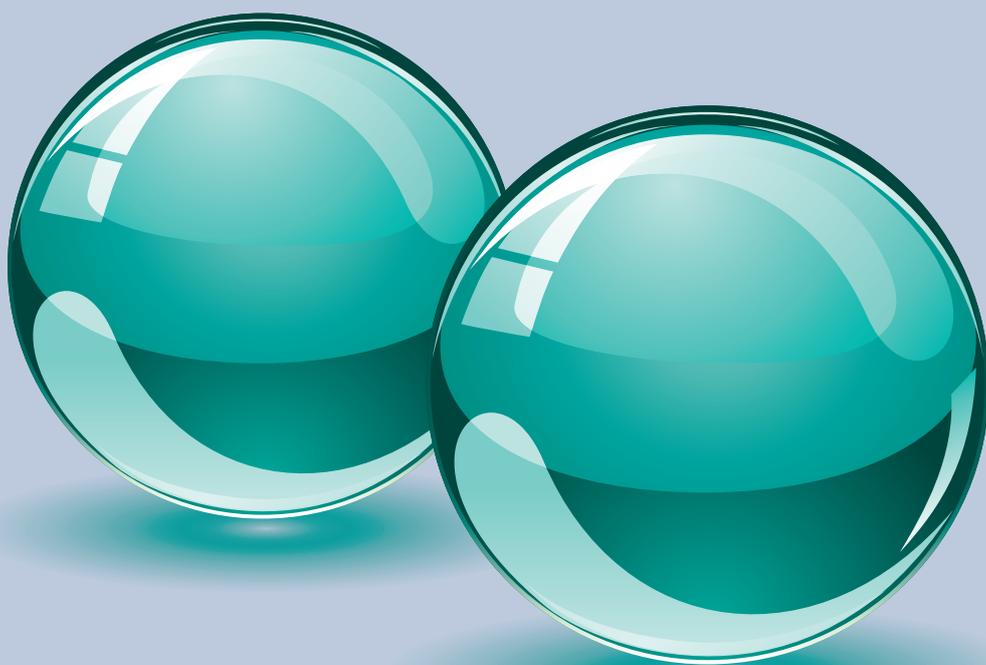
It is part of a mentor's role to allow the mentee to talk freely, without fear of retribution later in their careers. Remember, if a conversation is straying outside of defined territory, or beyond the competences and capabilities of the mentor, professional guidance should be advised.

More information on ethical issues can be found on the European Mentoring and Coaching Council website.

6.4. What next?

There are several books, web pages and factsheets devoted to mentoring, and many of these go into much greater detail on the topics covered in this guide (some of the key sources of information are listed at the end of this guide). Mentoring courses and specific skills development activities will help prepare you for the process. Visit www.iop.org/membership/prof-dev/tools/page_51437.html to find out more and to register as a mentor/mentee. IOP's online mentoring service is based on specific search criteria, such as geographical location, professional experience, specialisms and skills. You can also contact IOP with any questions or queries that you have (e-mail mentoring@iop.org).

IOP's online mentoring service is based on specific search criteria, such as geographical location, professional experience, specialisms and skills.



Section 7

Case studies

“Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen and a push in the right direction.”

(John Crosby)

Reading the principles and models of mentoring provides a good way to build understanding of what mentoring is, but the best way to understand the benefits is to see some examples. The following pages present some thoughts on the value of mentoring from a range of mentees and mentors.



New mentee – Charlotte Davis

Job title: Physics Analyst Graduate Trainee, Clean Energy, Consultancy, AMEC

Why did you get involved in the mentoring process?

The mentor and mentee relationship is part of the graduate training scheme. Over the two-year period, regular meetings are held with my mentor to allow me to monitor my personal and professional development, and have the platform to discuss any issues confidentially.

How did you find your mentor?

Within the graduate scheme, the mentor role is voluntary, but I was lucky enough to have someone from my team assigned to be my mentor when I started. He was part of the physics and licensing team, working towards chartered physicist status. It was comforting to know that my mentor was once a mentee and had experienced everything that I'm going through. Even though he has now moved to another team we have a good relationship and I know I can always talk to him.

What do you find most rewarding about being mentored?

I have found the most rewarding aspect of being a mentee is that my mentor is always there for me when I need help or advice, or even just someone to talk to. I can speak to my mentor about any problems or successes I have had. My mentor has always spared the time to talk to me regardless of how important any issue may be. Having the quarterly meetings makes sure that I am on track with my professional development, while allowing me to make sure I am happy with my work.

What do you find most difficult or challenging about being a mentee?

I haven't found anything particularly challenging or difficult. I know I have a fantastic support network, especially from my mentor, which has allowed me to deal with any problems I have encountered.

What skills have you developed as a result of the mentoring process?

I have definitely developed a greater confidence and belief in my ability. I am also more aware of the need to keep track of my professional development. Even though my graduate scheme will end in a couple of months, I am going to keep having regular meetings with my mentor to ensure I have a successful career path. I know my mentor thinks of attributes that aren't so obvious to me.

What impact is mentoring having on your career and professional development?

The mentoring process has allowed me to work towards the competencies for chartership. For my quarterly meetings, I can review what I have accomplished and what I need to do to achieve more competencies for chartership. By having these competencies to work towards, I have a better idea of how I can have a successful career, by gaining a wider knowledge of technical work, leadership, outreach skills and mentoring skills, to name but a few.

What advice do you have for new mentees?

Even though some people may be hesitant to talk to their mentors, just talk to them. The mentors have volunteered to carry out this role as they are passionate about encouraging the development of you. They have the experience to be able to help out with any problems and guide you towards your goals, personally and professionally.

What have you learned about the mentoring process that you will take with you when you become a mentor?

When I become a mentor, I want my mentee to feel that they can trust me and that I am there for them, regardless of whether they need to talk about professional or personal issues. It can be daunting starting a job after university and not knowing anyone, so I want to allow my mentee to feel comfortable around me and know that I am part of their support network.

What advice do you have for new mentees?

Be open to the mentoring process – the more effort you put in with your mentor, the more you will get out (do not expect your mentor to do all the hard work).

Be prepared – although mentor meetings may typically be informal, do your research and prepare for the meeting so that your mentor can be best informed of your current situation and your future goals so that they can offer valuable advice/support.

What have you learned about the mentoring process that you will take with you when you become a mentor?

Be challenging but supportive. Yet I believe a strong relationship must first be formed in order to cement a level of trust. I have been very lucky to have such an engaging mentor but I have noticed that my peers may not have established similar relationships with their mentors, leading to them gaining less from the mentoring process than I have. As such, I will endeavour to establish a strong personal, as well as business, relationship with future mentees so that I can be supportive but challenging.

In three words, what does mentoring mean to you?

Motivation, networking, advice (unbiased).



Experienced mentee – Kiran Mejer

Job title: Senior Engineer, Frazer-Nash Consulting (FNC)

Why did you get involved in the mentoring process?

On joining the company I was actively encouraged to become chartered. At FNC there is a good mix of physicists, mathematicians and various types of engineer employed. The opportunity therefore exists to be mentored to chartered status in many disciplines, depending on the mentee's experience and the type of work that they become involved in.

Having decided that Chartered Physicist was my aim, I was assigned a mentor by the company.

How did you find your mentor?

My mentor was assigned to me within the first couple of weeks of my employment.

What do you find most rewarding about being mentored?

Having a mentor added some much needed structure and focus in the early part of my career. Regularly meeting to discuss quarterly reports really helped me to understand how my experience was relevant to becoming chartered and also highlighted the areas in which I needed to increase my experience.

What do you find most difficult or challenging about being a mentee?

I wouldn't describe being a mentee as difficult or challenging in any way. Initially, the additional effort required to produce quarterly reports may have seemed improvident. However, I realised in the following years when looking back at those reports, and when making my application, just how useful the process had been.

What skills have you developed as a result of the mentoring process?

The thought process that mentoring encourages you to develop has proved extremely valuable. This has developed in me the ability to analyse my performance against a set of long-term targets, and has given me a focused drive regarding my early career goals.

What impact is mentoring having on your career and professional development?

It has helped me to direct my career towards the areas of technical expertise that I am interested in and has instilled in me the desire to continually develop professionally.

What advice do you have for new mentees?

Make the most of your mentor's knowledge and experience. Actively try to engage with them and provide quarterly reports as these provide a good starting point for you to discuss your current experience and your desired goals. A senior mentor may be difficult to pin down, but remember they have volunteered for the role and will be happy to discuss anything and everything you have on your mind.

What have you learned about the mentoring process that you will take with you when you become a mentor?

The benefit of constant re-appraisal. Your career path may not go exactly the way you plan as a new mentee (my career has certainly gone in a different direction to the one I initially envisaged). But by constantly reviewing your experience and competencies you can continue to develop and grow professionally, learning from each step along the way.

In three words, what does mentoring mean to you?

Guidance, support, development.



“Seasoned” mentor – Nigel Doyle

Job title: Senior Consultant, Frazer-Nash Consulting (FNC)

Why did you get involved in the mentoring process?

When I joined Frazer-Nash, there were a limited number of Chartered Physicists to support and guide more junior entrants through the process, most staff being engineers. I was keen to rectify this situation, especially given the large number of physics graduates that Frazer-Nash was recruiting and planning to recruit.

What do you find most rewarding about being a mentor?

It is great when your mentee finally gets the recognition that they deserve through award of the chartership, and I really enjoy helping people develop from graduate through to consultant.

What do you find most difficult or challenging about being a mentor?

The most challenging aspect is that every candidate is different, and being a mentor means finding what works and what is the right path for each candidate to take.

What skills have you developed as a result of mentoring?

Mentoring has helped me improve my personnel management skills in guiding staff to do the necessary things themselves, rather than requiring my direct intervention.

What impact is mentoring having on your career and professional development?

Mentoring has given me very useful skills in my progression through to team leader where I am now responsible for all pastoral and developmental aspects of a team of eight engineers.

What advice do you have for new mentees?

Keep your log books up to date and take advantage of your mentors – don't just wait for your six-monthly meetings.

What advice do you have for new mentors?

Take advantage of the experience from other mentors around you. Also, ensure that your mentor is regularly reminded of your role in the early months – this will make it easier for them to call on you later and means that you will offer the most benefit to them.

In three words, what does mentoring mean to you?

Development, guidance, teaching.



Experienced mentor – Chris Holland

Job title: Section Head, Water Reactor Safety & Performance, Amec Foster Wheeler

Why did you get involved in the mentoring process?

I wanted to be a mentor for a number of reasons, but primarily it was about developing others and helping them realise their potential. I have had (and still have) some great mentors, that have made a massive contribution to my development and if I can replicate some of that then it is good for the individual, good for my development and good for the business.

What do you find most rewarding about being a mentor?

The most rewarding part of mentoring for me is the relationship that you build. It is really great to be part of a valuable discussion in which it becomes clear what the mentee wants to achieve and how they are going to go about it.

What do you find most difficult or challenging about being a mentor?

Time can be an issue. I think what is important though is when you go into the mentoring discussions, be it a scheduled meeting or a chat in the corridor, that you leave all that baggage elsewhere and really focus on the mentee.

What skills have you developed as a result of mentoring?

Through mentoring I have hopefully learned to listen better, trying to understand what someone is really saying to me. I have also learned how to better coach myself and understand some of my strengths and weaknesses, so I have got a lot of personal growth from mentoring.

What impact is mentoring having on your career and professional development?

Mentoring is having a significant impact on my career and professional development. First, through the network of mentors that I use I am constantly learning from them about how I can achieve my goals. At the same time, when someone who is mentoring me introduces me to a new tool or way of thinking I try and use that with my mentees, so everyone benefits. I think developing people is so important in a business like AMEC, where our people are our biggest asset, that for significant career progression it is a skill that you absolutely need to have.

What advice do you have for new mentees?

Be totally open and honest, show vulnerability as it really helps build trust. The sooner that you can build a trusting relationship with your mentor the sooner you will get the help and support that you really need to define and achieve your goals.

What advice do you have for new mentors?

As above really, maybe even more so, especially if there is a significant organisational gap to bridge (by this I mean someone relatively junior being mentored by senior management). You may feel as a new mentor that you are supposed to “know the answers”, but this is the wrong perception I feel. Again it’s all about that open honest relationship.

In three words, what does mentoring mean to you?

Relationship, development, achieving.



Experienced mentor – Nigel Parkes

Job title: Functional Safety Manager, Sellafield Ltd

Why did you get involved in the mentoring process?

I was encouraged to become a mentor after gaining chartership 15 years ago. I wanted to encourage others to achieve professional recognition in the physics field.

What do you find most rewarding about being a mentor?

First, I like to see new graduates develop to gain chartership and success in their careers. I also find that it is pleasing when an individual who does not settle into their role eventually finds the solution to the issues presented and achieves success after a little more time than others.

What do you find most difficult or challenging about being a mentor?

Trying not to solve problems for the mentee – encouraging them to arrive at the right solution themselves.

What skills have you developed as a result of mentoring?

Listening skills. I am much better at finding out what makes people tick in general. I find this extremely interesting.

What impact is mentoring having on your career and professional development?

Mentoring has helped me in developing my own career and being recognised as an expert in my field (radiological protection).

What advice do you have for new mentees?

Explain to your mentor what you want to get from the relationship. Be honest and open about how your career is progressing.

What advice do you have for new mentors?

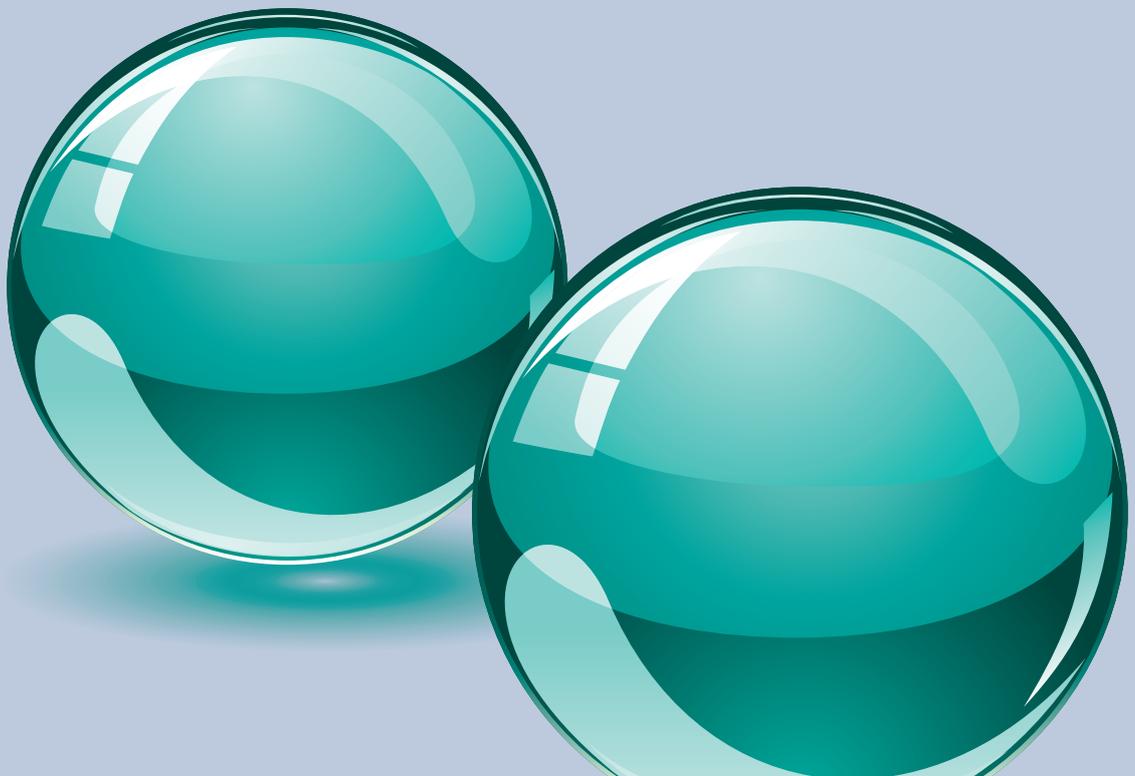
The initial discussion is key – find out what the mentee wants from you and explain to him/her what you can provide.

In three words, what does mentoring mean to you?

Honesty, integrity, success.

Section 8

Summary



The aim of this guide was to provide an insight into the mentoring process, highlighting some of the obvious and not so obvious benefits, and to share some useful models and frameworks for approaching mentoring. The case studies add another dimension, by providing first-hand, recent experience of mentoring.

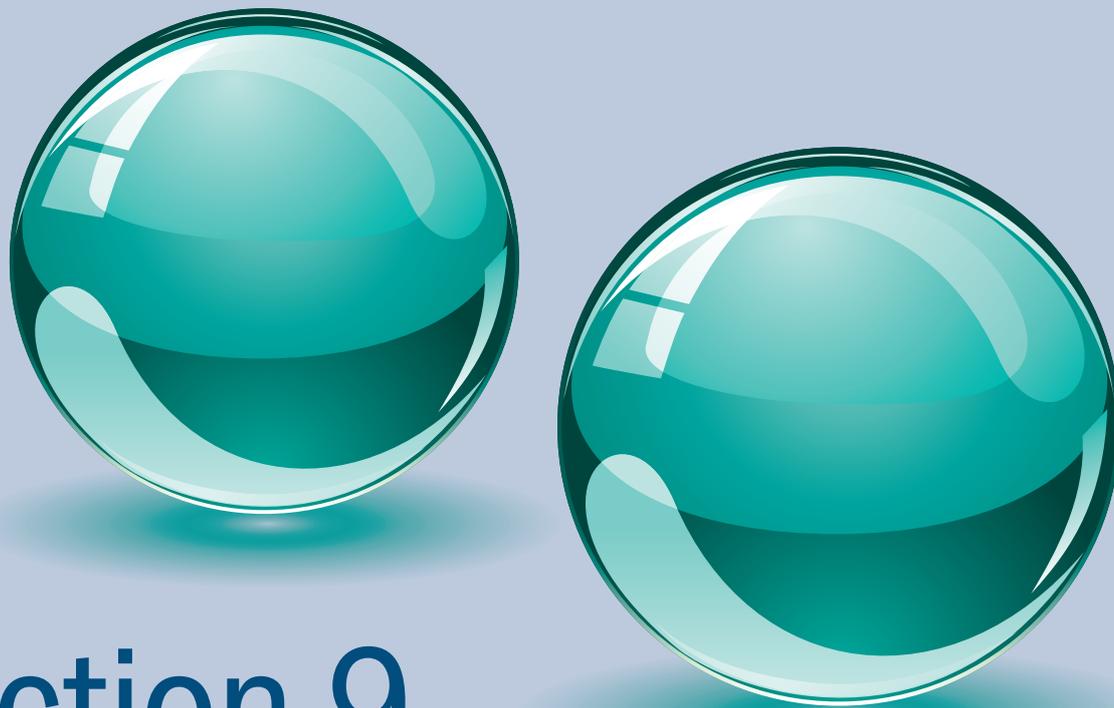
We hope that you have found the information relevant and useful. While mentoring is very common, there remains enough diversity in approaches to make guidance useful. The process can be extremely rewarding, providing a fantastic opportunity to develop others and be developed. It can also be challenging, taking commitment and effort to identify options and assess the best routes forward. Building self-awareness will always be an emotional journey and, if done properly, can make a significant difference to effectiveness and employment satisfaction. But a common theme emerges in the case studies – mentoring is an important part of development, and when you've had a positive experience, there is a desire to pay it forward and share lessons learned.

IOP can help you on your mentoring journey, as a mentor or mentee, and offers members a number of useful guides as well as the online mentoring service to help you find the right support and guidance. Mentoring through IOP offers another dimension to a mentoring relationship, as it can have the advantage of being outside of the workplace, something that some people may find beneficial depending on circumstances and development goals.

It's never too late to start the process.

Visit IOP's mentoring service at www.iop.org/membership/prof-dev/tools/page_51437.html.

The process can be extremely rewarding, providing a fantastic opportunity to develop others and be developed.



Section 9

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The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
www.cipd.co.uk

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council
www.emccouncil.org

For further information contact:

IOP Institute of Physics

76 Portland Place, London W1B 1NT

Tel +44 (0)20 7470 4800

Fax +44 (0)20 7470 4991

E-mail members.careers@iop.org

www.iop.org

Charity registration number 293851

Scottish Charity Register number SC040092

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Printed December 2014

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