

**WIG**The Whitehall & Industry Group  
connecting the sectors

## Cross Sector mentoring

### Guidance for mentors

Being a mentor can be hugely rewarding, help advance your career – and someone else's.

### Chemistry meeting

Use your first meeting with your mentee to assess the chemistry. Ask lots of questions and get to know each other so you get a sense of whether this is the right match for both of you.

When you have chosen a mentoring partner, it is tempting to start to discuss specific issues straightaway. However, your first mentoring session should be used to set the framework for the mentoring relationship as a whole.

Find out what your mentee wants from the relationship and decide together if that's achievable.

### Practicalities

This will include:

- Agreeing 'ground rules';
- Agreeing practical arrangements;
- Agreeing and prioritising objectives.

Set some overall goals for the mentoring relationship at the beginning and add some specific objectives for the month ahead each time you meet. This will help you to see the progress you're making.

### Active listening

Listening, and making sure your mentee feels heard, is one of the most important parts of your role. Active listening involves more than just hearing someone speak. When you practice active listening, you are fully concentrating on what is being said.

Tips for active listening:

- Adopt a neutral and non-judgmental stance;
- Be patient and comfortable with silence – this gap will allow the mentee to flesh out their thoughts;
- Give both verbal and nonverbal feedback to show signs of listening (e.g., smiling, eye contact, leaning in, mirroring)
- Ask questions and clarify what is being said
- If you find yourself thinking about what you're going to say next, remember this will exhaust your mind as you're splitting into two places simultaneously;
- Reflecting back what is being said;
- Summarise the conversation and next steps.

**WIG**The Whitehall & Industry Group  
connecting the sectors

## Progress

To ensure that mentoring has a clear focus and purpose, the mentor and mentee need to agree and clarify what the mentee wants to achieve from the programme. Writing these down is important – otherwise, there's a danger that they remain vague or get forgotten completely. They can be recorded on the mentee's record of objectives so that they can be used at subsequent meetings. The objectives agreed should be ones which:

- Will significantly improve or change things for the mentee or their organisation if they are achieved;
- Are balanced between individual and organisational outcomes;
- Are specific and practical, rather than broad and general;
- Can realistically be achieved within a year.

Ask your mentee to follow up with an email to you with any learning and actions achieved. This can help you avoid getting stuck on the same issues or covering the same ground and keep focused on the positive progress that has been made.

## Support

WIG's mentoring Coordinator will be available to provide support throughout the programme, and will contact you approximately three months into the programme to review how things are going and identify whether any support or guidance is needed.

## What happens at the end of the programme?

It is important that mentoring is the start of a process of personal development for the mentee and mentor, that continues beyond the end of the mentoring programme. In order to achieve this, we suggest that the last meeting of the mentoring programme is used to:

- Clarify what has been learnt and achieved;
- Agree an action plan for how the mentor and mentee will use and build upon this learning.

The WIG mentoring Coordinator will meet with each mentor and mentee at the end of the programme, to evaluate their experience of the programme and review how the programme can be improved for the future.

Overall, we sincerely hope to facilitate an enjoyable experience, in which you can make a difference to someone else's career.