

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

Cross-Sector mentoring

Guidance for mentees

A successful mentoring relationship allows individuals to access a pool of experience that is larger, or at least different, from their own. It is a trusting relationship where mentees can discuss issues and concerns in confidence, benefitting from their mentor's advice and experience.

Chemistry meeting

Use your first meeting with your mentor 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.

Establish what you want 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.

Success

Be clear on your needs. Set SMART goals and come prepared to each meeting with an overview or an outline of what you want to accomplish during your session. SMART goals helps you progress quicker and stay on track. When both you and your mentor are clear on the target outcome, you can both work together to reach it and share that sense of accomplishment.

Be proactive. Your mentor is there to guide you to success - however you have both defined success. They are there as an objective sounding board and provide an experienced yet neutral ear. Oftentimes, they will allow you the space to come to your own conclusions on certain issues. Follow up by communicating how you have implemented their advice or the advice you may have come to on your own during the discussion.

Be honest. If you disagree with something, don't be afraid to share that, as it will lead to a much more fruitful and authentic discussion.

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Be open to feedback. Your mentor may be able to objectively identify and relay destructive patterns that might be hindering your success. Remember not to take this too personally and remain receptive to mentoring, as they are there to help you improve.

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.

Follow up with an email to your mentor 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.