

# Guidance on Mentoring



These Guidelines have been prepared from various material including the outline guidelines produced by EC<sup>UK</sup> following a series of Seminars in June/July 2005.

For the purposes of the ECD, it is defined as “Provision of independent support and encouragement to potential ECD members and EC<sup>UK</sup> Registrants”.

The Oxford English dictionary defines as mentor as “A Wise Counsellor” and Megginson & Clutterbuck in their book define it as ‘Offline help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking’.

There is a need to beware of conflicting terms such as counsellor, buddy, coach, tutor, supervisor, advisor, facilitator, helper, overseer, sponsor, assessor, interpreter etc. Maybe all these functions can all be regarded as aspects of Mentoring!

It is important to stress the very wide scope within which Mentoring could be applied. Most discussions tend to focus on Professional Development, young graduates or the Technical Report Option. It is, however, relevant for all stages of the Registration process; all ages and all 3 levels of Registration although a different balance of Mentoring skills may be required depending upon the requirements.

Often Mentoring is conducted without actually being identified as such. For example staff or colleagues will often perform a ‘Mentoring’ function at the initial application stage.

## Requirements of a Mentor

A mentor needs to be a suitably experienced person, who is willing and able, to provide help and guidance, to enable a Mentee, to recognise their own development potential, encourage them to realise it, praise when it is achieved and challenge them to do more.

The skills required will vary according to the mentoring function, for example –

- academic experience may be important to establish individual requirements;
- UK-SPEC knowledge may be important to assess the different routes;
- technical expertise may be more important at the Professional Development stage;
- the personal approach may be important at the initial application and final Interview stage

There are many different arrangements within which the Mentoring process can be established. Mentors can have several Mentees and visa versa.

Two particular issues need to be considered carefully -

- Mentoring is based on a personal relationship. The Mentor may have the power to influence the career path of a Mentee in order to ensure s/he gains the required competencies. There can be a conflict of interest between the business requirements and the Mentee requirements. They can in some cases be matched but normally the business requirements will take precedence which may be to the detriment of effective Mentoring
- Approval by the Institution of the Mentor may, in a very small number of cases, lead to legal difficulties if the Mentee is not successful. To minimise the likelihood of this outcome it is important to have clear processes and, in particular, define clearly the role of the Mentor

Mentees can find their own Mentors or may request the Institution to assist. In the former case the Institution must have a mechanisms of ‘approving’ Mentors in order to ensure they are aware of the requirements and the process

The Mentoring Process is a very personal one and in consequence interpersonal skills are key. Mentors need to know their own limitations; have an ability to build relationships, listen and inspire confidence; to have commitment, broad knowledge and judgement; and be encouraging, challenging, objective, respectful and discrete.

The following “Golden Rules” need to be remembered - a mentor is not the boss, needs to avoid conflicts of interest, be confidential and meet, at least initially, face to face with a mentee.

Guidelines for mentoring relationships are provided as Annex A and a Mentors Checklist is provided as Annex B. These may assist in the preparation for meetings between mentor and mentee.

## Annex A

### Guidelines for Mentoring Relationships

The following guidelines should be read by all mentors and mentees. They do not constitute a formal agreement but should be understood by both parties.

- At the outset, the roles of mentor and mentee should be agreed.
- The mentor's role is to respond to the mentee's developmental needs. The mentor must not impose his/her own agenda.
- Both parties should take equal responsibility for progression of the mentoring partnership.
- Any matters discussed between the mentor and mentee should be treated as confidential.
- The mentor should not act on behalf of the mentee. The mentor and mentee should be open and truthful with each other, and in connection with the relationship itself at all times.
- The mentor and mentee should respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.
- Where possible (depending on both parties' geographical location) the frequency and length of meetings should be mutually agreed, along with the means of contact between meetings for minor issues.
- The mentor should provide constructive feedback to the mentee, while the mentee should attempt to tackle any areas for development.
- Both mentor and mentee must be happy with the location of meetings giving due regard to safety, security, mutual well being and travel arrangements.
- Mentors should be able to decide whether it is appropriate to refer a mentee elsewhere for advice but should not themselves offer specific advice. The mentor's role is to challenge and support the mentee.
- The relationship should last for a mutually agreeable time period, whereupon it can be continued or terminated.
- Both mentor & mentee should share responsibility for the smooth winding down of the relationship once it has achieved its purpose and, for informing the ECD Membership Officer
- Either party may terminate the relationship after discussing the matter with one another first ensuring mutual respect and understanding of the conclusion
- The mentoring relationship is entirely voluntary for both parties. The ECD does not reimburse any expenditure.

Most of the above guidelines will apply to those participating in **e-mentoring** pairings, however, additional points which need to be taken into consideration are as follows:

- When face-to-face mentoring is not possible for individuals (distance difficulties, no local mentor/mentee availability, etc), e-mentoring may be suggested and co-ordinated by the ECD.
- Whilst e-mentoring may be convenient it also has to be recognised that it can have its limitations; for example:
  - it may take longer to build a good mentoring relationship
  - the benefits of a face to face meeting such as facial expressions, body language, etc are lost
- E-mentoring best works for individuals who have an open mind and are keen to make it work

## Annex B

### Checklist for Mentors

#### Before the Meeting

- Review the notes of the previous meeting and decide on a structure for this meeting
- Be aware of requirements for registration at the appropriate level
- Have a copy of the application form available
- Be able to demonstrate relevant competencies as required by UKSPEC (IE have sufficient experience, skill, knowledge and understanding)
- Confirm time and date based on prior agreement
- Make a plan for your own day
- Clear desk and check your available time
- Switch off phones
- Relax – irrespective of your own issues and challenges
- Smile – however you are feeling today

#### During the meeting

- Smile – be welcoming and not too formal
- Chat about something light as an introduction
- Check how s/he is feeling today
- Briefly summarise the notes of the previous meeting
- Update status of any actions that were agreed
- Jointly establish the “gap” between the individual’s capabilities and the requirements for registration – develop an action plan to plug the gap. Consider how confident you are that the individual is registrable.
- Listen actively (Remember that “silent” is an anagram of “listen”)
- Agree ‘confidentiality clause’
- Check for feelings as well as facts
- Ask open questions
- Build on the Mentee’s own ideas
- Be honest, supportive, encouraging
- Share your thoughts and ideas but don’t give advice
- Only make promises that you are sure you can keep
- Take notes (or ask him/her to do so)
- Summarise actions
- Agree date/time for next meeting

#### After the meeting

- Send a brief note to summarise actions (or delegate this to Mentee)
- Do anything that you have promised to do promptly
- Keep in touch between meetings eg:
  - How did the trip to XYZ go
  - I saw this article in the journal of the Institute of ABC and thought you might be interested
  - Had you thought of entering for this.....
  - I’m going to a conference sponsored by the Institute of ABC and thought you would like to join me