

Guidance For Mentees



These Guidelines are intended to give guidance to mentees on the process and relationship that can be expected. Various material including the outline guidelines produced by EC^{UK} following a series of Seminars in June/July 2005 have been used in its composition. A similar document exists for mentors.

For the purposes of the ECD, mentoring is defined as “Provision of independent support and encouragement to potential ECD members and EC^{UK} 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’.

It is important to stress the very wide scope within which Mentoring can 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.

Functions of a Mentor

If you have been identified as requiring some additional assistance to enable registration via one of the 3 routes, the ECD will discuss your development needs with you and agree an action plan.

If you wish, the ECD will identify suitable mentors and put you in touch. Equally, if you wish, you can find your own Mentor. You should be aware, however, that all Mentors put forward by the ECD will have been subject to a mechanism of ‘approval’ to ensure they are aware of the requirements and the process.

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 mentors skills will vary according to the required 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

Particular issues that need to be considered carefully are -

- The mentor is provided to give guidance only to the mentee. This may entail suggesting information sources, academic institutions, courses or technical papers. It is, however, up to the mentee to progress the work.
- Deadlines should be agreed jointly. However, information needs to be issued to the mentor in plenty of time to allow any further checking/suggestions to be made. This should be built into the work program.
- Mentoring is based on a personal relationship. 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.
- Any difficulties in the relationship must reported to the ECD as soon as possible as this will have a detrimental effect on the speed of the mentees progression.

The Mentoring Process is a very personal one and in consequence interpersonal skills from both parties are key.

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

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

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 have a responsibility for the progression of the mentoring partnership but its purpose is to aid the mentee in development.
- 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