

Sheffield Digital Mentoring Scheme: Guide for Mentors

Thanks to Sheffield Creative Guild for providing their guide as a template.

This document should be considered both a guideline for the service you will receive and a code-of-conduct for participating in the scheme.

Who can be a mentor?

Being a great mentor doesn't hinge on your seniority or your job title! People from all organisational levels and all walks of life can make a huge impact on somebody else's growth and development.

It doesn't matter whether you've grown your experience in unconventional ways, or whether you've taken a circuitous or unexpected route to get to where you are today. What matters is your insight, drive, nature, and, above all, your desire to support and help others to reflect on themselves and their goals, and to help guide them on their journey by offering the invaluable experience you've gained so far.

In summary, if **you** feel you have something to offer to others looking to develop themselves (whether that be in the industry you currently work in, an industry you have worked in previously, or in any other skills or areas that you know about) then you should sign up.

Expectations for Mentors

What will feature in a six-month mentoring period:

- One-to-one support and guidance for the mentee's career plans.
- Encouragement and support to focus on and formulate aspirations for the mentee's career and skills.
- Help thinking about where their career opportunities may be found.
- Explore how to build professional networks and relationships.
- Share your knowledge and skills, gained from experience working in the mentee's target sector and skills.
- Help building confidence and skills, both in the mentee's practice and the networking and social elements that accompany it.

What mentoring is *not*:

- Training, coaching, or teaching.
- A mechanism for providing technical training.
- Offered for a personal agenda.
- Outsourcing specialist expertise or advice.
- Performance management.
- Rescuing.
- Counselling.

The role of the mentor

Listen

Listen attentively and provide structure, feedback, and direction.

Share

Share own real life experiences relevant to the mentee's situation or goals.

Challenge

Question the mentee's preconceptions of self and approach to situations. Encourage them to expect more of themselves and to be aware of their own potential.

Clarify

Encourage the mentee to be clear about their rationale for decisions and the ideas underpinning their practice or goals.

Affirm

Value and validate the mentee.

Respect

Remember that this is a commitment on both sides. Be respectful of your mentee's experiences as well as their time. Clearly communicate any changes ahead of schedule, and ensure you can commit to this programme for 12 months (unless otherwise agreed).

A mentee may be daunted by the idea of being paired with an established industry professional, and worried about how the relationship will pan out. One of the most valuable things a mentor can do is to put the mentee at ease from the outset: be friendly, approachable, and non-judgemental.

Similarly, you may be worried about whether you have the skills or experience to support your mentee (i.e. imposter syndrome). It's a good idea to have a realistic conversation early on about goal-setting, in which your mentee can let you know that their expectations of you are in line with what you feel you have to offer.

Time commitment

- Six 1-hour mentoring sessions. We would ask mentors for a commitment of one hour a month over six months to work with your mentee. This can be flexible if required.
- Option to attend a 1 hour information and guidance session so that you can find out how Sheffield Digital is running the scheme, meet the organiser and other mentors, and ask questions.
- Complete a feedback questionnaire. Both mentors and mentees will be asked to complete our feedback survey at the end of the mentoring period. This is so we can continue to develop and improve the scheme for future participants.
- We will hold meetups giving mentors an opportunity to meet each other. This is not obligatory but will be offered.
- We would also like to run a series of blog posts/podcasts/videos for participants to talk about what they learned in the process (or to document their journey while they are taking part), and while this also will not be obligatory, we would greatly appreciate any contributions to this and can offer advice and guidance on writing the post.

Lifecycle of the mentoring relationship

1. Establishing the relationship: building rapport and trust.
2. Setting direction: discussing the mentee's hopes for the future and how to work together to begin your journey towards meeting these goals.
3. Progression: working towards those aims, with regular check-ins.
4. Winding up: discussing the successes and challenges of the past six months and the mentee's next steps.
5. Moving on: parting ways with the option to continue a friendly, professional relationship.

Opt-out

You can withdraw from the process or request a change to your pairing at any point during the scheme via this form: <https://forms.gle/ks9zSF39KDVgE7fX8>

Please think carefully before withdrawing from the scheme while paired up with a mentee and about the impact this will have on them.

Data Protection

Any data obtained as part of this scheme is held by Sheffield Digital and falls under Sheffield Digital's Privacy and Data Policies, which you can read about here:

<https://sheffield.digital/about/data-protection-policy/>

