

The role of the mentor

Mentoring is a highly effective learning activity which is designed to accelerate the development of an individual's professional knowledge and skill in their role by utilising the support of someone who has expertise in that role. It can be used equally effectively with new or existing staff where the development of new skills and knowledge is necessary.

The role of the mentor is to support the mentee (or client) by providing advice, guidance, challenge and support. It is not always to give solutions and a skilled mentor will provide the mentee with opportunities to discover answers themselves.

While successful mentoring is predicated upon an effective relationship, there is no single fixed model or approach. Every mentoring relationship is unique, however there are some elements that are present in any. Some of the most important of these are:

- The relationship is based upon trust
- The relationship is lead by the mentee (client)
- There is mutual understanding between both parties about the nature and purpose of the relationship
- There are regular meetings between mentor and mentee at a time and location suitable to and agreed by both
- The mentee maintains responsibility for their own development and owns their development agenda, they provides the focus for meetings
- The mentor provides guidance, challenge and support and freely shares their skills, knowledge and experience
- The mentor may challenge and remove barriers outside of the mentee's control where these negatively affect their development
- The mentor is not responsible for managing the performance of the mentee.