

Mentoring contract

It is important to make a clear agreement for the mentoring relationship. The exact shape and nature of mentoring relationships is determined by the mentor and mentee involved. As part of the process of developing the mentoring relationship on a firm foundation, we recommend that both parties talk about and jointly agree the basis of the working relationship.

Below are questions and topics you might like to discuss when starting your relationship:

1 The purpose of the mentoring relationship

What do both parties understand as the overall intention of the mentoring relationship?

- What do you want to achieve from the relationship?
- What are the boundaries of the relationship? How will you handle confidentiality?
- How is mentoring support different from research supervision, appraisal and counselling?
- The roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee.

2 The potential topics for discussion

It is always helpful to agree on:

- The broad areas with which you are both comfortable as the main focus for mentoring.
- Are there any limits or conflicts of interest?
- Are personal issues acceptable to discuss?

3 The practical arrangements

It is important to agree the initial structure of the mentoring relationship:

- How often do you want to meet?
- Where will you meet?
- Will you be available for face-to-face meetings occasionally, as well as for online or email conversations? What are the limits to that contact?
- How long do you anticipate the relationship lasting? It may be helpful to discuss the future of your mentoring relationship regularly and whether it is still useful.

Having this clarifying conversation at the start of the mentoring relationship enables both parties to be confident that there is a shared understanding of the mentoring process.