LSE'S Guide to Mentoring for Members of Staff

LSE

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a professional relationship that involves the practice of an individual sharing their knowledge, skills and experience with one or more individuals, assisting them to progress in their careers.

Mentoring is much more than just 'giving advice', or passing on what your experience wasin a particular area or situation. A Mentor motivates and empowers the mentee to identify their own issues and goals and help them to find ways of resolving or reaching them.

Mentors do not do the Mentee's task for them or expect them to do it the way the mentor did it, but instead- understand and respect their different ways of working during the mentoring process.

Role of the Mentor:

The Mentor is responsible for guiding and sharing valuable information about their career and how it can help practically help the mentee. Mentors must make the learning journey comfortable enough to develop mutual trust and respect with the Mentee, maintain confidentiality, and listen not only to what is being said, but also *how* it is being said.

What Mentors can do:

- Act as an impartial sounding board.

- Create valuable space and time for the Mentee to 'stand back' and review where they are now,where they want to get to, and how best to get there.

- Contribute viewpoints, advice, and information from their own knowledge, experience, and expertise.

- Assist the Mentee to achieve changes and goals to enhance your professional and personal life.

Sensitivity, Confidentiality and Mental Health:

As part of setting boundaries, it is important for Mentors and Mentees to discuss any topics, themes or elements of personal and/or professional life that the Mentee is not comfortable with and that should be avoided or addressed carefully. Anything that Mentees wish to maintain confidential should not be shared by the Mentor with anyone outside of the Mentoring relationship to safeguard interests and sensitive information. At any point in the Mentoring relationship, if issues surrounding personal life, mental health concerns, discrimination on the basis of one's cultural, sexual, racial or socio-economic, identity come to light-it is the Mentor's responsibility to get in touch with relevant support systems in place. This could be the Mentee's line manager (if the Mentee is comfortable with it), and relevant networks in place-Safe Contacts, Staff Counselling Services, EAP, Mental Health First Aiders.

What Mentors cannot do:

- Mentoring is not counselling or therapy nor is it a replacement for the line management relationship.
- Mentors are prepared to offer help as the need arises- within pre-discussed and pre-established boundaries.
- Mentors shouldn't be partial to their mentees, or exercise any form of favouritism in professional situations that are separate from the Mentoring relationship.
- Mentors cannot offer promotional opportunities or favor mentees as professional candidates for training programmes, internal staff developmental and growth opportunities.

Role of the Mentee:

The Mentee needs to come to the relationship with a desire to learn and to take ownership of the process in an active and constructive way as an equal partner. A Mentee must take responsibility for their own learning and development.

Self-reflection is very important for Mentees to engage in, especially when it comes to mapping out why they wish to receive mentoring. Some guiding questions for Mentees to refer to when considering Mentoring are:

- **I want to progress my career, but I'm not sure how?**
- **How can I be more effective in my role?**
- **How can I work through the challenges faced in my role?**
- **How can I develop into a leadership role?**
- **How can I develop my skills in for example, developing others, thinking more creatively, making decisions?**
- **How can I be more influential?**
- **How can I develop my confidence/self-belief?**

It is important that potential Mentees not only ask themselves these questions, but also talk through these with their line manager to ascertain whether Mentoring is right step for them at present in their career. Having the right expectations from oneself and a clear understanding of what they'd like Mentoring for is important before the start of a Mentoring relationship.

Things to keep in mind for Mentees:

- There are many reasons why someone seeks mentoring (highlighted in section "Types of Mentoring at LSE") Mentees must be honest and clear about why they want to receive Mentoring.
- Mentees must take charge of their own development by setting objectives for the Mentoring relationship.
- Mentees need to feel safe and comfortable enough to discuss their career development with their Mentor. If this is not the case, it is important that Mentees be honest about it and let Organisational Learning know of this.
- Mentees should provide feedback of the Mentoring relationship to the Mentor and Mentee's line manager from time to time.
- The Mentoring relationship is centred around the Mentee and their development. Mentees must make an active effort to engage with the Mentor by setting up meetings, agendas, and put their best foot forward.

Types of Mentoring at LSE:

- **LSE Mentoring Scheme**
- **BAME Mentoring Scheme**
- **Mentoring as part of a leadership/development programme: e.g., LDP, AURORA , ITL**

LSE's Mentoring Scheme

The School has a formal mentoring scheme for Professional Service Staff.

If a member of staff wants a Mentor, it is important that they first discuss this with their line manager, who approves of them entering a Mentoring relationship, and commits to supporting it by allowing for the Mentee to have the time and necessary resources to be mentored. The Mentee can then request to have a Mentor, either by using the Mentor request form or getting in touch with HR Organisational Learning. No mentors will be allocated without the line manager's agreement on the form (s).

The area(s) that the individual may wish to be mentored on include but are not restricted to:

- Knowledge of LSE and its culture
- Knowledge of the wider Higher Education sector
- Communicating effectively
- Confidence and assertiveness
- Dealing positively with change
- Improving resilience, work life balance and well being
- Management or moving into a management role
- Leadership or moving into a leadership role
- Negotiating and influencing skills
- Networking opportunities
- Personal organisational skills and workload management (prioritising, planning and time management)
- Project management
- Problem solving
- Strategic thinking and implementation
- Career development and planning e.g. any particular professional specialism

The Mentee can select one or more of these areas in the Mentoring form. This information will be used to match the individual with a trained mentor. As and when available, a suitable Mentor will be contacted by HR Organisational Learning. Once they have agreed to mentor the individual, HR Organisational Learning will contact the requesting staff member and provide them with the name and contact details of the mentor. It is then responsibility of the mentee to make arrangements to meet the mentor.

The length of the mentoring arrangement is down to the Mentor and Mentee however most relationships will last from 3 to 9 months. At the end of the process, it is the responsibility of the Mentee to inform HR Organisational Learning that the process has been completed.

Mentoring

66 Mentoring is one person sharing their knowledge, skills and experience to assist others to progress in their careers **99**

Mentoring is one person sharing their knowledge, skills and experience to assist others to progress in their careers. Mentors are prepared to offer help as the need arises - within agreed bounds. Mentoring is rather more than 'giving advice', or passing on what your experience was in a particular area or situation.

It's about motivating and empowering the other person to identify their own issues and goals, and helping them to find ways of resolving or reaching them - not by doing it for them, or expecting them to 'do it the way I did it', but by understanding and respecting different ways of working.

Print or share

The LSE mentoring scheme +

OL LSE Mentoring Webpage. You can access the page **here.**

How to apply —

For more in depth reading before you apply or volunteer, it may be useful to read our Guide to the Mentoring Scheme [PDF].

To apply as a *mentee*, simply complete our application form here ⤢.

To volunteer as a *mentor*, complete our mentor volunteer form ⤢.

Guidelines on applying to the Mentoring Scheme

BAME Mentoring Scheme

As part of the LSE Mentoring Scheme, you can also opt to be part of the BAME Mentoring Scheme. The Organisational Learning Team and LSE's EmbRace have set up this Scheme to improve race equity at LSE by supporting career progression and developing confidence in BAME* (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) staff.

This scheme supports BAME staff to navigate the workplace with support from senior colleagues, either through 1-to-1 Mentoring or Mentoring circles. In order to be eligible for the BAME Mentoring Scheme, Mentees must identify as Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic background. Mentors and Mentees who are part of the BAME Mentoring Scheme must aim to focus on developmental concerns and objectives while keeping a sensitive focus on the Mentee's experiences as a BAME member of staff and how that has influenced their development, networking and overall functioning in the School. Have a look at LSE'S BAME Mentoring webpage here.

In addition to all the mentoring guidance in this document, Mentors and Mentees specifically part of the BAME Mentoring Scheme must keep in mind:

- The Mentoring relationship must carefully address the concerns of BAME Mentees in terms of their professional development in the School and must address their experiences by virtue of being part of a particular ethnic/racial community.
- Should Mentees require support that the Mentor is not equipped to provide (see section "Role of the Mentor"), Mentors must effectively signpost to relevant staff networks and resources, such as Safe Contacts, Mental Health First Aiders, EAP and the EmbRace network.

Mentoring as part of a leadership/development programme:

Note: If you are a delegate on LSE OL's currently runs programmes like AURORA or ITL or others, or someone mentoring them, please read this section carefully:

If a delegate on a training programme is to be assigned a Mentor as part of an external leadership development programme, here are some things the Delegate or Mentee must keep in mind:

- If the programme dictates that Mentors from the School need to be assigned to delegates (mentees), HR Organisatinal Learning will assign suitable mentors to the delegates. For example, in the case of AURORA Women's Leadership Programme and Introduction to Leadership.

- If the programme doesn't dictate the allocation of a mentor but you would like one, please discuss this with your line manager and reach out to Organisational Learning directly via email to be assigned a mentor.

- Most external programmes with a mentoring element dictate that the delegate's (mentee) line manager must not be their mentor.

- As part of development on the programme, delegates (mentees) must set objectives that align with the modules that are part of the leadership/external training programme. Mentors and Mentees would benefit from structuring their meeting around the schedule of the programme modules to ensure that mentoring runs simultaneously with the programme.

- **For programmes with delegates that belong to a particular group on the basis of gender, sex, race, (e.g., AURORA)** :Mentors who do not belong to the same group should be sensitive to this difference, and use the Mentoring opportunity to work through the delegate's (mentee) developmental journey.

- **For AURORA Delegates and Mentors**: In addition to the guidance in this Mentoring guide, please have a look at AURORA's guidelines for both Mentors and Mentees here:

  AURORA Mentoring Handbook: a detailed guide on AURORA specific mentoring and the modules of the programme.
  Aurora Mentoring toolkit - First Mentoring Meeting Checklist.pdf (advance-he.ac.uk): to help set the tone between Mentor and AURORA delegate (Mentee) in the first meeting.
  Aurora Mentoring toolkit - Crib Sheet for Mentors.pdf (advance-he.ac.uk): further guidance on managing and maintaining an effective Mentoring Relationship.

The First Meeting:

The first meeting between Mentor and Mentee sets the scene for forthcoming meetings. In this first meeting, both parties should consider the following elements:

1. **The Relationship**

The first meeting is an opportunity for both Mentor and Mentee to get to know each other and establish the beginnings of a productive relationship. Exchange of information and seeing connections, similarities, opinions and differences is useful at this stage. It will be important to speak about the following things during the first meeting:

- Existing roles of both Mentor and Mentee, as this will help to get sense of where both parties are in their career.
- Career paths or trajectories of Mentor and Mentee to date.
- Previous experiences of Mentoring either as a mentor or a mentee. This helps to determine any expectations Mentor and Mentee might have from the Mentoring relationship based on previous experiences and highlight opinions and pre-existing perspectives about Mentoring.
- Discuss the reason for seeking Mentoring and establish concrete objectives that both Mentor and Mentee agree on.

2. **Expectations from Mentoring and each other:**

An explicit conversation about expectations from Mentoring reduces the possibility of misunderstandings later. It enables an agreed understanding to emerge about the purpose of Mentoring, what Mentor and Mentee expects of each other and how best to make it work. The following are possible areas for discussion:

- What the mentee is wanting from mentoring and what the mentor is able to offer?
- How mentoring is different from line management or supervision and how that boundary will be managed?
- Preferred ways of learning and giving/receiving feedback.
- How the mentoring meetings will run, the structure and content of meetings.
- How and when to review progress, gather feedback, and consider if mentoring is working and plans for ending of the relationship.

3. **Practicalities of the Mentoring Relationship:**

Discussing this is very important, as a clear structure and plan in place is the foundation of a functional Mentoring relationship. The Practicalities include:

- Frequency and duration of meetings. For instance, if the Mentoring relationship has been taken up as part of a leadership development programme, it will be imperative for the Mentor-Mentee to meet after/before each session of the programme.
- Confidentiality, sensitive areas of discussion, topics that should be avoided, and boundaries for both Mentor and Mentee. *Please refer to sections "Role of Mentor", "Role of Mentee" and "Sensitivity, Confidentiality and Mental Health" for some guidance on the responsibilities and roles of both Mentor and Mentee.*
- Process for arranging meetings- location, timings.
- Managing cancellation/missed meetings. In the event of a cancellation, there should always be provisions for rescheduling on an alternative date and time when both parties are available.
- Communication between meetings.
- Length of the relationship – how long will the mentoring relationship last for, and timelines to achieve objectives.

By the end of the first meeting there should be a common understanding of the areas that are most likely to be discussed, how Mentor and Mentee will work together and a clear agreement about how to communicate with each other.

The Mentoring Relationship:

Mentoring involves the creation of reflective space for the Mentee, helping them to improve the quality of their thinking. Mentors will also provide professional friendship, role modelling, advice and be a challenger that will stretch the Mentee in their learning zone. Mentoring is a confidential relationship between Mentor and Mentee (i.e., with no direct involvement of the Mentee's line manager). It is a positive, developmental relationship which is driven primarily by the mentee.
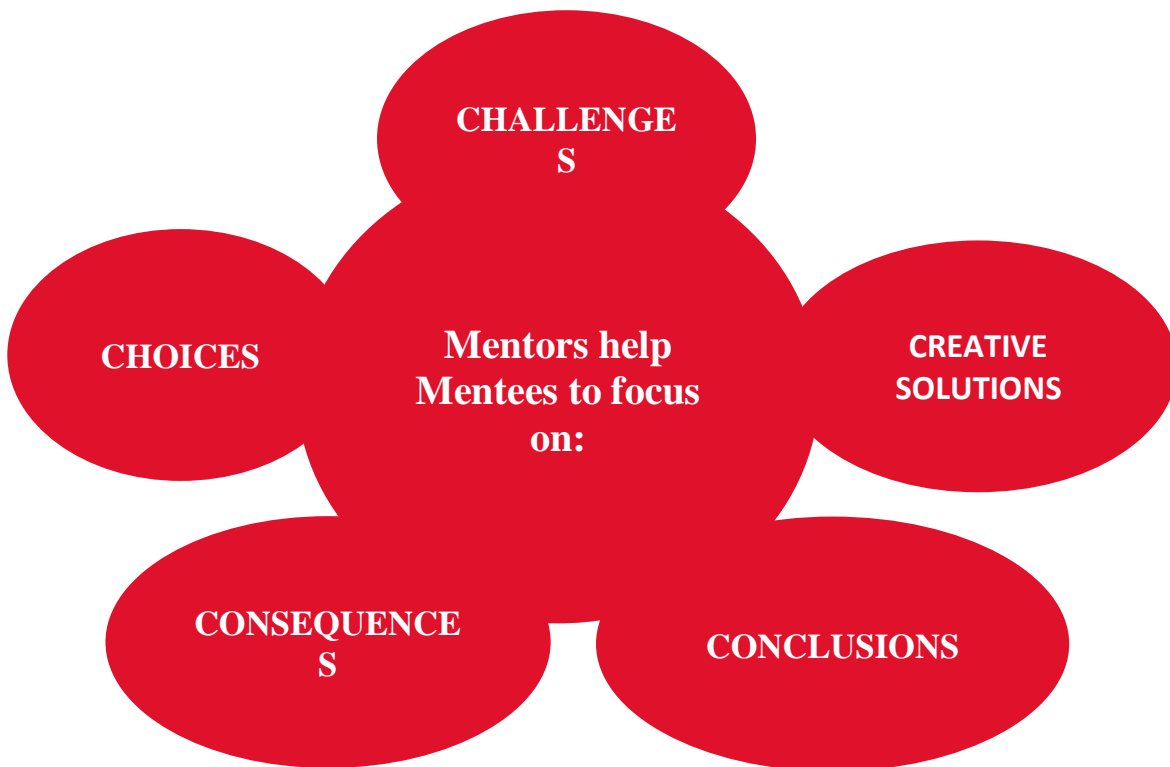
Consider this question: What does the mentee want to focus on and why? Discussing this broad question in detail with the Mentee is important, as it helps to bring out themes that the Mentee wishes to explore in the Mentoring process. And highlights what is most important for the Mentee to work on within this Mentoring relationship. If the Mentee comes to the first meeting with very clear direction, the Mentor should challenge them on their thinking to ensure they are really working on the most important two or three learning objectives for them at this point in their life and career.

How to get the most out of a Mentoring session:

Mentoring when done right benefits both Mentor and Mentee, therefore indirectly benefitting their team projects, colleagues, and the School.

A Mentoring Conversation is a particular type of conversation- with a definite purpose and an intended benefit. Shaping the Mentoring conversations around the decided objectives is important. The framework below shows the importance of assessing the current situation and can be helpful in loosely shaping such a conversation. It provides movement towards learning and action.

The 5C model of Mentoring illustrates the focus of Mentoring and helps shape appropriate conversations between Mentors and Mentees:

CHALLENGES

CHOICES

Mentors help Mentees to focus on:

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

CONSEQUENCES

CONCLUSIONS

Additionally, the Mentoring relationship and conversations are underpinned by good communication skills by both parties. Those skills are an ever-changing balance between:

Saying – giving information.

Listening and accurately extracting meaning.

Asking – for clarification or exploration.

Summarising and consolidating.

In the beginning of each meeting, it is imperative that Mentor and Mentee take some time to first establish rapport and feel comfortable in each other's presence (virtually or in person). It is important to follow up on past commitments and actions from the last meeting and discuss them in detail- the process, successes, as well as lessons learned.

It is crucial to regularly review the Mentee's progress against set objectives. These are a few steps Mentors can follow to ensure this happens:

- **Assess the need to revise or update the objectives.**

- **Identify development opportunities and solutions.**

- **Encourage self-management** – the Mentor's role in the relationship is not to create dependencies by dictating problem-solving techniques and decisions to their mentee. Mentors should encourage mentees to manage the achievement of their objectives themselves and providing their experience as a source for ideas, letting the Mentee choose and decide.

- **Mentors should support, listen, challenge-** and only guide and provide advice at the request of their mentee once they have gained some insight themselves into the issues being discussed.

At the end of each Mentoring session, it can be useful to reflect on the balance of communication in the session and whether it was as effective as it could be. Mentors and Mentees need to ensure that the mentoring conversations aren't one-sided. Mentees must be comfortable sharing their thoughts, ideas, and self-reflective thinking with their Mentors, who should be able to provide insightful feedback and steer them in the right direction. For example, this four- s t a g e model can help you focus such a conversation.

Ending the mentoring relationship:

Many Mentoring relationships come to a natural end: the original issues have been resolved, objectives have been achieved, one or other of the parties has left the School, an agreed-upon time limit has come to an end, and so on. In any case, it is crucial to do the following when a Mentoring relationship ends-

- The Final Meeting
- A Review of the Mentoring Process
- Learning and achievements
- A Celebration
- Get in touch with Organisational Learning

- **The Final Meeting:** When Mentor and Mentee have their last official meeting, both parties must engage in reflecting upon their entire journey together. This could be facilitated by asking the following questions:

  i. **What have we achieved together?**
  ii. **What would we like to thank each other for?**
  iii. **Do we want to continue in a more ad hoc, informal relationship and, if so, what will the intent of this be?**
  iv. **When we look back on this relationship, what have we learned that we can apply to our future mentoring relationships?**

- **A Review of the Mentoring process**- what worked for both parties, what didn't work and key takeaways.

- **Learning and achievements-** a recap of objectives and how they were achieved, any learnings Mentor and Mentee found unique, useful. Oftentimes, Mentoring relationships help uncover perspectives and issues that weren't anticipated by either party. It is important to capture this information and make sure that it is addressed and worked with correctly.

  An example: Dave and his Mentor were working on Dave's Confidence and Assertiveness, particularly in presenting. In the process, both Dave and his Mentor realized that Dave's issue had less to do with Confidence and more to do with the fact that he was struggling to connect with his audience- Academics, who he had previously never worked with. This meant that Dave and his Mentor spend some time exploring Dave's interactions with Academics and his understanding of their roles and how they like to receive information in presentations.

- **A Celebration**- a Mentoring relationship is a wholesome as the hard work and effort that has gone into it from both Mentor and Mentee. It is important to celebrate a successful, holistic, and satisfying Mentoring relationship coming to an end. Mentee's line manager and HR should be informed of the successful closure of the Mentoring relationship. Mentors and Mentees might decide to stay in touch periodically after the official end of the Mentoring Relationship.

- **Get in touch with Organisational Learning**- It is important that Mentor and Mentee provide their honest feedback to Organisational Learning to help OL better support the Mentoring Scheme and learn from their valuable feedback.

Unfortunately, there are some mentoring relationships that falter and come to unplanned ends. This can be for a variety of reasons including:

- The parties can't communicate and connect with each other.
- Logistics mean they can never seem to find a mutually suitable time and location.
- The mentee is not being proactive about setting meetings, coming with an agenda and making best use of the mentor's expertise.
- The mentor is telling the mentee what to do and not listening to their issues.

To avoid an unpleasant ending to a Mentoring Relationship, Mentors and Mentees must try to do the following:

- Have a conversation and explicitly agree to finish Mentoring. If you have agreed at the

      beginning to review it after a couple of meetings, this makes it easier to raise the subject and reach a conclusion.

- Extract the positives out of the Mentoring Relationship.
- Review your own contribution and reflect on what you would do differently if you were to take part in mentoring again (this applies to both Mentor and Mentee)
- Provide feedback to the line manager and HR Organisational Learning (note: you can provide feedback to your departments/division's concerned HR Partners, Advisors).