

# Mentoring guidance 2025-26

***For Academic, Research, Policy, Education Career Track (ECT) staff and LSE Fellows***

## **1. Introduction**

The School expects that all staff and particularly those in the early stages of their career receive good advice from their Head of Department (HoD)/Research Centre Director (RCD)/Institute Director (ID) or other senior colleagues on progressing their careers. While staff are expected to be proactive in managing their own careers, the School has in place two approaches to structuring these conversations:

- a [Career Development Review \(CDR\)](#) scheme
- a [Mentoring scheme](#) (this applies to early career staff as explained below)

This guidance applies to the following staff groups, with additional notes for specific staff groups where applicable:

- New Academic Contract staff
- LSE Fellows
- Research staff
- Policy staff
- Education Career Track (ECT) staff

## **2. The purpose of the mentoring scheme**

The mentoring scheme is distinct from the CDR scheme. Mentors give informal advice as needed and provide a sounding board throughout the year, whereas formal CDR meetings take place annually for most staff and are normally conducted by the HoD/RCD/ID.

Both aim to give staff guidance on how to make the most of their career within LSE both for their own development and to further their contribution to the School as a whole.

## **3. The process**

Mentors are allocated by the HoD/RCD/ID. At the start of the academic year, HR will send all departments/centres/institutes a list of staff who should be allocated a mentor that session. The department/centre/institute will review the list and ensure that it is correct and provide HR with any changes. Names of mentors will be collected through the CDR form in June.

New staff should be allocated a mentor no later than one month after their start date. The VCAC will receive a regular report on assigned mentors and follow up if a mentor has not been allocated.

Mentors for pre-Major Review academic staff are reported to the Promotions Committee at its first meeting of each session.

#### **4. Who should have a mentor?**

The following groups of staff, regardless of the length of contract, should be assigned a mentor by their HoD/RCD/ID. For research staff, this should be in discussion with the Principal Investigator (PI) for the project:

	<b>New Academic Contract staff:</b>	<b>LSE Fellows:</b>	<b>Research staff:</b>	<b>Policy staff:</b>	<b>Education Career Track (ECT) staff</b>
<b>Roles</b>	Pre-Major Review academic staff	All LSE Fellows	Research Officers  Research Fellows  Assistant Professorial Research Fellows	Policy Officers  Policy Fellows  Senior Policy Fellows	All ECT staff (whether Assistant, Associate, or Professor) on probation  Post-probation Assistant Professors (Education)

#### **Additional notes:**

- If the employee is 0.2FTE or less, mentoring is optional. A discussion should be held with the employee about whether they would like to be allocated a mentor.
- Other staff not listed above may request a mentor via the HoD/RCD/ID. There is no requirement to send this to HR.

#### **5. Who should be a mentor?**

The mentor will normally be a senior member of academic/research staff within the staff member's department/centre/institute or a related department/centre/institute (for example if they are closest to the mentee's research interests). Please note:

- The mentor cannot be the one holding the CDR meeting.
- Staff on any form of leave should not normally be appointed as mentors.
- **ECT staff:** the mentor should not be the person undertaking Probationary Review Meetings (where this is different).
- **Research staff:** the PI should not be the mentor.

#### **6. The mentoring relationship**

The relationship should be positive and trusting. The HoD/RCD/ID should be mindful of this when allocating new mentors. A mentee can request that they are allocated a

different mentor by the HoD/RCD/ID, although this may not always be possible. The mentor will assume responsibility for regularly discussing the staff member's career and will provide advice on their career development.

## **7. Frequency of meetings**

All mentors are expected to arrange a first meeting with new colleagues allocated to them. In the first year after appointment, meetings should take place once per term, after which they can take place at least once annually. Given the nature of mentoring, it is expected that mentors and mentees will have regular informal meetings.

## **8. The role of the mentor**

The role of the mentor is three-fold:

- to assist the mentee in developing an understanding of the expectations placed upon them within the department and the School;
- to provide a listening ear and informal guidance, so that they can work out how to address any challenges they face at work;
- to act as an advocate for the mentee (e.g., if their workload allocation appears unreasonable, or if they face difficulties with colleagues).

## **9. Areas of discussion that may arise**

The mentor relationship has similarities to coaching. It is important that the relationship is professional and the mentor should feel able to offer criticism and advice which the mentee, whilst encouraged to listen carefully, is not obliged to take.

The matters which fall within the scope of mentoring will depend on the individual. They may include:

- Achieving an appropriate balance between the different elements of the person's role and between work and life.
- Issues arising from writing, research, dealing with journals and publishers, etc.
- Reading and commenting on draft papers/chapters and offering guidance on publication outlets (mentees must be aware that mentors can only do so for a small number of writings).
- Challenges arising in teaching.
- Relationships with colleagues.
- Responding to challenging feedback from students, colleagues, or reviewers.
- Addressing issues related to diversity of all kinds with students and colleagues.
- Contribution to the life of the School, collegiality, and citizenship.
- Managing their administrative load.
- Training and development needs.
- Where to go for further support, advice, and information.

Further areas of discussion for specific staff groups are provided below.

### ***New Academic Contract staff:***

- Research performance, with consideration of the individual's research trajectory, research achievement record, guidance on where to publish, contribution to the Research Excellence Framework, involvement in grant

applications and engagement in the research community in the School and their discipline.

- Teaching contribution, teaching quality and teaching innovation, and feedback from teaching surveys.
- PhD supervision (note: pre-Major Review staff should not be expected to take on a primary supervisor role for research students but should have the opportunity to develop their supervisory skills as a second supervisor).
- Research and teaching administrative arrangements and contributions.
- Knowledge exchange and impact activities.
- Citizenship in the Department, School, and profession.
- Potential for contribution to the School's external activities (e.g., LSE Enterprise (LSE Consulting), Summer School, international institutional links).

### ***Research staff and policy staff:***

The duties of a mentor include discussing whether the researcher or policy staff member has a well-framed programme of work on which progress is being made and whether their programme offers scope for the development of their research and policy interests and skills. Further areas of discussion may include:

- Methodology of research and the structure of their research programme.
- Ways of addressing research problems (including, where relevant, policy-oriented research) and improving quality of outputs.
- How to publish successfully.
- Knowledge exchange and impact activities.

In addition, mentors/mentees are encouraged to discuss issues related to continuity of employment. (Staff are also encouraged to discuss this with their HOD/RCD/ID/PI.) Because most research and policy staff posts depend on external funding, it is crucial to consider well in advance what steps can be taken to avoid an undesired termination of employment due to the end of funding. Mentors should be able to give constructive advice on managing this issue, e.g., about how to balance current work obligations in the School with the need to apply for additional research funding from external sources or explore options outside LSE, where appropriate.

### ***ECT staff:***

- Teaching contribution, teaching and course quality, teaching innovation, and feedback from teaching surveys.
- Teaching administrative arrangements and contributions.
- Pastoral care responsibilities.
- Achieving an appropriate balance between the different elements of the role.
- Citizenship in the Department, School, and profession.
- Potential for contribution to the School's external activities (e.g. LSE Consulting, Summer School, international institutional links).

## **10. What the mentor is NOT responsible for**

The mentor is a 'guide on the side'. It is not their role to line manage the mentee, and the mentor is not responsible for the mentee's career success within the School.

Mentors cannot make commitments to the mentee on behalf of the department/centre/institute regarding the mentee's likelihood of passing Interim or Major

Review or the prospect of a successful promotion. This advice must come from the CDR meeting and review and promotion decisions are taken by the Promotions Committee. Equally, it is up to the mentee to decide what they do with any advice offered.

## **11. Further advice**

Where necessary, the mentor should seek guidance/advice from others (e.g., if concerned about the mentee's health/well-being).

In some cases, it may be appropriate for the mentor to advise the mentee to discuss detailed matters with other colleagues in the department/centre/institute and/or to contact colleagues elsewhere in the School (e.g., [Eden Centre](#), [Research and Innovation](#), [Human Resources](#) or the [Careers Service](#)). Staff can also contact their area's [HR Partners](#) if necessary (e.g., for guidance related to disability, flexible working, caring responsibilities), or their union, for example the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU). There is also a [Staff Counselling Service](#).

## **12. Mentoring skills**

Effective mentoring is about building a supportive relationship based on listening, respect, and trust. It requires skill and sensitivity on both sides.

The mentor can build this relationship through:

- Establishing initial expectations on both sides.
- Being available at times agreed.
- Listening.
- Being open to answering questions.
- Drawing on experience and offering models – be it in research or teaching (e.g., encourage the new member of staff to come to observe you teach, see your materials, read your articles, share your reviewer feedback, etc. before asking to see theirs).
- Offering insight.
- Being willing to question and challenge the mentee to reflect on their work.
- Sharing networks/contacts.
- Being willing to give both positive encouragement and critical constructive feedback.
- Seeking/giving feedback on the mentoring relationship – and agreeing when this relationship comes to an end.

The mentee can build this relationship through:

- Indicating what you expect from the mentoring relationship.
- Being mindful of the demands you place on your mentor, e.g., keeping the number of papers or the amount of course material on which comments are requested within reasonable limits.
- Being available at times agreed.
- Coming with questions/ideas/things to explore and discuss.
- Having ideas on objectives and ways forward.
- Listening.
- Being ready to adapt – both yourself and the ideas you gain from your mentor.
- Being willing to accept both positive encouragement and critical constructive feedback.

- Giving/seeking feedback on the mentoring relationship – and agreeing when this relationship comes to an end.

The mentor should feel able to offer criticism and advice which the mentee, whilst encouraged to listen carefully, is not obliged to take.

### **13. Further development for mentors**

The School offers support for new and existing mentors, such as mentoring development sessions. Further information is available [here](#). A helpful tips document for mentors and mentees is also available [here](#).

### **14. The role of documentary materials in the mentoring relationship**

There are no written requirements related to mentoring, or any necessity for the mentor or mentee to share documents. However, if both are agreeable and have time, there may be benefits from sharing:

- Research papers (including reviewer feedback and how this is handled).
- A brief email log of matters discussed.

### **15. Monitoring and implementation**

The VCAC, in conjunction with the Vice President (Faculty Development) and Human Resources, is responsible for oversight and implementation of the mentoring scheme and for reporting on any issues to the relevant committees for example, the Promotions Committee, Research and Policy Staff Committee, and Appointments Committee.

The Code of Practice on Free Speech outlines the responsibilities of LSE to protect and promote freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law for students, faculty, staff, and visiting speakers. It applies to all activities on LSE premises and those conducted in the name of the School or LSE Students' Union at any location. The Code confirms that LSE does not take formal positions on political or international issues but provides a platform for critical debate within the law, taking account of the various legislative requirements and the context provided by policies and procedures. Procedures are set out in the Code on how events must be arranged and conducted.

#### **Review schedule**

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
Annual	01/06/2026	01/05/2026

#### **Version history**

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
2	01/11/2025	Appointments Committee/VPFD/VCAC	-

#### **Contacts**

Position	Name	Email	Notes
----------	------	-------	-------

HR	HR Reward Team	<a href="mailto:hr.cdr@lse.ac.uk">hr.cdr@lse.ac.uk</a>	-
----	----------------	--	---

### Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	<b>No</b>
Will training needs arise from this policy	<b>No</b>
If Yes, please give details -	