

# NDORMS PILOT MENTORING SCHEME

An advice booklet for NDORMS Mentors



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## Introduction

The NDORMS Pilot-Mentoring Scheme's overall aim is to assist mentees to achieve personal and professional growth through a mentoring relationship that provides support as he/she progresses and develops within the Department and University. Equally the scheme also offers benefits to the mentor and to the Department.

This booklet is for mentors participating in the NDORMS Pilot-Mentoring scheme, which provides 1:1 mentoring for career development. It is to help mentors think about their approach, and provides tips, tools, ideas, and links to other sources of support at the University.



*For any queries, please contact;*

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## 1. The role of mentor and the mentoring process

Mentors should draw where appropriate on your own experience and expertise, acting as a facilitator to the conversation. However, you are not expected to offer solutions nor to undertake work on your mentee's behalf, but rather to support and enable the mentee in being proactive and in bringing their own ideas and self-reflections to generate actions.

### The mentor's role includes:

- Listening actively with interest, holding the focus on the mentee's agenda.
- Steering the process: maintain an awareness of the time; although the conversation will invariably explore many related areas, you should ensure that ultimately the focus stays on the issue in hand, and remains constructive and within boundaries.
- Observing, not interpreting or judging.
- Challenging: you might challenge perceived inconsistencies or assumptions in what you are hearing from the mentee; or



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you might challenge them to take action to stretch themselves.

- Encouraging the mentee to explore a wide range of options and possibilities.
- Providing advice / sharing expertise and knowledge where appropriate.
- Encouraging the setting of action points that are specific, realistic and time bound.
- Reviewing progress.

## 2. Agreeing boundaries and expectations

Setting up expectations from the outset, in terms of both practicalities and content, will help you both to get the most out of the process.

### 3. Logistics

#### **How often and for long to meet**

The NDORMS Mentoring scheme involves committing to at least 2 or 3 meetings of an hour- but how you distribute these meetings over the year is up to you. You may also want to consider whether to set dates and times for all the meetings at the beginning of the process, or to set each one as you go along.

#### **Where to meet**

As well as considering the practicalities of a suitable place to meet, think about what kind of perspectives the environment might bring to the mentoring process. Wherever you meet it should provide privacy and be a



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place where the mentee **will** feel confident and secure enough to discuss concerns openly.

## **Communication between meetings**

How much communication do you expect between meetings? How will you communicate? By phone, email, face to face? Discuss and agree each party's preferences. What **will** happen if one party is unable to make a scheduled meeting?

## **Keeping records**

Who **will** be responsible for keeping a note of what is discussed and actions to be taken? In what format?



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## 4. Content

- Are you clear about what the objectives are?
- What and how much are you able /willing to provide in respect of the mentee's objectives and expectations? How much 'work' are you happy to do for the mentee between meetings?
- Are there any other boundaries or caveats you have?
- **Confidentiality.** An understanding of confidentiality is essential to the process to be productive. What are your respective understandings of what confidentiality mean: and do your ideas align with each other? How will you manage it if they don't?
- **Ending the mentoring relationship.** Some mentoring relationships do not work out, no matter how seemingly good a match on paper, through no fault of either party. How will you manage things if either of you wishes to end the mentoring relationship before the agreed time?



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## 5. First meeting: suggestions

It is important to establish a shared understanding of how the mentoring will work, so that you both feel it is a safe, supportive environment and so that expectations are met.

**Ground rules:** Discuss the terms on which you will be meeting together. Confidentiality is key. Other things might include honesty (people should feel free to share whatever is useful to them but only if they feel comfortable) and responsibility (the mentee is responsible for achieving their own goals).

**Meetings:** Discuss the logistics between you. What is the best time of day? Where will you meet? How often?

**Objectives:** What would they like from the scheme? What are their goals? What barriers/opportunities do they perceive in



achieving these? You could use their stated aims from their application proforma to start the discussion.

**Goal setting:** Mentees will get most out of the scheme if they have concrete goals, though in the first meeting they might not be able to articulate them. Try to move each meeting towards a point where the mentee will leave with at least one action point, even if that's just 'find out more about'.



## 6. Mentoring tips and tools

### **GROW model**

- GOAL (what do you really want to achieve?)
- REALITY (what are the factors you need to take into account?)
- OPTIONS (what choices and options are there?)
- WAY FORWARD (what's your action plan?)

### **Active listening**

Listening well is a key skill and one that needs practice. On occasion we may not

listen well because our attention is on something other

than what the other person is saying: perhaps

comparing what is being said to our own experience;

rehearsing



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what we are going to say when the speaker stops;  
solving the speaker's problem for them; or thinking  
about something else entirely such as what we are  
going to have for dinner. Think about the following:

- The value of silence
- Appropriate reinforcing sounds and body language
- Playing back, reflecting the speaker's words back to them
- Asking appropriate questions- expanding, clarifying
- *Are you listening or waiting to speak?*

### **Open questioning**

Closed questions can usually be answered 'yes' or 'no'. Open questions mean the mentee has to answer more fully and thoughtfully. For example: 'has your career generally been successful to date?' contrasted with 'tell me about your career



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to date, highlighting some successes'. Open questions encourage the opening up, expanding and exploration of a

topic and tend to start with words or phrases such as What, How, Where, Describe, Tell me about....

### **Giving advice**

- Make sure that advice and suggestions are appropriate and relevant
- And realistic- that it is about something that can be acted upon or changed
- Encourage mentees to receive advice and decide later whether to act upon it-
  - not to reject/accept it in the moment
- It is the mentee's decision whether to act on advice or not

### **Force field analysis**

This is a useful decision-making tool. A plan is recorded in the central of three columns. Favourable factors are listed in the





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left column; unfavourable factors on the right. Lines are drawn between each factor (the thicker the line, the more important the factor) to build up a way of visualising and prioritising push and pull factors affecting a decision. See [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED\\_06.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_06.htm) for more ideas.

### **Appreciative inquiry**

When a mentee is 'stuck' or despondent you might ask them to recall a situation in which they felt successful or proud of an achievement. Then help them to identify the factors which contributed to that achievement and feeling of well-being, and explore how some of those factors might be brought into play in the current situation.



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## Career scenarios

This is a longer-term strategy which could form the basis for a series of meetings. The mentee maps out in writing or diagrammatically up to three different career visions, taking into account his or her aims, abilities, constraints and knowledge of opportunities that might be available. Encourage the mentee initially to add realistic timescales and to be prepared to move between differing visions rather than to stick rigidly to one so that failing at certain hurdles does not have such a big impact. In time one clear career path may emerge from this process.

Information and further exercises are available on the University Careers Service's website: <https://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/generating-career-ideas>.



## Walking and talking

A change of scene and activity like taking a walk together can bring new energy into a mentoring discussion.

## 7. What other support is available?

Your mentee may wish to pursue avenues about which you do not feel able to advise them; but there is a wealth of support, resources, societies, and networks at the University that you can point them towards, some of which we have listed here. If you are not sure where to point them, you can always feel free to contact us ([maria.granellmoreno@ndorms.ox.ac.uk](mailto:maria.granellmoreno@ndorms.ox.ac.uk)).

We will be in touch with mentors and mentees part way through the year to see how things are going and to ask if there are any workshops, resources, or information that we can provide to complement the conversations you're having.



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If you have any issues or queries at any time in the programme, please contact us: [maria.granellmoreno@ndorms.ox.ac.uk](mailto:maria.granellmoreno@ndorms.ox.ac.uk)

## 8. Further resources for mentors

### Support services and advice

- *Parents and carers information*  
[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/parentsandcarersinformation](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/parentsandcarersinformation)
- *Childcare Services* [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare)
- *Occupational Health* [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/uohs)
- *Counselling Service self-help resources*  
[www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/counselling/self\\_help](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/counselling/self_help)
- *Harassment advice*  
[www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice)
- *Equality and Diversity Unit* [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop)
- *Support for researchers*  
<https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers?wssl=1>
- *University and College Union (UCU)*  
[www.oxforducu.org.uk](http://www.oxforducu.org.uk)

### Societies and networks

- *Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Network* [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/race](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/race)
- *Oxford Research Staff Society* [www.oxrss.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxrss.ox.ac.uk)





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- *LGBT Network*  
<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/sexualorientation/informationforstaff>

## 9. Further information

### Career and professional development

- *Oxford Learning Institute* [www.learning.ox.ac.uk](http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk)

The Oxford Learning Institute provides personal and professional development for all staff at the University, including personal development planning, assertiveness, and managing upwards.

- *lynda.com* Login via University of Oxford portal for access to a range of courses
- *Careers Service* [www.careers.ox.ac.uk](http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk)
- *Language Centre* [www.lang.ox.ac.uk](http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk) The Language Centre offers daytime and evening courses in foreign languages and English for academic studies.





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