

UNITED IN DESIGN

MENTORING GUIDELINES

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is essentially about helping people to develop more effectively. It is a relationship designed to build confidence and to support the mentee so they are able to take control of their own development and work.

Mentoring is not the same as training or teaching, and a mentor doesn't need to be a qualified trainer or an expert in the role the mentee carries out.

They need to be able to listen and ask questions that will challenge the mentee to identify the course of action they need to take in regards to their own development. An effective mentor will encourage, support and offer constructive feedback

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

The Oxford Dictionary definition states that a mentor is an "experienced and trusted adviser". This description reflects how we would like to see mentors work with their mentees. In your role as a mentor you may share information about your own career path, as well as provide guidance, motivation, emotional support, and role modelling. A mentor may help with exploring careers, setting goals, developing contacts, and identifying useful resources.

"I've learnt to keep going regardless of setbacks, focus on my strengths and in general what firms are looking for in new junior interior designers for portfolios and cvs etc."

United in Design Mentee 2023

WHY MENTORING?

- A professional relationship
- It has flexibility – mentoring can happen in so many ways and under many different circumstances
- Mentoring conversations can become part of day to day activity and don't always need to be scheduled
- It relates to work and the job
- It is individual – each relationship will be unique to those individuals involved
- It is people centred
- It provides a feedback system- feedback is central to mentoring and is a great tool to enhance and embed learning
- It is broad in focus – it should meet the needs of the mentee and mentor
- It is not exclusive – but actually complements other methods of learning
- A partnership lasting over a pre-determined and fixed time-scale
- Honest and supportive
- Confidential (within appropriate boundaries)
- Focused on expanding the mentee's horizons and thought processes and developing their decision making skills
- Focused on building the mentee's personal and professional development

SUPPORTING MENTORS

At times you may feel that you need a little support yourself as a mentor; you may have faced or may be dealing with a situation with your mentee and be unsure how to approach it. There is a range of support options available to mentors.

- Your colleagues and peers at United in Design - Please feel free to contact us at hello@unitedindesign.com if you have any questions during the mentoring year
- Your own mentor if you have one

- Mentor development sessions/programmes
- On-line resources and tools

BENEFITS OF MENTORING

For the Mentor	For the Mentee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use and develop your information, advice and guidance skills • It is a good opportunity to give back to the creative community • To work with someone with a fresh perspective • To learn and understand about different cultures • To reflect upon your own career path • Increased recognition from peers • To develop your communication skills by working with someone you would not usually be in regular contact with • Satisfaction at the success of the mentee • Challenge and stimulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced knowledge of a specific organisation, job role and sector • Access to a source of careers guidance and perspective • An opportunity to reflect and be challenged • Access to networks and an awareness of how to make new professional contacts • Increased confidence and self-esteem to further career development • Enhancement of existing employability skills and an opportunity to acquire new skills • Increased knowledge of work experience and internship opportunities within the design sector • Understanding of the formal and informal culture and structures within a design practice • Knowledge of further study options, professional qualifications and professional bodies

"My mentors feedback was priceless.
It was very reassuring having someone more
experienced to turn to."

United in Design Mentee 2023

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Self -awareness– you should have a good understanding of your own strengths and development needs.

Accessibility– you should be willing and able to commit sufficient time to your mentee to offer support and guidance.

Communication– you should have good communication skills and are able to understand the ideas and feelings of others. You also need to be a great listener.

Ability to empower– you should be able to create a working environment where it is safe for individuals to try out different things, allowing them to contribute in different ways.

A desire to help others develop– you should understand how individuals develop and have experience, either formally or informally, of developing others.

Inventiveness – be open to new ways of doing things and different ways of working.

Empathy– Ability to empathise with others.

Understanding–You should be prepared to try to understand different perspectives, approaches and the diverse backgrounds of different mentees.

DIFFERENT ROLES IN MENTORING

Networking

In the role of networking the mentor alerts the mentee to the use of contacts both formal and informal outside of the official structure of the design practice. They also

explain how these individuals can add value to the mentee in the achievement of their goals.

Counselling

In counselling, the mentor acts as a sounding board when the mentee is solving a problem or making a difficult decision. As a trusted confidant, the mentor helps the mentee to clarify the real issues involved and to see the bigger picture, thus allowing the mentee to constructively problem solve. Guiding the mentee, knowing if and when it may be necessary to seek specialist advice.

Facilitating

The mentor as facilitator takes action that will indirectly smooth the way for something else to happen. This could be as simple as passing on a phone number or making an introduction to someone who could prove to be helpful for the mentee either now or in the future. By facilitating you are starting a process that will help the mentee to pursue their goals. When acting as a facilitator, the mentor will need to be clear about what should happen and why. Helping the mentee to recognise potential barriers and what causes them, providing guidance and relevant advice on how to overcome barriers.

As a facilitator you may be in a position to provide introductions for mentees, back ideas or spread the word on projects that the mentee may be working on.

Coaching

This can be a very active role for the mentor, you would be working with the mentee to encourage them in the development of relevant skills and attitudes for the future. The focus of the coaching role is on the ability to help the mentee see beyond the current situation and to identify what the future can look like and what needs to happen to help achieve this. This is helpful in setting goals and identifying what actions an individual needs to take next. Enabling mentees to recognise their strengths and areas of weakness.

MENTORING MODEL

There are many ways to structure your meetings with your mentee one suggestion is to use the Grow model.

You can either start with the goal and work logically through the model or you can move the model around, starting with the reality and then the goal, if this works best. Remember to always finish with the way forward and ensure that this is set and owned by the mentee.

The model is outlined below:

What will you do?

What do you want?

What is happening now?

What could you do?

Goals– Guide the mentee to focus on their future and on what **THEY** want to achieve as an individual. It is not where you think they should be aiming.

Reality– Ask questions to help the mentee establish where they are now. If the mentee has already been employed within the industry, encourage the mentee to get feedback on their performance. This will help them to identify their current reality and will assist in the realistic setting of goals.

Options– help the mentee to identify what different options are open to them and ask questions to help them explore the reality of each of these options. Share your own experiences if the mentee is struggling to identify sufficient options, but beware of being too 'directive' in your approach.

Way Forward– Encourage the mentee to design an action plan which they have set and encourage them to set **SMART** objectives, objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic for the mentee in their current position and that they have realistic timescales attached.



Remember to:

- Focus on what the mentee needs to achieve
- Listen more than you talk
- Support and encourage the mentee
- Encourage the mentee to address challenging issues
- Keep an open mind.

Don't:

- Take responsibility for the action plan
- Assume that what worked for you will work for your mentee
- Take action on behalf of the mentee unless you jointly agree that this is the best course of action
- Assume you know what the problem or the answer is

MANAGING THE MEETINGS

The mentor should take on the role of a facilitator during meetings with the mentee, using questions and a non-directive, non-judgemental approach. Following the GROW model will be really helpful during the meetings. The purpose of the meetings could be for some or all of the following reasons:

- Reviewing and identifying the mentee's experience
- Helping the mentee to identify individual strengths and areas for development
- Discussing professional and work issues
- Agreeing what support is required
- Exploring the options open to the mentee
- Advising on specific skills
- Supporting the mentee to set achievable realistic and stretching action plans

Remember meetings will not be the only form of contact with your mentee.

Telephone calls, emails and brief on the job discussions may also be a part of the process but where possible, you should have an agreed number of scheduled meetings with your mentee set to fit around the action plan, and around specific points in their development.

MAKING MEETINGS WORK

- Have a clear structure and purpose. Before the meeting consider the structure and the time parameters. These should be agreed during the initial meeting when you are contracting with the mentee. Having a clear structure and purpose in mind will be the best and most effective use of your time and their time.
- Think about the content of the meetings. There should be a balance of looking back and reviewing the mentee experiences and reviewing if objectives set have been met or, if not, why not? There should also be a balance of discussing current issues and thinking about the future and ensuring the mentee sets realistic objectives for their action plan.
- Where possible, keep to dates and times set. It is easy to let the 'day job' get in the way but try to focus on the benefits to everyone (including your organisation) of engaging in this process. Give it the priority it requires to be successful.

PLANNING MENTORING MEETINGS

Key Questions	Answers
Goals for the mentoring relationship - what do you want to work on?	
What can my mentee expect from me?	
What I can expect from my mentee?	
We will assess progress by reflecting on?	
Frequency and duration of meetings?	
Questions to ask mentee?	
Questions I may be asked?	

ENDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

It is important to consider how the mentoring relationship will end. Discuss the reasons for the ending of the relationship with your mentee. In most situations the end date is agreed during the initial meeting, but we are aware that it is not always possible to be able to identify a clear end date. Reasons for ending the mentoring relationship can be varied:

- The relationship has achieved its objective
- You feel that your mentee is confident and ready to move on
- You have tried but the mentee is not responding
- The programme is coming to a close
- The relationship isn't working successfully and both parties wish to move on.

It is useful and good practice for the mentor and mentee to revisit any original goals or objectives and compare them with actual outcomes. This allows both parties to review what progress has been made and to acknowledge what has been achieved. It may be useful to encourage the mentee to find another mentor for the next stage of their journey and you may even be able to suggest individuals the mentee may like to approach. However, you should take time to evaluate how you feel you have developed during the relationship and what lessons you have learned.

FINAL EVALUATION

As part of our evaluation process we ask that you complete a short feedback form, this will give you the opportunity to tell us about your experiences as a mentor, and any suggestions for improving the mentoring scheme for future participants. Feedback forms are treated confidentially.

Most of all, enjoy the experience!