



Intreo

WPEP Mentoring Toolkit



Department of Social Protection
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Glossary of Terms:

WPEP: Work Placement Experience Programme

Host: Host Organisation

Mentee: WPEP Participant

Mentor: Host Company appointed Mentor

ETB: Education and Training Board

DSP: Department of Social Protection

Welcome to the WPEP Mentoring Toolkit

This mentoring toolkit provides a guide for hosts and mentors on how to approach participation on the Work Placement Experience programme. We recommend you read through it before the first mentor/mentee meeting and reference it as often as you wish. We hope it can help you work through the mentoring relationship in a structured and effective manner.

The toolkit is designed to assist the mentor to build their own mentoring skills and implement the process of building a supportive, structured and directive relationship with the mentee. We hope the content of this guide will provide you with the information and advice to put a robust plan in place.

The purpose of a mentor is to help mentees excel in their career and become the best version of themselves. This includes helping them to identify and achieve goals, introducing new ways of thinking, challenging limiting assumptions, teaching life lessons, and much more.

To ensure the mentor is aware of how to implement the mentoring process a short half day ETB Mentor Workshop will be available for you to access. Information and registration details will be issued to host organisations at the commencement of the Work Placement Experience Programme (WPEP) and further details are also available on <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/98f23-operational-guidelines-work-placement-experience-programme/>

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor. In an organisational setting, a mentor influences the personal and professional growth of a mentee.

Mentoring is part of a developmental system that includes:

- Formal training and education
- On-the job training
- Experiential development
- Research and discovery

A **mentor** is different from a line manager in that they will not have direct responsibility for the mentee's work performance but they will be responsible for encouraging the mentee to work towards their own individual objectives and be a motivating guide for the mentee on their journey. Mentoring is therefore an invaluable process to enhance the person's personal and professional future.



WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER
HAVING A MENTOR



"A mentor is an accomplished and experienced performer who takes a special, personal interest in helping to guide and develop a junior or more inexperienced person"

- S. Gibb -

Benefits of a Mentor in the Workplace

Assigning a mentor can ensure both the host and the participant get the most out of the work placement experience.

The mentor acts as a “buddy” and will be dedicated to providing the work placement participant with full support and guidance. The establishment of this support system will aid in the settling-in period and provide ongoing feedback over the duration of the placement.

The workplace mentor is a distinct and separate role and is a key element in a work experience placement. The mentor is in addition to and compliments the role of the workplace supervisor. Ideally a mentor will be an experienced and trusted employee.



Mentor - Role and Skill Set of a Mentor

The role of the mentor in the workplace is to establish a partnership with mentees for the purposes of learning and growth. Mentors support for mentees provides opportunities to identify goals, access appropriate training and development, coaching and encouraging performance and inspiring mentees to progress their careers.

The role of a mentor is to:

- Enhance the mentee workplace experience,
- Set up and manage a mentoring agreement,
- Develop strategies to deal with challenges,
- Provide company knowledge,
- Provide structured confidential meetings to :-
 - discuss goals,
 - review progress,
 - identify development opportunities and
 - work through issues
- Encourage workplace and personal development,
- Relate to the mentee through their own experience and career.

The ideal skill set of a mentor is:

- Relevant expertise and knowledge of the job and the organisation,
- Enthusiasm for sharing their expertise,
- Be respectful and approachable,
- Be vigilant and notice any changes in mentees attitude, attendance or commitment (both positive and negative),
- Treat relationship and meetings in confidence,
- Eagerness to devote time and energy to mentee,
- The ability to provide honest and direct feedback,
- Take time to reflect and listen with empathy,
- Willingness to be the “Go to Person”.

Mentee - Role and Skill Set of a Mentee

A mentee is a person who engages in a relationship with a mentor for supports, advice and training. This role to ensure learning goals and measures of success for the mentoring relationship are identified and will require the mentee to be open to and seek feedback, take an active role in their own learning and help drive the process, to schedule and attend mentor meetings, to follow through on any actions/commitments, to meet challenges as they test barriers and influence behaviour in support of career and development goals. Mentee's attitude is central to the success of the mentoring process.

The main elements that mentees should bring to their mentor/mentee relationships are:

- A willingness to be mentored,
- A desire to learn and be forward thinking,
- An interest in developing their work place skills,
- A positive attitude and,
- Receptive to being directed and advised.

A mentee ensures they: -

- Are motivated to make the mentoring relationship and process succeed,
- Have good time management and time keeping, committing enough time to make mentoring worthwhile,

-
- Show a positive attitude to the mentor, work placement and colleagues,
 - Be respectful to the mentor and the process,
 - Demonstrate willingness to learn and develop their skills in the workplace to achieve a positive outcome,
 - Be honest with the mentor about their performance and progression,
 - Strives to be a clear communicator,
 - Have confidence in the mentor and the process.

Coaching and Mentoring – Key differences

What is Coaching?

Workplace coaching is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to fully develop themselves to be effective in their commitment to themselves, the company, and their work.

The focus of a coach is on developing an individual to become their “best self” and to contribute their “best fit” and talents. This is a process which promotes a shift in thinking and behaviour.

Coaching encourages resilience for both the employee and the organisation and is also a workplace support to develop skills, processes and knowledge.

Difference between Coaching & Mentoring

Coaching

- Input based on professional skills and training
- Increases performance
- Addresses specific, stipulated needs
- Designed programme
- Coach promotes skills development, attitudes change
- Directed and guided by the coach, as appropriate
- Preparation time required by coach
- Coach responsible for outcomes
- Feedback delivered
- Tripartite contract if corporate sponsorship
- Support work outside session by coach

Mentoring

- Input based on experience
- Increases maturity and understanding not skills
- Mentee sets goals
- Mentee responsible for outcomes
- Based on relationship building
- No preparation for mentor
- Tripartite contract might be necessary if corporate sponsorship (limited to feedback on neutral information such as attendance, timekeeping etc.)
- No formal assessment at the end of the process
- No formal feedback
- No support work outside session

Managing the Mentoring Relationship

The Mentoring Agreement

A mentoring agreement is a reference document where mentor and mentee state and agree their commitments during the period they work together.

The mentoring agreement enriches the mentor-mentee relationship by setting:

Clear Expectations

Structured & Honest Communication

Goals and Deadlines

Confidentiality

Key elements of a mentoring agreement:

- The mentee's learning requirements and development goals are identified,
- Ways the mentee will be held accountable for their development (both by the mentor and themselves),
- Areas of the relationship that the mentee and/or mentor want to remain confidential,
- The frequency and a schedule for meetings,
- Ways for both the mentee and mentor to monitor progress.

Sample Mentoring Agreement

Many companies and organisations have an established mentoring agreement template. A sample agreement is detailed below for illustration purposes only.

Mentoring Agreement Form

(To be completed by the mentor and mentee together)

People involved in the mentoring process:

Overall Goals for the mentoring process:

In this mentoring relationship, accountability will be determined by:

In this mentoring relationship, progress toward the overall goals will be measured by:

What is the duration of the relationship?

How will you know when the relationship is at a natural end point?

Ideal schedule for the mentoring meetings (day, time, place, frequency, etc.)?

Signatures of parties involved:

Date:

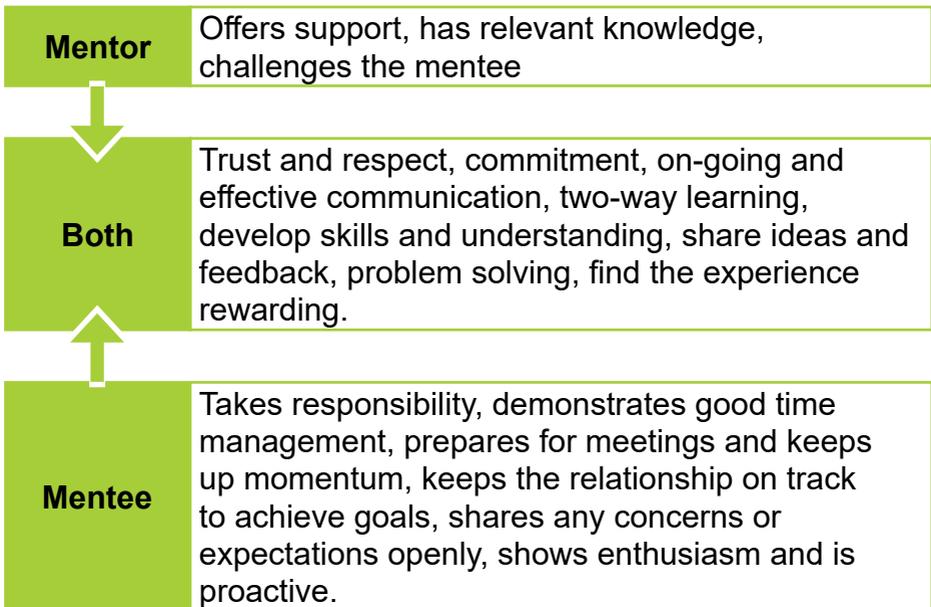
- Soft / online version: Download a [Sample Mentoring Agreement](#) form
- A sample mentoring agreement form is available for download via the mentoring toolkit at www.gov.ie/wpep

The Mentoring Relationship

To develop a successful mentoring partnership, the relationship must include:

Trust and respect
Commitment
Confidentiality
Ongoing and effective communication

A successful mentoring relationship is a process of two-way learning that is 'person-centred' and steered by the mentee.



Confidentiality

Topics discussed by mentors and mentees may be personal opinions or of a sensitive or controversial nature, therefore strict confidentiality must be maintained between mentors and mentees.

By signing the Mentoring Programme Agreement, the mentor and mentee agree to maintain confidentiality.

Rules of Engagement

Getting Started - Preparing for & Structuring the First Mentor Meeting

Mentee

Preparing for the first meeting is extremely important especially for the mentee. It is good practice for the mentees to take the lead role and suggest an outline meeting plan for engagements with the mentor, set agenda, take notes of actions and circulate to mentor after the meetings. To initiate the engagements the mentee should bring their current CV and other relevant information to the first meeting. This will provide a platform to commence communication and relationship building.

Mentor

Mentors and mentees should work together to ensure meetings are productive. But the general expectation is for the mentor to support and guide the mentee through the mentoring process.

Mentoring First Meeting

Setting a structured and targeted agenda is important to a successful initial engagement and to set the tone for future meetings. The agenda should focus on developing a discussion around the mentee's goals and history. The mentor should discuss both parties expectations for entering the mentoring relationship.

In advance of the first meeting the mentor should familiarise themselves with the mentees work position, duties and required skill level to become fully competent in the workplace.

First Meeting: the first mentor meeting agenda should at a minimum include the following items:

1. Introduction: learn about each other, discuss personal and professional history, look for common ground. **(Building rapport)**
2. Identify skill-related immediate needs, career and goal aspirations, company related information. **(Discuss around mentoring topics)**
3. Discuss expectations from the relationship and the mentoring process, develop a regular meeting schedule, commence identification of the mentee's personal learning plan and setting initial goals. **(Set initial expectations)**
4. **Schedule next meeting (date and time)** conclude meeting by scheduling the next one.
5. Following the meeting, the mentee should issue a note with agreed actions, date/time and items for the next meeting.

First Meeting Agenda Template:

(Sample Agenda for the first meeting opposite. Please note approximate times are for reference only. Depending on the conversation each section may take more or less time)

Agenda	Mentees	Mentors
Introduction and CV exchange (approximately 15 min)	Share your previous work experiences and learning background.	Share your experiences, especially those relevant to your mentee's experiences and aspirations
Review goals / objectives (approximately 15 min)	Share goals for your work development and mentoring relationship.	Reflect on which goals you're best positioned to assist with, and in which ways. Let your mentee know what you cannot help with and point them towards alternative resources.
Refine goals and objectives. Develop strategies (approximately 15 min)	Discuss with your mentor which goals you can work towards together, and the required first steps. Determine the focus of your next meeting.	With your mentee, choose priority goals and first steps.
Establish meeting times (approximately 10 min)	Discuss times, dates, and places for meetings.	Plan to meet for 60 minutes, at least once a month. (Minimum 6 times during the WPEP placement). Discuss with mentee your preferences for between-meeting contact (email, office visits, etc) as well as your availability. Ask them about their constraints; do not assume that they do not have preferences
Wrap up (approximately 5 min)	Express appreciation. Thank your mentor for his or her time and effort. Recap what you'll be doing to follow up, and what you'll be discussing at your next meeting.	Review actions agreed and confirm any commitments you've made to your mentee.

Second Meeting:

- In advance of the meeting the mentee should issue an agreed agenda along with notes from the previous meeting,
- Structured in the agreed format during the first meeting the mentee will provide:
 - an update on outstanding actions from the previous meeting,
 - explore and discuss further needs to achieve agreed goals and development requirements.
- Mentee must track and review progress, provide update on any outstanding issues and encourage continued engagement.

Follow on meetings the mentee/mentor should jointly: -

1. Review agenda items.
 2. Prepare feedback for actions from previous meeting. Note issues for discussion in rank of importance.
 3. Track progress in the workplace and identify emerging gaps in skills.
 4. Show interest and commitment in the work placement and self-development.
 5. Identify key additional actions for the learner plan and explain why.
 6. Keep all goals realistic and achievable.
 7. Discuss any challenges and plan the way forward.
-

Make sure to schedule regular meetings to monitor progress and make sure WPEP documents are being updated.

Preparing to end the Mentoring Process

It is important to consider how the mentoring relationship will end. A formal final review meeting should be organised with both parties outlining the reason for the meeting and the date for ending the relationship.

During the meeting it is useful and good practice for the mentor and mentee to jointly revisit the original goals and objectives and compare them with actual outcomes. This allows both parties to review what progress has been made, to acknowledge what has been achieved and take time to evaluate the lessons learned.

When an end date has been identified, the mentor and mentee should follow this three step plan:

1. **Evaluate your progress.** Mentee should think about the goals set and the progress made. Ask the mentor to do the same so that a meeting can be arranged to discuss. Questions such as “Did you meet your development goals that you established at the beginning of the mentoring?”
2. **Get feedback.** Mentor and mentee meet to compare notes. Check if the mentor’s feedback aligns with mentees own self-evaluation of the progress made. Questions such as: What surprised you? What did you expect to hear?
3. **Plan next steps.** Mentor should develop an exit plan with mentee during the final meeting. Mentor should ask questions such as - Did you meet your goals? Do you feel confident in ending this relationship? Do you need to adjust the original goals and objectives given the feedback

Exit Plan - When developing an exit plan the mentor and mentee should:

- Review original goals and objectives,
- Review all records on the WPEP Personal Learning Plan,
- Review skills developed and progress in the workplace,
- Note qualifications achieved and other learning outcomes,
- Take note of the progress - mentor/mentee should identify the next steps in relation to :
 - Changes to work preferences,
 - Future skill development,
 - Review CV updates,
 - Where possible arrange a mock interview,
 - Next steps on the employment ladder.

Finally:

Bringing closure is really a further opportunity for growth on the part of both mentor/mentee. From a mentee perspective, it's an opportunity to review with your trusted mentor the areas of growth that have happened during your relationship. It's also an opportunity to receive feedback on experience of working with a mentor- the successes and the challenges, what you've learned about yourself and what you've gained from the mentor.

From a mentor perspective, it's an opportunity to share hopes and vision for the mentees future, to affirm the growth seen, to gain feedback from the mentee on their experience in being in this relationship and to share what they have gained in the process.

Appendix 1: Mentor Skills - Best Practice

Personal Skills	Advocacy Skills	Coaching Skills	Interpersonal Skills
Relates well with people who want to learn	Provide networking opportunities	Set goals	Confidential impartial support
Open minded & flexible attitude	Access to senior professionals	Explore Options	Challenges
Questions	Highlight Career Paths	Plan	Discuss experiences
Encourages reflection	Identify development opportunities	Review	Explore options
Suspends judgement and listens	Provide guidance	Give constructive feedback	Friendly
Builds trust	Knows how the system works	Support learning	Respectful and trusting
Empathy	Problem solving skills	Usually short term and goal specific relationship	Open and honest
Time to develop relationship	Persuasive and influential	Incisive questions	Rational
Motivated	Assertive	Present	Emotional Intelligence

Notice: A key to good mentoring may be merely noticing how the mentee is feeling. Sometimes this may be more about what is not said than what is said. Are there any changes in their motivation, commitment, attendance and so forth that may need support and discussion? There may be subtle indicators that the mentee has an issue with work or interpersonal relationships that - with support - they can overcome.

Mentoring Skills



Listening and communication skills



Leadership qualities



Recognition of your skills and experience



Experience of being a mentor



A sense of personal fulfilment that comes from helping others

Appendix 2: Mentoring – Useful Questions

Good Mentor Questions:

Mentoring asks that mentors be skilled in the art of asking thought-provoking questions, active listening, providing objective feedback, and helping mentees learn how to be reflective. One of the best ways to do this is to develop a toolkit of key questions that you can ask as mentees embark on and complete growth experiences. These experiences might include: study abroad, internships, volunteering, leadership opportunities, and/or exploring personal values and strengths. Additionally, asking and considering good questions allows both a mentor and mentee to have deeper, more intentional conversations.

Here is a brief list of questions you might consider asking and/or adding to your mentor toolkit:

1. What is your goal? What do you hope to achieve from this experience?
2. How will you be different at the end of this experience?
3. What steps can you take to achieve that goal?
4. What skills or knowledge do you hope to gain from this experience?
5. What do you think will be the most challenging for you?
6. What do you think will be the most rewarding for you?
7. What are you the most worried about/afraid of?
8. How well did you accomplish your goal?
9. What did you learn?

-
10. How can you use that new knowledge, skill, ability in the future?
 11. What was the most challenging for you?
 12. What was the most rewarding for you?
 13. What did you learn from facing that challenge?
 14. What did you learn from that success?
 15. How are you different now than you were at the beginning?
 16. Who were the most important people that you met, and why?
 17. How can you describe this experience and what you have learned to an employer or graduate school?

Good Mentee Questions:

Questions help the mentor figure out how to give meaningful answers.

Expertise, self-improvement and building skills

1. Where do you think my strengths lie?
2. How can I develop the right amount of discipline to achieve my goals in this industry?
3. What are the necessary skills that I should develop to rapidly grow in my career?
4. What are some things in your career that you regret not having done earlier?
5. How do I effectively manage my time and prioritise accordingly?

Stories

1. Do you ever get impostor syndrome? How did you learn to get over it?
 2. Did you have a hard time starting out in this industry?
 3. What are some hard choices that you made to get where you are in your career?
 4. Did you experience some major setbacks in your business/ career path? How did you bounce back?
 5. What are some instances that you would have done differently?
-

Situational

1. How do I handle this situation better?
2. Do you have some tips for networking online?

This question is even more relevant than ever today, as more companies are embracing working from home.

1. I feel stuck. What are some ways that I can apply to solve this issue?
2. My boss and colleagues are treating me unfairly. Based on your experience, do you think I should move elsewhere?
3. I have an interview coming up. What are some interview questions and other things that I need to know to succeed?
4. Do you have any tips on how to improve my CV for my job search?
5. How do I prepare myself for performance reviews?

Accountability

1. What would you like to see me do every week to show that I'm improving throughout this mentorship?
2. Am I progressing in the right direction?
3. Am I correctly listening to your advice?
4. Are there any other topics you'd like for us to discuss?
5. Do you have any feedback on how we can improve our mentoring rapport?

Appendix 3: Useful Links

<https://careersmart.org.uk/your-career/career-development/mentoring-podcast>

The Benefits of Mentoring YouTube (1.28 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=836-noR3DO8>

American Psychological Association

Introduction to Mentoring—a guide for mentors and Mentees

<https://www.apa.org/education-career/grad/mentoring>

Skills you need—What is mentoring?

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/mentoring.html>

What is mentoring? YouTube (4.42 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoy5MifHuLs>

Scenarios

<https://petersen.consulting/samples/Mentor-Scenarios-Handbook-Sample.pdf>

For more information

Visit: www.gov.ie/wpep

Email: wpep@welfare.ie

Telephone: 0818 111 112

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