

Key Points: Mentoring for Mentees

Mentoring for Mentees

Having a mentor or mentor(s) in the workplace is a great way of getting personalised support and professional development. By building a strong relationship with someone who understands your context and can offer you new perspectives you can accelerate your development.

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council define mentoring as: *“A learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.”*

You can use a mentor for lots of different things:

- Developing your skills
- Building your network
- Providing support during challenging times
- Helping you get a fresh perspective on your current situation
- Helping you plan for the future
- Giving you feedback and challenging you

You may choose to have different mentors for different purposes and it's quite ok to have more than one. It's important that you pick someone you have a good rapport with and you think can offer you some helpful new perspectives – so sometimes picking someone who is quite different from you is a good idea. But you need to feel you can trust them so you can discuss openly and honestly. You might also want to discuss an agreement for confidentiality of your relationship.

Some tips for making the most of your mentoring relationship:

1. **Come Prepared:** Always come to meetings with your mentor prepared. This shows dedication and respect for their time, and it helps you make the most of each session.
2. **Set Clear Goals:** Define what you want to achieve from the mentoring relationship. Having clear objectives will guide your discussions and help you measure your progress.
3. **Be Open to Feedback:** Embrace constructive criticism and use it as a tool for growth. Being open to feedback is crucial for personal and professional development.
4. **Take Initiative:** Be proactive in driving the mentoring relationship. This means scheduling meetings, setting agendas, and following up on action items.
5. **Reflect and Act:** After each session, reflect on what you've learned and take action on the advice given. This demonstrates your commitment to growth and helps solidify new skills and knowledge.

Don't be afraid to end the relationship: your mentoring relationship will have a lifespan; this may be a few years but it could just be a few months (or even weeks). It is ok to take a pause or end the relationship if you think you have met your goals or got what you need from your time together. But make sure you do this professionally and share some appreciation for your mentor.