Thank you for volunteering to be a Royal Society of Chemistry mentor.
We hope you enjoy your role and take pleasure in using your experience to help other members with their career development. Please take the time to read the information in this pack which provides clarity about what to expect while mentoring. After reading this document we ask that you complete a short questionnaire which will help us match you appropriately with a mentee.

We are here to provide you with a beneficial service and support you in your mentoring role. Should you need any assistance at any time, please contact our mentoring coordinator Laura:
by phone: 01223 432420
by email woodwardl@rsc.org or careers@rsc.org
by post  Laura Woodward
Royal Society of Chemistry
Thomas Graham House
290-292 Science Park, Milton Road
Cambridge
CB4 0WF
1 Introduction to mentoring

Mentoring is “A process whereby an experienced, empathic individual guides another individual in the development and re-examination of their own ideas, learning, and personal and professional development.” Through our mentoring service we train members to mentor other members in order to support them in their career progression, development and growth.

Being a mentor can be challenging and stimulating. It can allow you to develop many valuable skills that are transferable to your personal and working life. Many mentors gain considerable personal satisfaction from giving something back, particularly when the mentee reports successes.

2 Your role as a mentor

Supporting your mentee and encouraging them to explore all of their options can facilitate their thoughts and help them come to their own decisions. Your knowledge, experiences and insights are invaluable and can help your mentee explore new ideas and look more closely at themselves, their opportunities, their goals and any challenges they face. This will support them in maximising their potential, developing their skills and improving their performance.

Part of your role as the mentor is to build an open and honest relationship and create a comfortable atmosphere for your mentee. Rapport between you and your mentee is important for a successful relationship. In order to help create a trusting environment we encourage you to be honest and open, non-judgemental and empathetic. Your mentee could be from a different discipline, type of work or field of science from you; this is not a cause for concern and will not normally affect the rapport. Remember you are there to listen and offer another perspective.

Below is clarification of what we would not expect you to do as a mentor:

- Solve your mentee’s problems and have all the answers.
- Tell the mentee what to do or how to behave.
- Be a coach (providing specific technical expertise) or a counsellor.
- Help your mentee if they are working towards becoming Chartered, a Registered Scientist or a Registered Science Technician; they will have a mentor specifically for this process. Your role is to help them with other aspects of their career planning and development.

A mentoring relationship is a professional relationship – some mentors and mentees do stay in contact after the formal mentoring has finished, but this is not always the case. Approach your mentoring partnership as you would any other professional relationship:

- Act in accordance with our Code of Conduct.
- Avoid discussing issues that could be commercially sensitive to either party’s employer.
- Maintain an ethical approach with your mentee, including confidentiality to protect sensitive and personal information.
- Uphold other basic values, including treating people with respect and being non-judgemental.

2.1 What to expect

Once you have read through these guidelines, the next step will be to fill in the online questionnaire. This will allow us to find out more about you and your experiences, which will help us match you with a suitable mentee.

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When you have completed the online questionnaire, we will ask you to attend a training session to give you the knowledge and skills to help you be a great mentor. It will also give you the opportunity to raise any concerns and questions you may have before you start mentoring. The training is suitable for those with all levels of mentoring experience, however, if you feel you don’t need to attend then please get in touch with us to discuss alternative options.

Once you have been trained, we will put you in touch with your mentee, who we will have matched you with based on your responses in the questionnaire and their requirements. We will do this as soon as possible but you may not be matched straight away; while we will do our best to match you with a mentee, we cannot guarantee it.

During your mentoring relationship we will ask you to maintain your mentoring professional development by attending at least one regional group session, which will count towards your Continuing Professional Development. We also ask that you log any mentoring training or development you complete elsewhere on our online CPD tool.

To ensure you are well supported, we will send you an invite to join the mentor forum where you can contact other mentors, share best practice and update others with your mentoring progress. We also encourage you to use our online webinars and reading resources to help you develop your mentoring skills. To offer you further support we have worked with mentoring experts at Coach Mentoring Ltd to provide you with an independent confidential hotline to ask any questions or address any issues. They can be contacted on rsc@coachtmentoring.co.uk and will respond to you within 24 hours, offering follow up phone or skype conversations for specific support.

To maintain the high quality and standard of our service we have three ‘formal’ touch points with you during your mentoring relationship, where we will be asking you to complete feedback surveys. However, this does not restrict you from sharing your thoughts with us at any time by getting in touch. We will also be asking your mentee to provide feedback and will pass on anything they share about you as their mentor.

### 2.2 Key mentoring skills

The two most important skills of a good mentor are active listening and challenging constructively.

**Active listening** involves being attentive and concentrating on what your mentee is telling you, while remaining non-judgemental. This includes:

- Relaxed body language to invite your mentee to talk.
- Maintaining eye contact (without staring) and smiling.
- Trying not to interrupt, but using non-verbal encouragement to show you are listening.
- Limiting your own talking. We would expect your mentee to talk about 80% of the time, but it can be appropriate to let your mentee know of similar experiences you have had. Try not to jump to conclusions or complete their sentences.
- Allowing silences; a pause does not necessarily mean your mentee has finished everything they want to say and they may just need time to think.
- Encouraging the mentee by asking open questions to help them think things through, for example “tell me about….”, “how did you…..”, “what did you think about…..”. Equally, we advise you to avoid leading and multiple questions as well as questions beginning with ‘why’, which can sound judgemental.
- Using closed questions if you are confirming or agreeing something.
- Summarising and reflecting at suitable moments to make sure you both have an understanding.
- Taking notes during the session to help you actively listen and to jog your memory for future sessions. If this is something you would like to do, we suggest you discuss this with your mentee first and explain what you are going to write down and why.
Confronting and challenging your mentee in a sensitive way, without being aggressive or directly challenging them, can help them think about what they have said and the assumptions they are making about their situation. A good way to do this is to think of challenging their assumptions rather than challenging them as a person. For example if the mentee says “I couldn’t do…”, a good challenging response could be “what makes you think you couldn’t…” or “what would be alternative ways to achieve…”

Other skills you can use to help create effective sessions are:

- Being enthusiastic, supportive and motivating.
- Encouraging your mentee to take the lead during the session and to reach their own decisions.
- Being flexible on your approach to the structure and frequency of the sessions. This can help you work together with your mentee to keep a suitable environment for you both throughout the mentoring experience.
- Highlighting a topic to your mentee if they mention it three times. Sometimes people are unaware they have mentioned something a number of times, so drawing attention to this can be useful.

3 How mentoring works
Mentoring relationships tend to move through five phases as the relationship progresses. Being aware of how the relationship can change is helpful to ensure both yours and your mentee’s needs are met.

1. **Introduction and rapport-building**: you and your mentee get to know each other, start to become comfortable and develop trust for one another. Rapport will build as you get to know each other and work together on achieving your goals, but it does demand both parties to share or acknowledge the validity of each other’s values.

2. **Direction-setting**: we recommend you help your mentee to set their goals at the outset to give focus and direction to the sessions and to ensure you are both working to the same agenda. Bear in mind these goals may evolve as the relationship develops.

3. **Cultivation**: where the relationship is in full swing and provides the full range of benefits.

4. **Maturation**: learning and support becomes mutual and your mentee becomes more self-reliant.

5. **Review and closedown**: the formal relationship comes to an end. This can be for a number of reasons, for example if your mentee has achieved their goals and has no new challenges to cover, or if they feel they can tackle situations confidently without your help. Either party must be able to leave the mentoring arrangement without blame when either or both feel it is no longer beneficial.

We want all of our members to feel completely comfortable in their mentoring relationship, so if at any time you feel that the partnership is not going to work out, please contact us to discuss this. If it is necessary to terminate the relationship early, it is important not to assign fault. The Royal Society of Chemistry is your point of contact for any queries and we will support you if you have difficulties with your mentee that you cannot resolve; if necessary we will take responsibility for ending the partnership.

4 Mentoring sessions
A suggested agenda for the first session would include:

- Introductions.
- Explaining how mentoring works and your role as a mentor.
- Discussing the focus of the session (your mentee’s goals and expectations) – see section 4.1.
- Discussing practicalities of future sessions – see section 4.2.
- Discussing how the relationship will work – see section 4.3.
• Clarifying what you have both agreed to do before the next meeting.
• Agreeing a date and place of the next meeting.

4.1 The first session: focus
It is important that your mentee sets clear goals at the beginning of the relationship. Helping them to break these down into achievable steps using SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed) actions helps to give them a clear focus. The “Example Questions and Exercises” document can assist you in doing this.

Think about what you can do to help your mentee achieve their goals and consider how you will both measure progress. For example, you could write down your mentee's goals to refer back to at different stages of the relationship. Most mentoring relationships have a finite lifetime, usually one to two years depending on your mentee's goals, and applying an approximate end date to the relationship encourages focus to the sessions.

4.2 The first session: practicalities
Before your first meeting, it is good to think about the venue. It is best for this to be private and comfortable and with enough time away from interruptions and distractions. It is also a good idea to agree with your mentee in advance how long the first session should be.

We have suggestions practical aspects of the mentoring sessions to discuss with your mentee in the first meeting. Defining these limits will allow expectations on both sides to be managed from the outset. It is a good idea to record a summary of your discussion from the initial meeting.

• Where you will meet and who will arrange room bookings.
  
  We advise you arrange to meet in a reasonably quiet public place to avoid unease, for example we do not recommend you meet in either the your or your mentee’s home. If you decide to meet at either of your workplaces, you should check with your employer first; issues of commercial sensitivity and use of company time should be considered.

• How often you will meet.
  
  This may be a regular occurrence (for example once a month) or it may vary in regularity; it will need to be something that you can both commit to, so it is good to be honest and realistic. Again, if you decide to meet in working hours, agreement from both employers will need to be sought first.

• How long the sessions are likely to be.
  
  Setting a time limit to the meetings will help focus the sessions.

• How you will communicate and whether you can be contacted between sessions.
  
  If using email to communicate, both of you will need to check with your employers before commencing email discussions from work. Although it is possible to be mentored using email, video calling and telephones, we recommend your mentoring sessions take place face to face whenever possible.

• How you intend to keep records.
  
  If you wish to take notes for your own memory, we suggest you discuss this with your mentee first.

Defining these limits will allow expectations on both sides to be managed from the outset. It is a good idea to record a summary of your discussion of expectations from the initial meeting. If keeping notes, ensure they are anonymised (don’t include full name, or email address for example). Make sure notes are destroyed at the end of the relationship.

4.3 The first session: how the relationship will work
At the beginning of the relationship it is essential that both parties discuss expectations of each other and how the relationship will be managed. Think about what will make this a useful relationship for you and discuss with your mentee what will make the relationship satisfying for them; this may add some value at the first session by helping to build a mutual understanding.
The following questions can help you discuss your expectations at your first meeting:

- Are we clear about what we both expect of:
  - Each other?
  - The mentoring relationship?
  - What we hope to learn from each other?
- How closely do our expectations match?
- How formal or informal do we want our meetings to be?
- How structured does my mentee want the sessions?
- Are we agreed that openness and trust are essential? How will we ensure that they happen?
- Are we both willing to give honest and timely feedback, being constructively critical?
- What, if any, are the limits to the scope of discussion (i.e. what we talk about)?
- What, if any, are the limits to the confidentiality of the relationship (i.e. what we are prepared to tell others)?
- How do we ensure the mentee’s line manager is supportive (where appropriate)?
- Is my role as the mentor clear?
- How challenging does my mentee want me to be?
- When and how shall we check this relationship is ‘right’ for both of us?

4.4 The first session: building rapport

Every mentoring relationship is different and it can vary how quickly an effective and trusting environment is created. Any relationship takes time to build and it may take longer than your first session for you both to feel completely comfortable with each other. The more you meet the more you will build up trust as your mentee works towards their goals and you get to know each other.

Prior to your first session, we will provide you with an introductory questionnaire filled in by your mentee. This will help you get to know them a little more before the process begins and it can also be a useful tool for you to use as a basis for discussion during the first session.

Here are some tips that can help to build rapport:

- Be welcoming and attentive.
- Get to know your mentee and share information about yourself. This can help find a common area of interest and also establishes trust, helping you to work person to person rather than just role to role. Suggested areas of discussion are work, personal life and what is important to you both.
- Try to show understanding and respect for your mentee’s circumstances, feelings and priorities.
- Review your mentee’s goals and how you are working together regularly to ensure they are getting what they need from being mentored.
- Be honest and discuss any issues as soon as they arise.

Generally, however, if two people do not ‘click’ within the first two meetings, the relationship is unlikely to develop the depth of rapport and trust necessary to address personal issues through mentoring. The reality is that not all relationships are going to work. In the absence of rapport it is always better to dissolve the relationship and the Royal Society of Chemistry can help you with this. Please get in touch with us at any stage if you need advice.

4.5 Future sessions

It can be useful to discuss your mentee’s goals at the outset of each session to give it focus and direction. The mentoring sessions are for your mentee to take the lead on what they would like to talk about, and the following questions can help you to encourage this:

- What would you like to focus on today?
• What will give you the most value from today’s session?
• What challenges are you currently facing?
• What is happening now that is working well?

Try to end the sessions on a positive note. If you struggle to bring the sessions to a close you could:

• Summarise what you have heard.
• Ask your mentee to summarise what they are taking away from the session.
• Confirm any actions and timescales your mentee will work on as a result of the session.

It is important to give feedback to your mentee regularly. This will be most effective if you describe the specific behaviour you have observed and focus on aspects that the mentee can improve on. Think about what you have noticed about your mentee, including:

• Known strengths.
• Hidden strengths (things you think are strengths that they haven’t noticed or they don’t think they are good at).
• Known development needs.
• Blind spots (things you think are development needs that they haven’t noticed or they think they are good at).

It is equally important for you to welcome regular feedback yourself and be willing to change your approach if necessary.

When the mentoring relationship comes to a natural close it would be beneficial to review with your mentee their original goals against outcomes, and it is important for the mentee to reflect on what they have gained from the sessions. Your mentee may prefer the mentoring to gradually reduce over time to ensure they have obtained everything they wanted from the relationship.

5 Common challenges of mentoring

Roles and responsibilities are unclear.

Spend some time in the first session clarifying roles.

There is no focus for the sessions.

Make sure there is a clear, realistic purpose for the mentoring and between you both agree an agenda for each session.

Your mentee is not contributing much to the sessions and expects you to come up with all the suggestions.

A rule of thumb is to listen more than you talk, so consider sitting back more. Mentees tend to learn most effectively by setting their own agenda and finding their own solutions from their mistakes. You may be using a very directive style, so re-evaluate your approach as a mentor, or ask us for more training.

Your mentee appears dependant on you.

At the start you may need to give a lot of guidance and support, but aim to reduce this as the mentoring relationship grows and the mentee’s confidence increases. You could support them in setting the agenda and encourage them to keep a learning diary. As time goes on you could increase the gap between sessions as appropriate.

You feel uncomfortable challenging your mentee.
Relate feedback to specific observed behaviour and balance positive with negative.

**You feel uncomfortable when your mentee talks about emotional matters.**

Discuss with your mentee your levels of comfort when dealing with emotions. If emotional issues are important for the mentee, it may be appropriate for them to have a different mentor.

**There is a lack of rapport between you and your mentee.**

Try to find ways of improving communication with your mentee and try to find a common interest. If it doesn’t improve and you feel the mentee would benefit from a different mentor then this is something you could suggest. No one is to blame if the relationship doesn’t work and your mentee can use the experience to identify more clearly what they are looking for in a mentor.

**Your mentee tells you something that you believe has serious implications.**

You can refer this to the Royal Society of Chemistry for advice. In some cases you are bound by law to take appropriate action.

### 6 Mentoring Policy

This policy sets out the Royal Society of Chemistry’s aims and approach in supporting all mentoring relationships, and applies to all mentors and mentees. It is not intended to create a legally binding relationship or contractual agreement.

The Royal Society of Chemistry is committed to all mentors, who can expect to:

- Be valued as individuals and respected for their knowledge and skills.
- Have support, feedback, appreciation and encouragement.
- Have opportunities to discuss concerns or problems with the mentoring relationship.
- Have all information relevant to them.
- Have adequate insurance cover (see “Supplementary Information” document).
- Have their personal data collected, held, used and disclosed in accordance of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Have opportunities for appropriate training.

The Royal Society of Chemistry expects its mentors to:

- Show commitment to the mentoring service.
- Be reliable and engaged in the mentoring service.
- Have a flexible approach and use alternative techniques depending on your mentee’s learning style.
- Ensure your level of experience and knowledge is sufficient to meet the mentee’s needs, and attend relevant training as appropriate.
- Operate within your limits and, where necessary, support the mentee in seeking a different mentor or help of another professional (e.g. business adviser, financial adviser or counsellor).
- Be sensitive and tactful where necessary.
- Treat your mentee, other Royal Society of Chemistry members and Royal Society of Chemistry staff with respect.
- Respect confidentiality of any discussions. This is important and will help to create trust with your mentee.
  - All information should be regarded as confidential unless otherwise advised. Only under exceptional circumstances where the discussion has serious implications (e.g.
where illegal or dangerous) should you take appropriate action and disclose the information.

- Confidential matters must not be disclosed with members of the general public (including other Royal Society of Chemistry members).
- Personal information should not be repeated and should be treated in a sensitive manner.
- No information must be released to a third party without first seeking the agreement of the individual concerned.
- Personal details should be held securely.
- Records no longer required should be shredded or safely disposed of.

- Remain within the law at all times.
- Conduct themselves in a safe manner and not to act in a way that may cause injury to themselves or others.
- Consult the Royal Society of Chemistry if in need of help or guidance, or to discuss any concerns.
- Have read and understood these guidelines and all other information provided.

We will reimburse reasonable costs for you to attend the training and mentoring professional development sessions.

6.1 Further information
Details of our complaints procedure, insurance details and confidentiality (including data protection) can be found in the “Supplementary Information” document. We ask that you read these so that you are aware of the procedures and policies in place, should you need them.

7 Next Steps
Once you have read and agreed with the guidelines outlined in this document, we ask that you complete the initial questionnaire to help us match you appropriately with a mentee.

You will then be invited to attend a training session, after which we will put you in touch with your mentee.