

Mentoring Scheme Guidance and Commitment

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a learning and development process which allows the mentee to discuss their professional development needs with a more experienced and senior mentor. The arrangement should benefit both: The mentee will learn through discussing issues and reflective thinking, benefiting from the mentor's knowledge, whilst the mentor will have a facilitating experience that contributes to their own personal and/or professional development. To achieve this mutual benefit, both parties should take responsibility for the arrangement throughout.

Mentoring In the context of Women in Parks Horticulture and Landscape

In the context of Women in Parks Horticulture Landscape the recommendation is that the mentoring focusses on supporting with practical actions and behaviours as well as specific area of their job role if there are practical aspects that can be shared. The mentors have been deliberately matched / selected so that the mentor has transferable experiences, career paths and associated skill sets to offer every opportunity of learning, support and growth.

Benefits for the mentee

- Opportunity to gain objective guidance and support from professionals outside of your organisation which will aid your career growth.
- Learn from the experience of others and develop your own self-reflection and decision-making skills.
- Opportunity to focus on the skills/knowledge you would like to develop.
- Access to the mentor's knowledge, skills, and experience.
- Opportunities to develop networks.

Benefits for the mentor

- Personal/career development
- The opportunity to act as a role model and inspire future generations.
- Develop leadership and management skills.
- Expand connections across the Women in Parks Horticulture Landscape network
- The mentee may often lead the mentor to insights of their own
- Personal satisfaction
- Opportunities to improve networks beyond your own organisation
- Enhance understanding of working with those at the start of their career

Typical skills and qualities of a good mentor:

- Truly interested in being a mentor
- Encourages others
- Cares about and respect others
- Trusts others and is trustworthy, discreet and maintains confidentiality
- Can engage effectively on effective workplace behaviours
- Willingness to commit their time
- Friendly and approachable
- Listens actively and effectively – asks open and appropriate questions, maintains good eye contact, acts as a sounding board
- Reflects back feelings and opinions to show listening/understanding
- Makes suggestions without being prescriptive
- Gives constructive and positive feedback – focuses on the behaviour and not the person, explores alternatives and ideas for the future

Mentoring In the context of Women in Parks and Horticulture

In the context of Women in Parks Horticulture Landscape it is recommended that the mentoring focusses on supporting with practical actions and behaviours as well as on specific areas of their job role where relevant.

The expectations for the relationship of a mentor and mentee are:

- Each mentor and mentee meet at an agreed frequency that suits both.
- The duration and timing of each meeting is to be agreed by each mentee and mentor, as well as whether the meeting will be in person or online (e.g., via Teams or Zoom)
- The mentor may start setting up the meetings to begin with but then the pair can choose how it works best for them.
- It is recommended each mentee take responsibility for setting the agenda for each meeting – at least preparing questions and topics for discussion.

Here are a few tips to help the mentee gain the most from the relationship:

- This process is about you, so there's really no such thing as a 'good mentee'; however, a few things that will help
- Be persistent in setting up meetings! Try to schedule a few at a time, get to know your mentor's scheduler or PA if s/he has one, and don't give up if both of you are busy.
- Seek common ground (even hobbies, travel, pets) with your mentor, so conversations flow more freely
- Be as open about your career or work-related concerns as possible, within the confidentiality parameters you set – this should be a safe space for you to work through issues
- Be clear about where you feel you may have gaps; examples will help your mentor understand where you may have confidence- or knowledge-related concerns

Guidelines and 'mentoring commitment'

The content of the meetings should be agreed between both parties, but the following guidelines may act as a useful framework:

The mentor and mentee should prepare for the first meeting, so that it includes:

- Discussion about what the mentee is looking to get out of the relationship
- Agreement on future ways of working (discussion, shadowing, site visits...)
- Location of meetings
- Frequency of meeting
- Length of meetings
- Structure of meetings - both parties should be ready to discuss ground rules and boundaries, including confidentiality and any limits to the role (e.g., types of issues to be discussed, communication outside of meetings). The mentor needs to be honest about the amount of time they can commit.

Subsequent meetings may include:

- Reflection on what has happened in between meetings
- Reviewing how best to influence line managers and other senior colleagues
- Time Management
- Effective written and verbal communication in the workplace
- Identification and exploration of problems
- Suggestions for training opportunities
- Identification of information needed and ways of acquiring it

It is likely that the relationship will develop from one that starts off with the provision of basic information in response to specific questions and develops into more in-depth discussion of wider issues. However, each relationship is specific to the individuals involved. For example, some may prefer conversational meetings whereas others prefer a more structured approach using agendas.

Likewise, some may prefer the informality of a café, whilst others prefer the privacy of an office if you are located nearby as part of this process. If distance does not permit an in person meet up, most people opt for a video call, while some find benefit in a phone call as an opportunity to get away from the desk.

It is recommended that both the mentor and mentee keep their discussions confidential.

Note that mentors provide their time free of charge and in good faith. Mentees are not obligated to take advice. No one is liable for anyone else.

MENTEE:

MENTOR:

Broad purpose and mentee's goals

Meetings (duration, location, time of day)

Contact outside of meetings, if any (phone/email, frequency, content)

Confidentiality (should any third parties be informed about issues, goals, mentoring?)

Evaluation of mentoring relationship, as well as mentee progress
