



etbi

Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*

MENTORING POLICY

POLICY

*For all staff in
Education and
Training Boards
Ireland*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education and Training Boards Ireland supports the mentoring process and places a high value on supporting and developing its people to achieve their full potential.

Mentoring is the process by which a mentor empowers a mentee to build their skills and to achieve their career goals. Support is offered at ETBI through a partnership of senior staff members and early career colleagues with the aim of developing staff to release their potential.

This policy provides a standard definition for and a consistent approach to mentoring for all staff across ETBI. It seeks to provide a common framework, based on best practice principles, to support and inform the design of new, and continuing development of existing performance management and development systems.

2. DEFINITION

“Mentoring in the workplace tends to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague shares their greater knowledge to support the development of a member of staff. It calls on the skills of questioning, listening, clarifying and reframing”. CIPD, 2021.

Mentoring may be defined as “support by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking”.

The mentor is an experienced individual whose role is to “help” rather than to “tell”, and the mentee is encouraged to do things for themselves.

3. POLICY SCOPE/COVERAGE

This policy covers formal mentoring relationships, in which all staff can choose to participate.

Mentoring is separate from performance management development systems.

4. PRINCIPLES OF MENTORING

ETBI supports and encourages mentoring. Mentoring is a voluntary, confidential relationship. Mentoring is the process by which a mentor guides the career and development of a mentee. For a mentoring relationship to succeed, it needs to be underpinned by the following principles:

Ownership of the mentoring process rests with the mentee, and they drive the mentoring agenda. The mentee is responsible for initiating contact with the mentor.

The mentor relationship is confidential. Discussions between the mentor and mentee must not be divulged to a third party without the agreement of both parties.

- Mentoring is nondirective in its approach.
- Mentoring is a relationship built upon trust and mutual respect.
- The mentor empowers the mentee to take responsibility for their own learning and career development.
- The mentor offers a safe environment to the mentee within which they can discuss work-related issues and explore solutions.
- The mentoring relationship places no obligation on either party beyond its developmental intent.
- The maximum number of mentees any one person can be assigned is one.

Differentiating mentoring from supervising

ETBI directors and line managers have a responsibility to organise tasks and work processes, define roles and priorities, provide performance management development plans, and address performance-related issues to meet ETBI's objectives. Additionally, they are responsible for developing the staff reporting to them. It is appropriate that this includes engaging in activities such as mentoring, coaching, training, and guiding.

Key characteristics distinguishing the role of a mentor from that of a supervisor are that:

- the mentor has no supervisory responsibility or authority over the mentee.
- the mentoring relationship provides a confidential, non-judgmental and non-directive environment.
- the parties to the relationship are equal within and share responsibility for the relationship, and
- the overall developmental needs of the mentee are the focus of the relationship.
- The role and responsibility of directors and line managers with respect to staff development and performance management is in no way diminished by the application of this policy.

5. THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

Benefits to the Mentee:

- Enhancement of induction for new staff and accelerates their learning curve
- Increases in clarity and management of career goals
- Opportunity to have own thinking and beliefs challenged
- Development of a wider network of influence through engagement with their mentor
- Provision of time and space to reflect, develop insight, increase self-awareness and confidence
- Increase in productivity, effectiveness and contribution to career goals
- Support in managing and developing relationships with others
- Gain insight into the culture of ETBI, its formal and informal structure and how it operates

Benefits to the Mentor:

- Development of a new set of skills and additional learning acquired from the relationship
- Contact with early career staff and familiarisation with their career development
- Opportunity for reflective space and to gain personal insight
- Satisfaction of developing colleagues and helping them succeed

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mentor Responsibilities

Generally, a “Mentor” will hold a position that is more senior or has more experience in an area that is of interest to the Mentee. The Mentoring relationship is driven by the Mentee.

The Mentor may at times be a role model or sounding board and at other times challenger, advisor or facilitator. However irrespective of role, the Mentor will demonstrate the highest professional standards and also demonstrate a range of personal attributes in each of those roles which include:

- An interest in developing themselves and others
- Excellent listening ability
- Being accessible and available

- Capable of building trust and maintaining confidentiality
- Remaining constructive with a focus on the development of the Mentee.

Mentors will be experienced people who are motivated to make a difference in the role and who have the competencies listed in Figure 1 below.

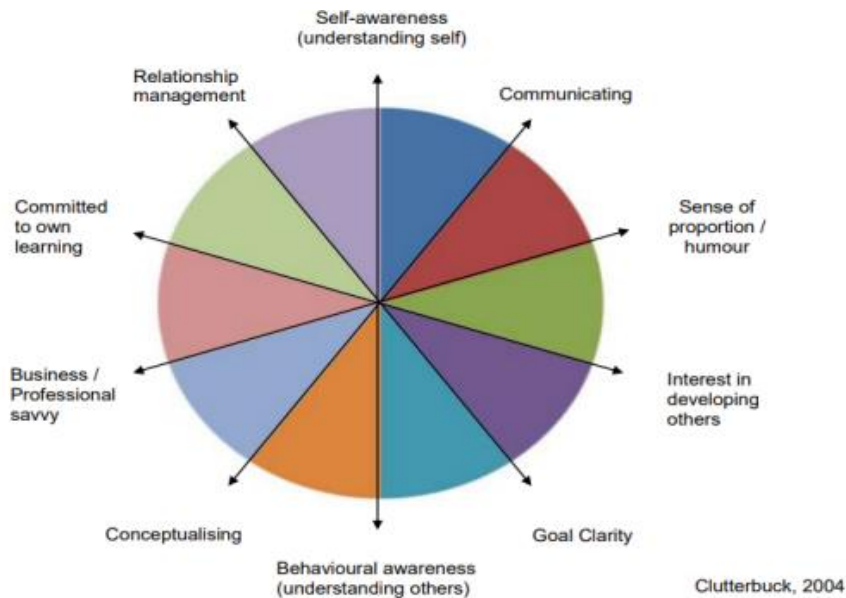


Figure 1 Mentor Competencies

Mentee Responsibilities

The Mentee has a role in ensuring the success of the Mentoring relationship and can add to the success of a Mentoring relationship through;

- A willingness to engage in career development opportunities
- Being open and honest in discussing with the Mentor what it is they would like to achieve from the relationship
- Appreciating and respecting the commitment on the part of the Mentor
- Maintaining confidentiality

ETBI – General Secretary/Schools/Further Education and Training (FET)/Organisation, Support and Development (OSD)/Change Programme Responsibilities

- General Secretary/Schools/FET/OSD/Change Programme will identify a nominated “mentor champion” who will support the Mentoring programme within their functional area.
- The mentor champion will be supported by Human Resources in:

- Facilitating the Mentoring process within their functional area by encouraging Mentees and Mentors to engage in the process.
- Championing and reporting on mentoring as a KPI at Executive Leadership Team Meetings
- Meeting with potential Mentors, where appropriate, to discuss suitability for the Mentor role
- Involved in the process of mentor selection/allocation.
- Gathering mentor/mentee nominations within their area
- Facilitating reflective practice to champion Mentoring

Human Resources Responsibilities

HR will work and support the General Secretary/Schools/FET/OSD/Change Programme by:

- Organising briefing sessions on the mentoring policy
- Organising and scheduling mentor and mentee workshops
- Assisting with the review of the process
- Assisting with the pairing of mentors/mentees
- Supporting reflective practice by gathering and providing relevant data without breaching mentor/mentee confidentiality

7. BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING IN ETBI

Individual-orientated, work-based learning interventions such as mentoring encourage the employee to take responsibility for their own learning and foster self-reliance and the learning-to-learn capability.

Learning through mentoring requires relatively less time away from the job than attendance at training courses.

Attraction of high-calibre recruits and development of all aspects of their competence leads to greater productivity.

8. ETBI MENTORING GUIDELINES

a. Objectives of Mentoring Programme

- To accelerate and improve the induction and growth of mentees
- To support mentees in developing the wisdom and judgement necessary for applying the knowledge accumulated through education, on-the-job and formal training
- To provide time and space for the mentees to reflect, have their own thinking challenged, develop insights, and identify the actions needed to further their development

- To guide mentees in becoming familiar with the formal and informal structure of the organisation
- To foster self-reliance and the learning-to-learn capability in mentees

b. Preparing for the first session

Both parties should prepare for the first session by:

- Completing the mentoring agreement (Appendix 1)
- Considering expectations and goals and what they want out of the relationship
- What needs to be done in order to make the first meeting effective?
- What do both parties need to know about each other?
- Consider the time commitment – 1hr a month is recommended
- Think about the preferred learning style
- The mentee should do further research in regards to their reason for mentoring and goals they have in mind e.g.
 - Job descriptions for future roles
 - Details of issues
 - Examples of projects of interest
- Agree on the goals and actions for the next meeting (Appendix 2).
- Agree time and date of the next mentoring session.

c. Duration and Timing of Mentoring Relationships

The mentoring relationship will continue for a period of 12 months unless there is mutual agreement between the mentor and mentee that it should last longer. If a relationship cannot be sustained for any reason, the mentor and mentee may ask to create a new one.

9. MENTORING MATERIAL

Horoszowski, M. (2020) [How to Build a Great Relationship with a Mentor](#)

Tu, M., Li, M. (2021) [What Great Mentorship looks like in a Hybrid Workplace](#)

10. REVIEW OF POLICY

There will be a review of this policy two years after its introduction or earlier if deemed necessary by ETBI management.

Appendix 1

Sample Mentoring Agreement

We have agreed on the ground rules and code of ethics below for the mentoring relationship.

_____ (Mentor) _____ (Mentee) _____

(Date) _____

Ground Rules

We will meet monthly, and agree on the time, date and duration of the meetings in advance.

The mentor will assist the mentee in achieving development goals but will let the mentee do things for themselves as much as possible.

The mentor will share general insights gained from this mentoring relationship as part of the process of organisational learning but will respect personal confidentiality at all times.

Code of Ethics

The mentor's role is to respond to the mentee's developmental needs and agenda: it is not to impose their own agenda.

Mentor and mentee will respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.

While the mentor is expected to maintain confidentiality, they will be mindful of legal provisions which require reporting of issues to the relevant authorities.

Appendix 2

Key Actions and Documents

Record of Mentoring Meetings

Mentee name: _____

Mentor name: _____

Meeting date: _____

Meeting no: _____

Developmental goal	Points discussed	Actions agreed

Date agreed for next meeting: _____ Time: _____