



# Mentoring Framework: Guide for Leaders and Managers in Further Education

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# Contents

- 4 Introduction
- 5 Chapter One: What is developmental mentoring?
- 7 Chapter Two: An organisational infrastructure for mentoring
- 9 Chapter Three: A mentoring programme coordinator
- 11 Chapter Four: How mentoring can help achieve strategic priorities and enable diversity
- 12 Next steps
- 13 References

# Introduction



“Mentoring is one if not the single most effective means of fostering ... professional learning and development.”<sup>1</sup>

As a leader or manager in further education (FE), you are key to creating a learning culture across your organisation. Mentoring can be one of the most effective methods of continuing professional development (CPD) for practitioners. However, in order for them to be effective certain conditions need to be in place. The **ETF’s mentoring framework** outlines a set of practices to enable effective mentoring. This short guide for leaders accompanies the ETF’s mentoring framework. It provides you with information and ideas for how to implement or enhance a mentoring programme in your organisation.

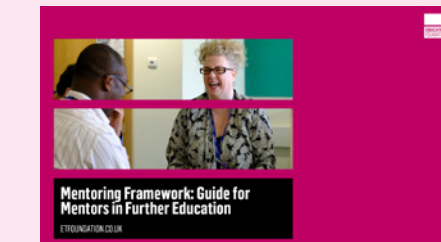
There are two other guides available: one for mentors and one for mentees. We recommend that you firstly familiarise yourself with the mentoring framework and the contents of this guide. Then encourage mentors and mentees in your organisation to access these publications as well. The ETF are also offering a range of free CPD activities and resources for leaders, mentoring coordinators, mentors and mentees. Please visit our [website](#) for the latest information.

At the end of this guide, you will find a list of suggested next steps so you can take mentoring in your organisation to the next level!



Mentoring Framework for Practitioners in Further Education

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Guide for Mentors in Further Education

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<sup>1</sup> Hobson et al. 2009

# Chapter One: What is developmental mentoring?



## Reflective questions:

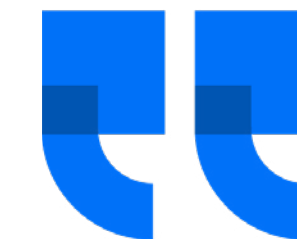
1. How do you define mentoring?
2. How do others around you define mentoring?
3. What is the underlying purpose of mentoring for practitioners in your organisation?



## Definitions of mentoring

There are many different definitions of mentoring and coaching. Contrary to what some people say, there is no one 'correct' definition of mentoring or coaching. These terms are used across the world and their meanings can vary (a lot) depending on the context. You might already hold a firm view of what mentoring means and what coaching means. However, from time to time, you are likely to encounter people who hold a different, and perhaps even a contrasting view to yours, and that's OK! The most important thing when establishing a mentoring programme is to define your terms upfront so everyone is clear about what to expect.

In the ETF's mentoring framework and accompanying guides, mentoring is considered to be a process that involves:



“teachers and trainers supporting colleagues on a one-to-one basis, over a sustained period, to bring about professional learning and development.”

Whilst some people draw a clear distinction between mentoring and coaching, at the ETF we use the term mentoring in a broad sense, which *includes* coaching.<sup>2</sup> In other words, we consider that a trained and skilful mentor is able to adopt a wide range of helping techniques, including both mentoring and coaching activities, which they draw on in dynamic response to the individual needs of the mentee.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> These definitions of mentoring are based on ideas presented in Hobson and Maxwell 2020

<sup>3</sup> For these reasons, from here on in, the terms mentoring and mentor are used in their broadest sense to include coaching and other helping roles.

# Chapter One: What is developmental mentoring?

## Approaches to mentoring

**The approach or techniques that a mentor uses can vary a lot. One factor that contributes to how a mentor approaches the role is the purpose of the mentoring or, in other words, why you are establishing a mentoring scheme in the first place.**

An international literature review undertaken by one of the contributors to this guide identified three main mentoring approaches, their underlying purposes and associated mentoring techniques:

### Judgmental mentoring

This is sometimes called mentoring for supervision or evaluative mentoring. It involves the mentor observing, evaluating and giving feedback to the mentee on how to improve. The underlying purpose of the mentoring is to try to bring about performance improvement. The types of techniques a mentor adopts include: setting the agenda for mentoring meetings, giving the mentee feedback and strongly advising them on what to do next. Whilst mentees can sometimes find it helpful to receive feedback from their mentor, if the approach is solely or mainly judgmental, there is evidence that suggests this can be harmful to the mentee (see Hobson and Malderez, 2013).

### Developmental mentoring

This is a flexible and multifaceted approach which aims to maximise learning and development for the individual mentee. The underlying purpose is to bring about professional learning and growth. The types of techniques a mentor adopts include: asking open/probing questions, co-enquiry and offering positive reinforcement. The ETF's mentoring framework and guides provide ideas about how to bring about this approach to mentoring in FE organisations. The publications are informed by published evidence on how to effectively enact this approach to mentoring.

## Transformational mentoring

The underlying purpose of this approach is to bring about substantial change in an organisation and/or redress systemic inequalities. The types of techniques a mentor adopts include prompting critical reflection, promoting critical pedagogies, supporting practitioners to experience different cultures and being an advocate for social justice. Whilst the ETF recognises the potential benefits of transformational mentoring for both practitioners and learners, there is currently little published evidence about how to effectively apply this approach in practice. This is an area we continue to explore.



#### Developmental task:

Draft a short statement, including a definition and purpose of mentoring, for your organisation in collaboration with qualified or trained mentors within your organisation. Then ask relevant stakeholders to review the statement before sharing more widely.



#### Further information:

For more information about definitions and approaches to mentoring, please see the list of references at the end of this document and further resources on the [ETF's mentoring website](#).

# Chapter Two: An organisational infrastructure for mentoring

In order for mentoring to reach its potential as an effective method of CPD, it needs an organisational infrastructure or architecture around it, otherwise, the benefits can be lost. As a leader, you are in the prime position to ensure this infrastructure is in place. Find the key elements below with suggested actions for how to implement them.

<p><b>Organisational commitment to mentoring</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Write an organisation policy for mentoring based around ETF's mentoring framework.</li> <li>▶ Take steps to ensure mentoring is a feature within an expansive learning culture in your organisation (Fuller and Unwin, 2003).</li> <li>▶ Make sure that mentors and mentees are allocated time in their timetables to meet on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Appropriate mentor training and networking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Enable new mentors to complete a new to mentoring training programme (for example, see <a href="#">the ETF's offer</a>).</li> <li>▶ Ensure that qualified/experienced mentors also have access to ongoing CPD (for example, see <a href="#">the ETF's offer</a>).</li> <li>▶ Give mentors access to mentoring supervision and/or mentoring networks so they can discuss their practice with other mentors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clarity and consistency of roles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Write role descriptions for mentors, mentees and mentoring coordinators, drawing on the ETF's mentoring framework and accompanying guides.</li> <li>▶ Ensure these descriptors explain a commitment to developmental mentoring approaches.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cultivating a mentee mindset</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure that mentors, mentees, and mentoring coordinators are aware of what constitutes a mentee mindset (see Searby, 2014).</li> <li>▶ Check that mentees are appropriately prepared for mentoring through training.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rigorous methods of mentor selection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Appoint a mentoring coordinator to oversee the selection and matching of mentors and mentees (see next chapter).</li> <li>▶ Only accept mentors who have willingly volunteered for the role.</li> <li>▶ Ensure potential mentors are committed to undertaking training and ongoing CPD in mentoring.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Duration of regular and sustained mentoring relationship</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Do not employ mentoring (or coaching) as a 'quick fix' remedial intervention.</li> <li>▶ Enable long-term relationships and a frequency of meetings that meets the individual needs of the mentee.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effective pairing of mentors and mentees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure mentors have credibility in the eyes of mentees.</li> <li>▶ Avoid pairing mentees with their line managers.</li> <li>▶ Ensure there is human judgment involved – do not rely on random pairings or software alone to make the matches.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensuring accountability for mentoring</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring in your organisation.</li> <li>▶ Address ineffectual mentoring through training and development and take further steps if necessary.</li> <li>▶ Ensure that mentors receive reward and recognition for their role.</li> </ul>

# Chapter Two: An organisational infrastructure for mentoring



## Developmental task:

To what extent does your organisation have an organisational infrastructure for mentoring? Discuss this chapter and the ETF's mentoring framework with colleagues and existing mentors at your organisation.



## Further information:

The information presented in this chapter is based on the findings of two important research articles about mentoring in educational contexts (including further education).

Hobson, A J and Maxwell, B (2020). 'Mentoring substructures and superstructures: an extension and reconceptualisation of the architecture for teacher mentoring'. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 46 (2), pp. 184-206.

Cunningham, B (2007). 'All the right features: towards an 'architecture' for mentoring trainee teachers in UK further education colleges', *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 33 (1), pp. 83-97.



# Chapter Three:

## A mentoring programme coordinator

A mentoring coordinator is someone who manages a mentoring programme or scheme. Sometimes this role might sit within a department, such as Initial Teacher Training or Quality. Sometimes there might not be a formally designated mentoring coordinator.

There are a number of research studies which suggest that having a mentoring coordinator is an important feature of an effective mentoring programme.

**The ETF recommend that all FE providers should have a mentoring coordinator who is responsible for the following types of activities:**

- ▶ Overall management of the mentoring programme
- ▶ Recruiting, selecting and maintaining a register of mentors and mentees
- ▶ Ensuring that mentors undertake mentoring training and CPD
- ▶ Ensuring that mentees undertake mentoring training
- ▶ Matching pairs of mentors and mentees
- ▶ Monitoring mentoring relationships (for example, making sure that meetings are taking place)
- ▶ Encouraging and supporting mentoring relationships
- ▶ Ensuring mentoring relationships are brought to a successful close
- ▶ Ensuring that the mentoring is evaluated and recommendations are implemented
- ▶ Communicating with mentors, mentees and other stakeholders
- ▶ Being available and offering support to mentors and mentees.



**In order to make sure you have an effective mentoring coordinator, we also recommend that as a leader you ensure that:**

- ▶ There is a robust process for appointing a mentoring coordinator who is likely to be successful in the role
- ▶ Mentoring coordinators are suitably trained and have opportunities for CPD
- ▶ Mentoring coordinators are supported to carry out the role, for example:
  - ▶ They have sufficient time and resources
  - ▶ They have a line manager who fully understands and supports the role
  - ▶ Mentors, mentees, managers and leaders throughout the organisation know who they are
  - ▶ Mentors and mentees keep in contact with them.

We recommend that when mentors and mentees start the mentoring, they are provided with contact details for their mentoring coordinator and are made aware of expectations regarding keeping in touch with them. Finally, you may also want to consider succession planning for the role to ensure there is a smooth transition if the role changes hands.

# Chapter Three:

## A mentoring programme coordinator



### Developmental task:

Identify who in your organisation is currently responsible for coordinating mentoring (there might be more than one person). Discuss the contents of this chapter with them and write a job description for the role so everyone is clear about what it involves.

Make sure that mentors and mentees are provided with information about the role of mentoring coordinator and how they should work with them.



### Further information:

The content presented in this chapter is taken from a study of research on mentoring coordinators:

Hobson, A J, Maxwell, B, and Kaplar-Kodacsy, K (2021). 'A rapid evidence review' [online]. Available at: <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/professional-development/mentoring/research/> [accessed 10 May 2021].

If you would like to know more about this important role, we recommend you read the study, which is available on the [ETF website](#).



# Chapter Four:

## How mentoring can help achieve strategic priorities and enable diversity

Much of the published literature on developmental mentoring emphasises how important it is for the mentee to be at the centre of the process. However, mentoring is not just about the individual; it has the potential to bring about substantial change across an organisation. This should not involve managers or leaders telling mentoring pairs what to change or improve. Rather it should involve providing opportunities for mentors and mentees to grow and share their learning, and leaders and managers listening to their responses. The challenge for you is to ensure that mentoring meets the individual needs of the practitioner, whilst also realising its potential to bring about change at an organisational level.

Mentoring also has the potential to promote diversity across your organisation. For example, if a practitioner has developed an inclusive curriculum or the use of critical pedagogies, they could be trained as a mentor to support other teachers and trainers to make similar advancements. The transformational mentoring approach described on [page 6](#) of this guide highlights the potential for mentors to be agents of change.

**Here are five ideas for enabling developmental mentoring, that focus on meeting the practitioners' needs, whilst also drawing links with the organisation's strategic objectives and opportunities for change.**

1. Raise awareness amongst mentors and mentees about your organisation's quality improvement plan. Do not task them with making advancements in a particular area, but rather encourage them to use the quality improvement plan as stimulation for discussion.
2. Provide pairs of mentors and mentees with opportunities to share what they learned from mentoring with colleagues, including leaders, from across the organisation.
3. Find out more about mentors' and mentees' skills, knowledge and interests and explore whether they would like to bring about particular changes that could have an impact across the organisation.
4. Alongside a generic mentoring programme, ask for volunteers to form a subset of 'special-interest' mentoring pairs who opt to focus on one of your strategic priorities.
5. Engage in critical discussions with the mentors and mentees. Involve them in discussions about the purpose and future direction of your organisation.



### Developmental task:

Consider the transformational potential of mentoring. How could you develop mentoring in your organisation so that it promotes equality, diversity and inclusion? Set up a discussion with other leaders/managers, governors and relevant student groups to explore this topic further.



### Further information:

**If you are interested to find out more about how mentoring can promote inclusion and social justice, take a look at the following:**

Clutterbuck, D (n.d) 'How mentoring supports inclusion', [online]. Available at: <https://davidclutterbuckpartnership.com/how-mentoring-supports-inclusion/> [accessed: 7 April 2021].

Duckworth, V and Maxwell, B (2015). 'Extending the mentor role in initial teacher education: embracing social justice', *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 4(1), pp.4-20. Available at: [http://shura.shu.ac.uk/10363/3/Maxwel\\_Extending-the-mentor-role.pdf](http://shura.shu.ac.uk/10363/3/Maxwel_Extending-the-mentor-role.pdf) [accessed: 27 May 2021].

# Next steps

Thank you for reading this guide on mentoring for leaders and managers in the FE sector. Our goal is to raise the quality of mentoring for the benefit of mentors, mentees and their learners. We hope that you have found the ideas presented in this guide useful for developing mentoring in your organisation further.

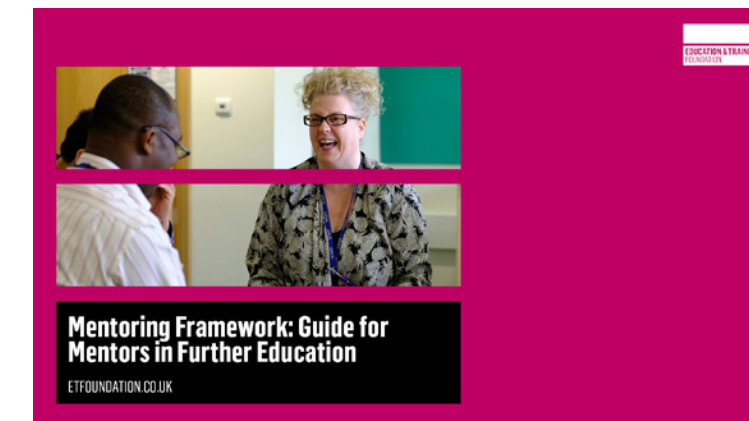
We recommend that you now consider undertaking the following next steps:

1. Revisit the ETF's mentoring framework and self-assessment exercise.
2. Create a policy for mentoring in your organisation based on the mentoring framework and the information in this guide.
3. Ensure that your colleagues have copies of the mentoring framework and accompanying guides shown to the right.
4. Visit our [website](#) to check out the ETF's training and CPD opportunities for mentees, mentors and leaders.



“This framework will help us enhance mentoring across our organisation.”

[Download Mentoring Framework](#)



“The inclusion of references to established literature is really useful. It allows all involved in the mentoring relationship to widen their understanding of certain concepts and topics, and encourages them to delve deeper into things they find useful or interesting.”

[Download Guide for Mentors](#)



“Lots of useful snippets of information. I read it from start to finish!”

[Download Guide for Mentees](#)

# References

Here is a list of references that were drawn on when developing this guide for leaders and managers in the FE sector. For more resources and literature on mentoring, please see the ETF's mentoring framework.

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