



Developmental mentoring

Mentoring can mean different things to different people, find out more about the model of mentoring we advocate.

It's important that both mentors and mentees agree on the model of mentoring their relationship will follow. Developmental mentoring allows mentees to drive the relationship, learn more about themselves and assess their options, while mentors are able to act as an independent sounding board.

Developmental mentoring

Developmental mentoring emerged in Europe in the 1980s as a process for empowering others to take charge of their own development. This is in contrast to a 'structured' or 'sponsorship' model of mentoring that was more widespread at the time, especially in the business world in the United States. It is important to be clear on how different these two approaches are.

Developmental Mentoring	Structured Mentoring
The mentor is more experienced in a relevant field but ideally independent of the mentee's direct professional life.	The mentor may have a hierarchical influence over the mentee and their career progression.
The mentor helps the mentee to discover their own wisdom and do things for themselves.	The mentor can promote and escalate the career of the mentee.
The mentor's experience and wisdom are not necessarily passed on, but can be accessed when needed.	The mentor gives advice and guidance and the acquisition of skills or knowledge is paramount.
There is a recognition of mutual growth and learning together despite the different levels of experience.	The learning is one way; from mentor to mentee.
The primary focus is on the development of the mentee and their personal journey.	The primary focus is on career development for the benefit of the organisation.
Great questions are central.	Great advice is the focus.

Characteristics of developmental mentoring

- A focus on developing levels of understanding and mutuality of learning for both parties.
- There is no line of accountability, e.g. manager / direct report, supervisor / researcher so the conversations are more likely to be free from bias.
- The mentor and mentee are able to address difficult issues as they arise due to the significant level of trust built between the two.
- Generosity of time and help by the mentor and the willingness of the mentee to take charge of their learning.