IBC Institute of Barristers' Clerks

# A Brief Guide to Mentoring

## How mentoring works

Role model mentoring is an entirely confidential process and is to be driven by the mentee. The mentor helps the mentee become what they aspire to be and to realise his or her potential by:

- Passing on knowledge and/or skills;
- To act as a sounding board, providing support/guidance and to point the mentee in the right direction;
- Guidance on applying best practice
- To discuss career ambitions, choices and paths.

We would suggest an open dialogue between mentor and mentee, regular communication and subject to the mentee's objectives/needs, one to one meetings arranged as required. Once again, it is important to note that the relationship and communication should be driven by that of the mentee and not that of the mentor.

The mentor will usually be more experienced than the mentee. Often working in a set that has similar Practice areas, or the mentor may have worked at a similar set in the past, so that knowledge and skills learned can be shared and passed on to mentee.

*What this scheme is not designed to do:*

- *Provide a platform to put forward a complaint of any form or advise as to how to make a complaint and assist in the process. If this should occur we would refer you to Etiquette & Discipline committee.*
- *The ability to obtain salient information from competing sets of Chambers and use for yours/Chambers personal gain and as a marketing tool.*
  *Discuss Equality and Diversity issues/concerns. Please refer to the E & D committee.*

## Benefits to a Mentee

- Development of professional skills;
- Clearer understanding of career opportunities, aspirations and goals;
- Improved self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Increased motivation;
- Support in managing workplace relationships;
- Reduced feelings of isolation;
- Ambition;

## Benefits to a Mentor

- The enjoyment of a rewarding challenge;
- Making a contribution, individually and professionally;
- Feeling valued as a role model;

- Refreshing and validating their own experiences;
- Gaining other perspectives;

## Responsibilities of a Mentee

- Define the key issues;
- Be clear about your expectations;
- Drive the mentoring relationship;
- Take responsibility for arranging meetings and the agenda for them;
- Be ready to challenge, in a respectful and open way if you do not agree;

## Responsibilities of a Mentor

- Provide guidance based on experience;
- Create a positive climate for open communication;
- Help identify problems and guide towards solutions;
- Offer constructive criticism in a supportive way;
- Be careful to not do their job for them;
- Solicit feedback.

## The Application Process

Members of the IBC who are interested in being mentors should complete a mentor application form, available on the IBC website.

The form asks about your professional background, skills and professional experience. The more information you can provide us with, the more likely we are to be able to match you well.

Members of the IBC who wish to apply to be matched with a mentor should complete a mentee application form (available on the IBC website). In addition to providing details of your background, there is an opportunity to identify any issues that you seek to address through this scheme.

If a mentee wishes his or her form to be anonymised for the purposes of the matching process, or not disclosed to a particular member of the matching panel, this should be clearly stated in a covering note when returning the form. No reason needs to be given.

Mentor and mentee forms should be sent to admin@ibc.org.uk

Matching of mentors and mentees takes place on a monthly basis.

## The Matching Process

The matching process is carried out by a member of IBC Management Committee, namely:

Lucy Burrows

When a possible mentor has been identified, Lucy will contact the mentee for permission to give out the mentee's contact details to the prospective mentor. If the mentee agrees, Lucy will then provide both the mentor and the mentee with contact details and they will be asked to make contact with each other. If the mentee does not agree, we will, if the mentee wishes, refer the form back for a further mentor to be identified.

The information on the forms is kept confidential and is held by the IBC, although mentee forms will be destroyed once a mentee is matched with a mentor, if the mentee so requests.

## Getting started

You must agree an initial meeting within 4 weeks of the appointment; the mentor and mentee should agree ground rules about the mentoring relationship and goals incorporating:

- The place and frequency of meetings
- Confidentiality: generally the information shared by mentee and mentor will be confidential. Is the mentee content that the fact of the mentoring relationship is known to others? Are there other confidentiality issues to consider?
- Boundaries: discuss any other issues (e.g. the mentor may only enquire into the mentee's private life by invitation)
- the Mentee's needs and career aspirations
- broad outcomes if possible
- approximate timescale of the mentoring relationship

It is also important to discuss the timescale and purpose of the mentoring relationship to ensure what they want to achieve . It is not necessary for the mentoring relationship to last indefinitely: it is essential to agree that it should last for a fixed period, e.g. three months, in the first place, to be extended if both parties consider it would be useful.

At the end of this guide, there is a checklist for mentors and mentees to use at the outset of the relationship to help with this process.

IBC Institute of Barristers' Clerks

# Checklist for the Start of a Mentoring Relationship

Have you done the following?

- ☐ Exchanged contact details and agreed contact preferences (e.g. email)
- ☐ Ensured that Mentoring is what is actually required as opposed to information from another IBC committee
- ☐ Agreed how often you will aim to meet or talk (e.g. once a month)
- ☐ Agreed who will be responsible for arranging meetings and where and when you will next meet
- ☐ Discussed confidentiality
- ☐ Discussed any other boundaries/limits or preferences the Mentee has about the mentoring relationship
- ☐ Discussed what the Mentee is particularly looking to get out of the mentoring relationship
- ☐ Set goals for what you hope to achieve through the mentoring relationship
- ☐ Agreed an initial timescale for the mentoring relationship, subject to review
- ☐ Agreed a "no fault divorce" clause – that either party can terminate the mentoring relationship, without giving reasons or allocating blame, if they feel it is not working/useful
- ☐ Discussed what to do in the event of a complaint or issue from both sides

# Institute of Barristers Clerks

## Mentoring scheme: introduction

Most of us, at some time or other in our career, feel the need to talk to somebody who can offer advice and the benefit of their experience. Often, there may be someone in Chambers, who can fulfil that role. At other times, those people may not be appropriate.

This is when a mentor – an informed, objective and supportive person who is outside your immediate workplace – can provide a sympathetic ear and impartial guidance on how you might achieve your career goal or deal with a specific issue

Mentoring has become a widely used way of managing talent in many areas of business, industry and the professions, from supporting Junior Clerks to people in mid-career and those who are taking up demanding senior positions.

The IBC has established its own mentoring scheme with the aim of providing a support and advice network open to all members of the IBC. We have based this entire model on information that has very kindly been provided by the Chancery Bar Association.

### What is mentoring?

The IBC Scheme is based on a common form of mentoring, known as role model mentoring. This is a confidential, one on one, non-judgmental relationship in which one individual (the mentor) provides support, advice or encouragement to another (the mentee). The mentor is generally more experienced than the mentee, and usually practises in the same or a similar field.

Mentoring is not a one-way process. It is a relationship based upon mutual trust and respect and, in a successful mentoring relationship, the mentor can benefit as much as the mentee. Many mentors talk about the value of refreshing their own experiences and knowledge, gaining an understanding of a younger viewpoint and skills, and also the satisfaction of helping a fellow professional to realise their potential.

A Mentor is a guide who can help the mentee find the right direction and who can help him/her develop solutions to career issues. Mentoring provides the mentee with an opportunity to think about career options and progress.

### The Scheme

As this Scheme is based on role model mentoring, it is expected that members applying to become part of the Scheme will form a relationship which will be of value to both of them over a period of time, rather than on a needs specific basis. There may however be opportunities to match mentees with mentors who have the experience to assist in dealing with one-off, specific situations. This is known as spot mentoring.

The IBC is constantly looking for Chambers Clerks, at all levels of seniority, who would be prepared to act as a mentor, or who might be prepared to offer advice on a one-off basis, based on their own career experiences. Members of the IBC may wish to be mentors and to have a mentor of their own. Younger mentees will be encouraged to become mentors themselves in time.

## How do I become a mentor?

Matching is a very important part of a successful mentoring relationship, and to assist in this process, individuals wishing to participate are asked to complete a form providing information about their professional background. IBC members who are interested in becoming a mentor should complete the mentor application form, available on the IBC website, and send this to admin@ibc.org.uk

The forms will only be disclosed to the members of the matching panel for the purpose of the matching process.

## How do I become a Mentee?

If you would like to have a mentor, you need to complete the mentee form, available on the IBC website and at the end of this guide.

The completed form should be sent to admin@ibc.org.uk

If a mentee wishes his or her form to be anonymised for the purposes of the matching process, or not disclosed to a particular member of the matching panel, this should be stated in a covering note when returning the mentee form. No reasons need be given.

## The matching process

The matching process is carried out monthly by;

Lucy Burrows

When they have identified a possible mentor, Lucy will contact the mentee for permission to give out the mentee's contact details to the prospective mentor. If the mentee agrees, Lucy will then provide both the mentor and mentee with contact details and they will be asked to make contact with each other. If the mentee does not agree, we will, if the mentee wishes, refer the form back for a further mentor to be identified.

The information on the forms is kept confidential and is held by the IBC, although mentee forms will be destroyed once a mentee is matched with a mentor if the mentee so requests.

## Managing the mentoring process

To help both parties manage the mentoring relationship effectively, a set of guidelines has been produced (see: A brief guide to mentoring.) These lay down the principles of role model mentoring, the responsibilities of the parties and an outline of the process.

## What happens if it doesn't work out?

The mentor/mentee relationship is voluntary and neither party is under any obligation to continue it. As the guidelines suggest, a mentoring relationship should include a 'no fault divorce' clause. There are various reasons for a mentoring relationship not working well, from personality differences to pressure of time. If either individual wishes to terminate the arrangement he or she should contact admin@ibc.org.uk, who can arrange for the mentee to be introduced to a new mentor.

## Who do I contact for further information?

If you would like further information about how the Scheme works, please feel free to contact Lucy Burrows (lucy@duxtonhill.net)

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## Mentoring Scheme

## Mentee Form

| | |
|---|---|
| First name: | Surname: |
| Age *(optional*): | |
| Contact address: | Telephone:<br><br>Email:<br>Preferred method of contact: |
| Chambers area of specialisation | |
| Appropriate matching is an essential element of a successful mentoring relationship, so it is helpful to know about particular issues that are important to you. The following list may help you to consider the support you are seeking from a mentor. *Please mark as appropriate.* | |
| Moving chambers | Furthering career/ realising potential |
| Balancing work and home life | Dealing with chambers |
| Returning to work after parental leave | Networking and career progression |
| Gaining specific skills (please specify): | |
| Additional details which you think may assist us in matching you with an appropriate mentor: | |

☐ Tick here if you wish this form to be destroyed once you have been matched with a mentor.

Signed: …… Date ……

**Send completed form to:**

admin@ibc.org.uk

The process of matching mentors and mentees will be undertaken by Lucy Burrows
Completed forms are retained by the IBC unless you specifically request it destroyed after use

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## Mentoring Scheme

## Mentor Form

| | |
|---|---|
| First name: | Surname: |
| Age*: | |
| Chambers address: | Chambers telephone:<br><br>Email:<br><br>Preferred method of contact: |
| *Appropriate matching is an essential element of a successful mentoring relationship, so to help in this process please provide further information in the boxes below.* | |
| Area/s your Chambers specialise/s in | |
| The following issues may help you to consider your own experience and what you might offer as a mentor. Please tick as appropriate. Other suggestions are welcome. | |
| Moving chambers | Furthering career/ realising potential |
| Balancing work and home life | Dealing with chambers |
| Returning to work after parental leave | Networking and Career progression |
| Gaining specific skills (please specify) | Other areas (please specify) |

**** Optional***

Signed ……

Date ……

**Send completed form to:**

admin@ibc.org.uk

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