

Coaching - Frequently Asked Questions

What is coaching?

Coaching is about partnering with you in a thought-provoking and creative process, designed to inspire you to maximise your personal and professional potential. The coach will help you learn rather than teach.

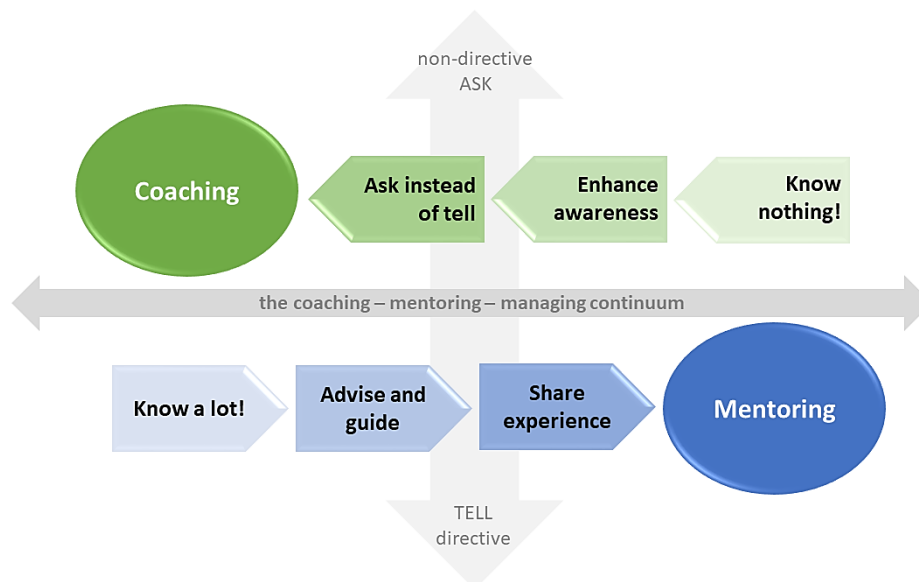
Through observation, questioning, listening and feedback, a skilled coach will create a conversation rich in insight. The process of coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity and leadership. We all have goals we want to reach, challenges we're striving to overcome and times when we feel stuck.

What is coaching not about?

Coaching is not about fixing people. It should be about getting you from good to great. If you're not in a good place for whatever reason, and the barriers to progressing feel insurmountable, it may be that services like counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or other services could help. They are more focused on the past and can help you to work through things that are holding you back.

What is the difference between coaching and mentoring?

Coaching and mentoring are both future-focused, but there are some [distinct differences](#). The diagram below illustrates the main differences:



How long does each coaching session last?

There is no hard and fast rule, but each session tends to take between 60 and 90 minutes.

How many sessions should I have?

This will depend on what you are looking to achieve and will be discussed with your coach. Generally speaking, colleagues have between four and six sessions. These can be scheduled close together (e.g. every four weeks) or spaced out more, and can flex depending on what you are working on.



Who is coaching for?

Coaching is open to everyone. Since we launched Digital Coaching last year we've had a wide range of colleagues take part including the following job roles: Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Deputy Directors, Directors, Heads of School, Heads of Department, Directors of Professional Services, Managers, Personal Chairs, Chancellor's Fellows.

When does coaching work best?

When you come with an open mind, ready to be challenged (in a good way of course!)

What can I do to prepare for coaching?

There are three main things which will help you make the most of your coaching time:

- 1. *Think about what you would like to focus on during coaching*** - this could be specific challenges you want to address, or goals you are working towards. Your focus might simply be that you want a space to explore your thoughts and feelings, and that's okay too. Just have an idea of what you want to talk about during the first conversation, and what you would like to achieve from coaching more generally. You might have an overall goal, but if something else comes up that feels more important then this can be discussed instead. It's your agenda, so you need to get what you need from your time with a coach.
- 2. *Bring a notebook and pen*** - have you ever got home from a meeting and forgotten some of the important points? That's why we recommend that you bring a notebook and pen. You might want to take a note of anything that comes up during the coaching conversation. You may decide on some actions you want to take and want to write them down so that you remember.
- 3. *Arrange some time to reflect*** - the time after your coaching session is just as important as the session itself. You might be full of ideas and inspiration, or you may be processing some thoughts and feelings that have come up. If you can, allow yourself some time after the meeting or in the following few days where you can reflect. If your coaching session is at the beginning of the day, it might be worth blocking out 30 minutes in your diary straight after the session to give yourself some transition time before your next meeting.

Anything else I should know?

If done well, coaching can be hard work. It takes a bit of time and commitment. It will challenge you. It will coax you out of your comfort zone, which as we all know can be painful at first. However, achieving your goals can be incredibly rewarding so you will be thanking yourself for having the courage to choose coaching.

Be prepared for the fact that what you think you need to change might actually be different to what you really need to change! As coaching is a process, things can quickly evolve as you move through.

Further support

- More about coaching with Know you More – [FAQ webpage](#)
- If you have more questions or would like to discuss coaching before registering, please get in touch with the [L&OD team](#)