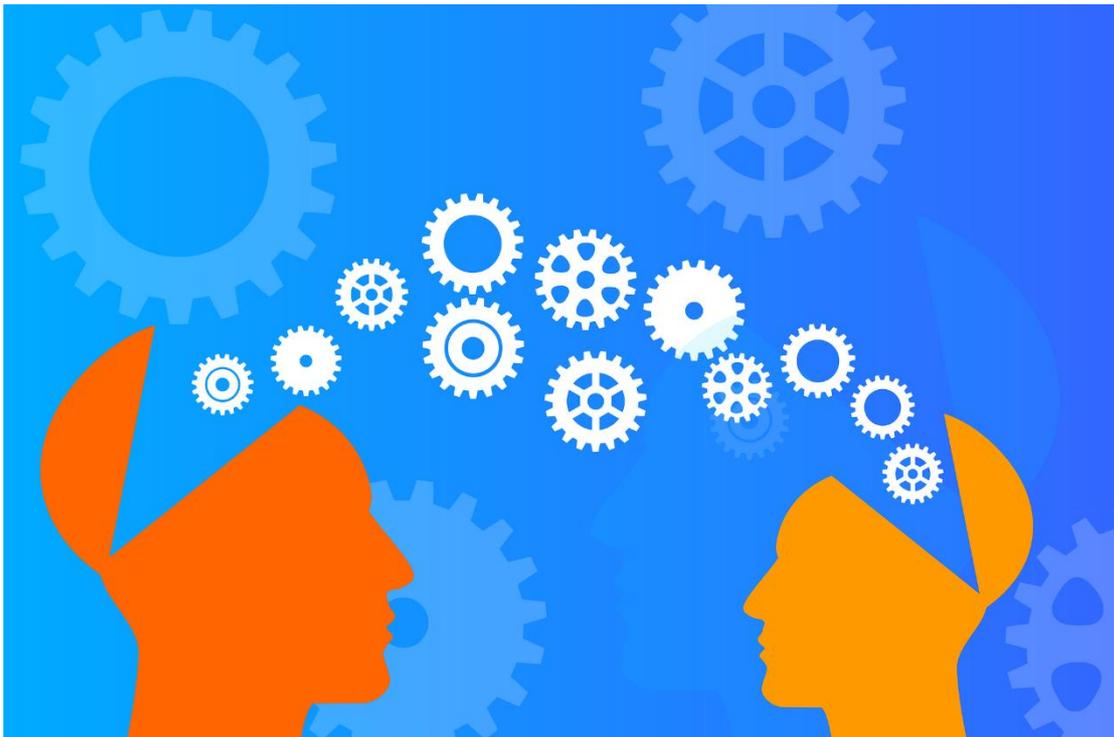


# Mentoring



## A Guide for Researchers

### Introduction

***“You cannot teach a man anything. You can only help him discover it within himself.”***

***Galileo Galilei***

Despite the somewhat insular nature of research practice, no-one ever succeeds by themselves. Sometimes success comes with the help of a good supervisor or manager. Sometimes from teachers and tutors. Sometimes from dialogue with collaborators and colleagues. Often though, and particularly in a world where lots of ‘knowledge’ is accessible more easily than ever before, individuals find that their learning and professional practice is enhanced by mentors, coaches and, particularly, coach-like mentors who can support, challenge and inspire them as they develop.

This document introduces our 4 resources, where we’ll explore what mentoring is, and what it is not. We’ll focus on the role of the mentee and consider how to find and build a mentoring relationship that works for you, focussing on:

- What to look for in a mentor
- How to find and approach a mentor
- How to design a relationship that works for you
- How to get the best out of your mentoring conversations
- Possible difficulties and what you can do if the relationship isn’t working

Part of the role of any leader, and one of the key facets of professional and academic success, is to help to develop and empower those around you. To that end, we have a resources that explores the role of the mentor, the skills required and how to do it ‘right’. Specifically, we’ll examine:

- The skills of a mentor
- Questions to ask potential mentees
- Designing mentoring relationships and establishing boundaries
- Taking a coaching approach to mentoring – asking powerful questions
- Possible difficulties and what you can do if the relationship isn’t working

We’ll finish with a resource including a reference list of mentoring and coaching literature and resources that you’ll certainly find helpful as you develop through your mentoring journey.

**Note:**

Throughout the resources, there are a number of questions where you’ll be able to think, reflect and record your thoughts and practices. To save space, we’ve not provided boxes for you to fill in, but you will find it valuable to record your answers and insights in whatever way you prefer.

Often mentoring relationships are facilitated through institutional schemes where mentors and mentees are matched. This guide is in no way meant to replace any handbook that sits alongside such scheme – especially since this work lacks any of the code of conduct compliance guidance that underpins institutional literature.

These resources will hopefully give a flavour of the notion of learner-centred mentoring where the mentor shares their experiences, acts – at least at times – in a coach like manner and generally amplifies the voice of the mentee. We've considered this from both the mentee and mentor perspective, though it must be noted that the resources have only really scratched the surface of the thinking and published research and guidance that will help you finesse your understanding and practice. It's worth looking at some of the reference material cited on the '*Further Thinking & Reading*', Resource 4, as you continue your journey.

On a personal note. As someone who's spent a professional life around good mentors and supervisors – those who are committed to their mentees and students and want to do their very best for them – I notice that their commitment is rewarded both intrinsically and because, perhaps karmically, they find great mentors for themselves. What's more:

***"You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end each of us must work for his own improvement, and at the same time share a general responsibility for all humanity, our particular duty being to aid those to whom we think we can be most useful."***

Dr. Steve Hutchinson

Produced for University of Edinburgh - IAD – 2022