




EASTERN
ARC Academic Research
Consortium



**The Eastern Arc
Mentoring Scheme
*Guidelines for
Mentees***

Your mentor is giving you their time, confidence, and experience. While there is no need for formal “preparation” before meetings, it is helpful to spend some time beforehand actively thinking about what you hope to achieve from the meeting, and from the mentoring relationship in general.

Before the first meeting with your mentor

Ask yourself the following questions. This will help you to identify areas for discussion, and to have a focussed and conversation.

- What would I like to discuss with my mentor?
- What have I achieved so far in my career?
- What are my main objective(s) in my career?
- Where am I on the path to achieving my career aspirations?
- What do I think I need to do to achieve my goals?
- What are my expectations of a mentor?
- What might my mentor be able to do to help me?

At the first meeting

Remember to ask and agree with your mentor:

- How will we conduct our meetings?
- How often will we meet?
- How much time will we spend on each meeting?
- What do we do if a meeting has to be cancelled or rescheduled?
- What method of communication may we use between meetings?

This guide has been adapted from materials produced for the Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme (WUMS). We are grateful to WUMS for their support in sharing copies of their documentation.

Before subsequent meetings

Your expectations and needs are likely to shift over the course of the mentoring relationship. To ensure your discussions with your mentor reflect these changes, it is useful to consider before each meeting:

- What (if anything) has changed since the last time we spoke?
 - What have I done or achieved?
 - What has shifted in my work and/or life?
- In what ways was our last discussion helpful?
- Have I taken any actions that we discussed?
 - If yes, what happened next?
 - If no, why not (changing context, time pressures, and so on)?
- What are my main goals for the mentoring relationship now?

Reflective exercises

To get the most out of the mentoring experience, mentees should take time to consciously reflect on what they would like to change as a result of mentoring. This reflection can be as formal or informal as mentees choose – spending ten minutes and jotting down a few bullet points before or after a mentoring meeting will be enough for some mentees.

However, some mentees who participated in the programme in previous years said that more structured tools for reflection might be useful. These two models for reflection can be used during the mentoring process, or as a way to assess its influence at the close of the mentoring relationship.¹

1. What? So what? Now what?

The model provides a simple framework for reflection. To learn from a particular experience, ask yourself three questions about it:

- **'What?'** This helps you to describe the situation you want to learn from. You should identify the facts and feelings of the situation.
- **'So What?'** This allows you to extract the meaning of 'What?'. It involves questioning what knowledge you and others had in the situation, and what knowledge or theories could help you make sense of the situation.
- **'Now what?'** This enables you to create an action plan for the future based on the previous questions.

What?: The experience of the situation

Consider the following questions:

What ...

- ... is the context?
- ... is the problem/situation/difficulty/reason for being stuck/reason for success?
- ... was I/we/others trying to achieve?
- ... was the outcome of the situation?
- ... was my role in the situation?
- ... was the role of other people in the situation (if others were involved)?
- ... feelings did the situation evoke in me? And in others (to the extent you know)?
- ... were the consequences for me? And for others?
- ... was good/bad about the experience?

¹: These models are adapted from the University of Edinburgh Reflection Toolkit: <https://reflection.ed.ac.uk/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience>. This includes fuller examples for both models, as well as other models that you might find helpful

So what?: The implications of the situation

Consider the following questions:

So what...

- ... does this tell me/teach me/imply about the situation/my attitude/my practice/the problem?
- ... was going through my mind in the situation?
- ... did I base my decisions/actions on?
- ... other information/theories/models/literature can I use to help understand the situation?
- ... could I have done differently to get a more desirable outcome?
- ... is my new understanding of the situation?
- ... does this experience tell me about the way I work?

Now what?: The action plan

For this part, make sure that you avoid generic statements (like 'I will do things differently'). Instead, be as concrete as you can be regarding what you want to do, how you will do it, and how you will remind yourself, the easier and more likely it will be to implement.

Consider the following questions:

Now what...

- ... do I need to do in the future to do better/fix a similar situation/stop being stuck?
- ... might be the consequences of this new action?
- ... considerations do I need about me/others/the situation to make sure this plan is successful?
- ... do I need to do to ensure that I will follow my plan?

If you're interested in reading more on this model, see:

- T. Borton, *Reach Touch and Teach: Student Concerns and Process Education* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1970).
- J. Driscoll, 'Reflective practice for practise', *Senior Nurse*, 13 (1994): 47-50.
- G. Rolfe, D. Freshwater, and M. Jasper, *Critical Reflection in Nursing and Helping Professions: A User's Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

2. The Four Fs of Active Reviewing

This model involves working through four stages to critically examine the situation you want to review and reflect upon, while thinking about how to use what you have learned in the future.

The four F's are:

- **Facts:** An objective account of what happened
- **Feelings:** The emotional reactions to the situation
- **Findings:** The concrete learning that you can take away from the situation
- **Future:** Structuring your learning such that you can use it in the future

Facts

The first F represents hard facts. This stage focuses on the sequence of events and key moments. Avoid introducing opinion at this stage – stick to what was said and done, rather than any interpretation of it.

Helpful questions:

- Write a brief account of 'What? Who? Where? When?'
- Did anything unexpected happen? Any surprises?
- Did anything very predictable happen?
- What was most memorable/different/interesting?
- What were the turning points or critical moments?
- What happened next? What happened just before?
- What most influenced your attitude and behaviour?
- What didn't happen that you thought/hoped would happen?

Feelings

With the facts established, you can move onto describing the feelings in the situation. Feelings can guide you to fully understanding the situation and so your learning is better grounded in the experience. Try not to evaluate or judge at this stage – stick with your own feelings, rather than whether someone or something was right or wrong.

Helpful questions:

- What are some of the feelings you experienced?
- At what point did you feel most or least involved?
- What other feelings were present in the situation?
- At what points were you most aware of controlling/expressing your feelings?
- What were your personal highs and lows?

Findings

This is the stage to you start investigating and interpreting the situation to find meaning and make judgements. The main questions are 'how' and 'why'.

Helpful questions:

- Why ... did or didn't it work? ...did you take on that role? ...did you do what you did? ...did you not do something else? etc.
- How ... did your feelings influence what you said and did? ...did you get the outcome that happened? etc.
- Were there any missed opportunities or regrets?
- What would you like to have done differently / more of / less of?
- What was most / least valuable?
- Was there any feedback / appraisal?
- What have you found out?

Future

Finally, you can take your findings and consider how to implement them in the future.

Helpful questions:

- How do you imagine using what you have learned?
- What has already changed?
- What choices do you have?
- How does it look to use the findings?
- What plan can you make for the future?

This model was designed by Roger Greenaway. For more information, see the Active Reviewing Cycle website.