



Choosing a CPD Mentor

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See also: Becoming a CPD Mentor
 Mentoring and the BAA CPD scheme
 The BAA CPD scheme

Purpose of this document

If you think that it would be helpful to have a Mentor to give you guidance with the BAA CPD scheme, this document may help you to choose an appropriate Mentor. It outlines what is and isn't involved and it suggests what ground rules you and your potential Mentor should agree from the outset. It does not go into the detail of mentoring – a separate document covers that.

Mentoring

A process where one person (the Mentor) offers guidance and support to facilitate learning or development of another person (the Mentee) in the progression and maintenance of their career. An effective Mentor may provide guidance and interpret complex information on technical and managerial issues. One role of a Mentor is to provide a different perspective so that you can compare and contrast your decisions and goals against a broader picture. Having a Mentor is encouraged, but is not compulsory within the BAA CPD scheme.

Who can be a Mentor

There are no firm rules for who should be a Mentor. The Mentor and Mentee need to be confident and secure in their relationship in order for it to be successful.

A Mentor:

- does not need to be a member of your department
- does not need to be a member of BAA
- does not need to be an Audiological professional
- does need to know you well enough to know that you “get on”
- must have a reasonably detailed knowledge of what your job entails
- needs to be able to meet you: this requires that both you and they make time available and to be geographically accessible
- will endeavour to assist you in meeting the CPD requirements of the Health Professions Council (HPC)
- will understand that mentoring sessions **are not** performance reviews or appraisals, though conclusions and decisions from those are likely to feed into the mentoring process
- is expected to be on your side, be your advocate, your sounding board.

You should not choose someone that you do not trust to provide impartial and confidential guidance, or feel that you may not establish a rapport with.

Line managers or heads of department often act as a Mentor for their staff and this can sometimes work well. However, there is an argument that your line manager should not play a role in the Mentoring process, as they may have an existing and potentially conflicting institutional relationship with you which may inhibit open discussion. If you **do** choose your line manager or head of department, it is important for both of you to understand that the purpose of the mentoring relationship is to support and guide **you**. Budgetary constraints or the conflicting interests of the service or other staff **should not** influence the guidance they give. They should be able to offer you guidance and support in order to develop your career beyond the bounds of your current job description. Ask your line manager to be your Mentor only if you are confident they will be able to fulfil that role.

Note that you, the Mentee, chooses your Mentor and not vice-versa.

Two people should not act as each other's mutual Mentor.

Basic points that should be shared and agreed between the Mentor and Mentee at the beginning of the relationship

The Mentor and the Mentee should agree upon the following:

Confidentiality

- The details of discussions between the Mentor and Mentee are confidential.
- Issues that require the actions of others may be followed up outside the Mentor/Mentee meeting only by agreement.
- Establish whether written notes can or should be made and if so, whether they need to be agreed as an accurate record by both parties.
- Issues that involve illegality or professional misconduct are not confidential.

Honesty

- Mentoring requires that both sides will be as honest and open as possible.
- Realise that some Mentoring relationships, although set up with the best of intentions, do not work.
- Understand and agree at the outset a "no fault" arrangement to terminate the relationship if either party requests this.

Structure of meetings

- In forming a CPD Mentor / Mentee relationship, a commitment is made to schedule regular meetings and it is important that both parties honour that commitment.

- Agree when to meet, how often and for how long. Neither the Mentor nor the Mentee should make excessive demands upon the other's time. Agree what this means in practice and adhere to the arrangement. Most experience shows that meetings on neutral ground, free from interruptions, twice a year are sufficient. Meetings lasting typically 1 to 1.5 hours are most effective. Adhere to any agreed time scale.
- Agree what will, and will not, be covered in the meeting. A mutual checklist or agenda may be beneficial, exchanged a fortnight before each meeting. Your annual appraisal or performance review can be the source of ideas for future CPD but likewise, it can also be the cause of anxiety, uncertainty or conflict. One important issue to include is to review and detail any structured private study undertaken or planned for the next CPD year. Another is to review the mentoring relationship & arrangement for value & content.
- Decide if there is to be any informal contact between formal meetings.

What mentoring is NOT

- Unless explicitly stated, there should be no formal, contractual relationship between Mentor and Mentee that defines or limits the mentoring process.
- As such, whilst there may be expectations on both sides, they cannot be legally binding.
- A Mentor may offer guidance but the Mentee is under no obligation to accept or act on it.
- Likewise, the Mentor cannot be held to account if the guidance they give is poor or inadequate.
- Mentoring is a voluntary undertaking and cannot be construed as employment.
- Mentors should not expect to receive financial reward or payment of expenses from their Mentee.

What Next?

Try to identify someone you already know who you respect and think would give you sound guidance. Approach them to enquire if they would consider acting as your Mentor, and if they have no immediate objections, ask them to read the document "Becoming a Mentor". If they then agree to become your Mentor, both you and they should read these documents:

Mentoring and the BAA CPD scheme

The BAA CPD scheme