



GUIDANCE NOTES ON MENTORING FOR PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

1. Purpose of the guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide information to CIHT members who have volunteered to act as mentors for those planning to apply for professional registration.

2. What is mentoring?

Mentoring can be described as the provision of advice, guidance and support to a practitioner for their personal development by a more experienced colleague. Mentoring differs from coaching, which tends to link an individual's development to organisational goals. Coaching frequently involves line managers. Mentoring is not normally carried out by line managers, which makes it easier to address personal, rather than organisational, needs. While mentoring can involve coaching as a technique, the overarching relationship is wider than simply acting as a coach.

3. The role of the mentor

The mentor's role is that of a 'critical friend', who draws on their knowledge of the industry, the national standards and the professional review process to give advice, guidance and encouragement to the mentee. They should assist the mentee in undertaking a SWOT analysis of their knowledge and experience against the national standards and advise on how this might be presented at professional review.

4. Characteristics of an effective mentor

An effective mentor needs to:

- be an experienced Highways & Transportation professional
- (ideally) be sufficiently senior to be able to raise relevant issues with the mentee's employer, if necessary;
- have an understanding of routes to professional membership and registration
- be accessible, approachable and organised;
- be able to build relationships, listen and inspire confidence;
- be willing to share knowledge from experience;
- be able to provide constructive feedback and encouragement;
- be objective, respectful and discrete;
- be proactive in support of the mentee.

5. Communication between mentor and candidate

Communication between the mentor and the mentee should, ideally, be based on regular face to face meetings supplemented by telephone calls and/or emails. Meetings should be held in a convenient location where a confidential discussion can take place.

Before a meeting with the mentee, the mentor should:

- have copies of useful reference documents available (e.g. Engineering Council's UK-SPEC, TPP Competence Standards);
- confirm time and date;
- try to ensure that there will be no interruptions.

During a meeting with a mentee, the mentor should:

- review the mentee's progress;
- listen attentively, encouraging the candidate to take the lead;
- check for feelings as well as facts;
- ask open questions;
- encourage realistic expectations;
- build on the mentee's own ideas;
- be honest, supportive, encouraging;
- share their thoughts and ideas with the mentee;
- only give undertakings that they can deliver;
- take notes, or ask the mentee to do so
- agree/ revise the mentee's professional development plan;
- agree date/time of next meeting.

After each meeting, the mentor should:

- promptly do anything that they have undertaken to do;
- keep in touch with the mentee between meetings, highlighting regional CIHT or other events or topics that might be relevant and useful.

6. Benefits for mentees and mentors

The main benefit to mentees is that they receive practical advice and guidance from experienced professionals who understand the industry and the professional standards that mentees should aspire to meet.

Mentors benefit from the experience too. As well as keeping them in touch with other practitioners with different experience, mentoring offers an opportunity for mentors to appraise their own leadership and management style and further their own professional development. There is also satisfaction in contributing to the success of others.

7. How to register as a mentor

CIHT uses the on-line system Mentor Match Me, which allows members seeking a mentor to view the profiles of those who have volunteered to mentor and find a suitable match. Their choice is normally based on the mentors area(s) of specialism (e.g. transport planning, road safety, traffic management) but may also be based on geographical location as many mentors and mentees conduct much of their communication off-line once they have been 'matched'.

When a mentor accepts a mentee, the mentor needs to manage that relationship. If a mentor finds that they are too busy to provide mentoring support, or have too many mentees to look after, they can turn off their profile on Mentor Match Me until they have more time.