



CRICK MENTORING HANDBOOK

Bold. Open. Collegial

1 What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a professional relationship in which a person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the mentee’s career and personal growth by offering support, advice and guidance.

A mentoring relationship can start at any stage of a mentee’s career, whether you have started at the Crick, been here a while or have recently left. Mentoring can be particularly helpful when you are working through a specific challenge such as a promotion, a change of career direction, returning to work following leave, working on a new project, or exploring your career options.

Typically, a mentor is a more experienced individual who is willing to share knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust, but it can also be successful for some staff to have a peer mentor, where the mentor/mentee are at the same level of seniority but have differing experience.

2 Benefits of mentoring

The key benefits for both parties include:

For Mentees	For Mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop transferable skills, such as management, leadership, or professional skills • Help in developing improved focus and setting career goals • A safe learning environment outside the lab/office setting where you can discuss and reflect • Access to new contacts who can support you with your learning and career progression and help broaden your network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop leadership and coaching skills • Gain knowledge and awareness of the challenges faced by staff at different stages of their career or in a different profession to your own • An opportunity to question your own perspective - challenge your own assumptions and learn something new. • Influence the next generation of scientists and managers, and pass on your own knowledge and experience

What can mentors help with?

Mentors that are registered on [CrickConnect](#) are asked to indicate their willingness to provide mentoring on their profile. Mentoring can be offered in many different areas but the below are the most common areas:

- Careers planning and guidance
- Changing career path/role type
- Industry/sector specific advice
- Relocating
- Work/life balance
- Challenges and opportunities
- Other areas (specific to the individual)

3 The roles of the mentor and mentee

Mentors and mentees should work together to establish a successful mentoring relationship with the overall goal of helping the mentee achieve the agreed goals. It is important you both have a clear understanding of what your roles involve and what the boundaries are. Some examples of things that mentors and mentees are expected to do and not do are outlined here:

Mentees...	Mentors...
<p>Will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive the mentoring relationship • Set up regular sessions with the mentors • Openly share information with their mentor about their strengths, weaknesses, ambitions, etc. • Initiate their own personal development and take responsibility for appropriate contact with their manager about development issues • Access any other sources of advice and information as may seem appropriate <p>Won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect their mentors to take action on their behalf • Attempt to force their manager or group leader into doing something by quoting their mentor, e.g. <i>“my mentor said we should do this instead of”</i> 	<p>Will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with mentees for confidential discussions and share knowledge as appropriate • Provide guidance, helping the mentee work through resolving issues and conflicts • Ask mentees challenging questions and listen actively • Be honest, objective and impartial, acting with integrity and honouring time commitments • Prompt mentees to contact others who might be able to provide useful advice/information <p>Won't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act on behalf of mentees • Take part in any succession planning discussions or intervene between the mentee and the line manager/group leader • Set the mentee's goals

What makes a good mentor?

Mentoring can be a very rewarding activity for both mentors and mentees. However, before deciding that you want to become a mentor, you should review and answer the following questions:

- Why do I want to be a mentor?
- What knowledge and skills do I have to offer?
- Am I willing to be an active listener?
- Practically, do I have the time capacity to be able to support?

<p>Activity: Complete a short profile of your career to date (including work and volunteering experiences) highlighting any skills developed that could help a mentee. This should be no longer than 200 words and if you're happy to, it's useful to include this text to your CrickConnect Bio.</p>
<p>Once you've completed your profile, identify the areas you feel you are able to provide advice and support</p>

Feedback from mentors in the past has been that it is challenging to put together the short profile but it is then *incredibly* useful to provide a clear focus and direction to the mentoring.

There are three main skills that will help you be a better mentor:

- **Active listening** is where you make a conscious effort to focus completely on what the mentee is saying. Listen, not just hear! Observe and notice what the mentee is saying and not saying e.g., body language and facial expression, tone of voice, etc., to help create a complete picture.
- **Building rapport** is the ability to develop mutual trust, and affinity with someone. It forms the basis of meaningful, close and harmonious relationships, creates the sense of connection and shared values by showing understanding and empathy.
- **Powerful questioning** is the ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the mentoring relationship and the mentee. The mentor should ask questions open-ended questions to allow new learning and discovery, and help move the mentee towards their goals.
- By doing this, mentors will be supporting, challenging and guiding their mentees in an effective and successful mentoring relationship.

4 Getting started

CrickConnect is the platform used to manage the mentoring programme connecting mentees and mentors. If you require any assistance using CrickConnect or specific mentoring support not covered by the platform (i.e., you're looking for support in an area that doesn't seem to be covered), please reach out to the Academic Training team via connect@crick.ac.uk. We also offer a mentoring workshop which is held several times a year at the Crick aimed at both mentors and mentees. Booking for this is available through [Workday](#). Please note, if a workshop isn't available to book into at the moment, please do check back as dates are released.

Why do you want a mentor?

Mentees are expected to take ownership of the relationship and lead it in the way that will help to make the most of the mentor's skills and experience. A key first step is to think about **what is the area that you are seeking help with?** This will help you to focus on what you want to get out of the mentoring relationship.

Important things to think about include:

- Your career path to date
- The skills you have developed and your areas of strength
- Areas and skills you would like to develop further
- Your personal and professional goals
- Your desired career path/ professional/personal goals over the next 1-5 years

Activity: Complete a short profile of your career to date including the above 5 points. This should be no longer than 200 words. If you're happy to, it's useful to include this text to your CrickConnect Bio.
Once you've completed your profile, identify the type of support you're looking for and the skills/knowledge you would like to develop.

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How to find a mentor on CrickConnect

The Crick mentoring programme is mentee led, and so the onus is on mentees to identify what they need and want from a mentoring relationship and find a mentor who can support them. Using the [CrickConnect mentoring platform](#), mentees can see who has volunteered to be a mentor. Below is a step-by-step guide to help you understand how to find a mentor on CrickConnect:

Finding a mentor:

1. When you are confident on what you are looking for in a mentor, log in to [CrickConnect](#) and go to the [Mentoring page](#).
2. Use the filters on the Mentoring panel to search for mentors who fit your criteria. You can filter by industry, job title, employer, education institution, job function, country or a keyword search. For example:
 - If you are interested in working in Switzerland, you can use the country filter to search for mentors currently working in Switzerland.
 - If you are interested in being mentored by someone working in Academia, you can select Academia from the industry filter.
 - If the existing filters don't cover what you are looking for, you can use the keyword search to search for mentors who mention your topic in their profile.
 - Once you have selected your search criteria, click 'Search mentors' to see a list of the mentors who fit the bill. CrickConnect will show you mentors who meet **at least one of the criteria** you've selected. Those listed first will be the closest match meeting more than one of your options and those further down the list may be less relevant.
3. From here, you can see what areas the mentors are offering help in and how these match the support you'd identified in your activity (e.g. Careers planning and guidance, work/life balance, relocating, etc.) and also find out more about them by clicking on them to read their profile.
4. When you have found a mentor who you want to approach, click on the Message button to draft and send a message to the mentor requesting their help. In your opening message, ensure you clearly outline your current situation and the sort of questions/areas you're looking for support with. It may also be helpful to provide some availability/suggestions of the format they be suitable for an initial conversation (a Zoom/phone call is a sensible first step).
5. The mentor will then receive your message and will decide whether they are able to mentor you. Mentors are not always able to accept requests, for a variety of reasons, so if you don't receive an initial response, please do try again.

Becoming a mentor in CrickConnect

As a mentor, your role is to help, support and provide guidance to your mentee(s). Before registering, it is useful to reflect on your reasons for wanting to be a mentor and your personal experiences on where you feel you could add value supporting others.

Completing your mentoring profile on CrickConnect will help to clarify (for potential mentees and for yourself) what you have to offer and why you want to be a mentor and it's important to make sure that you are registered with enough details regarding your personal expertise. If you haven't shared enough details about your current and past experiences, you're unlikely to be found when individuals are looking for a mentor.

Go to "**My Profile**" using the drop-down arrows at the top and from there you can make yourself available as a mentor, choose which topics/areas you are able to offer mentoring in, and set a limit to the number of mentees you are willing to have (to ensure that you aren't inundated with mentoring requests, NB: Given the number of mentors available on the platform, this is unlikely!). Once you have registered as a mentor, you will be visible to users as a 'featured mentor' in the mentoring panel. Do also **ensure that you have fully completed your Bio and included a photo of yourself** on the platform. Feedback from those who have used the platform to find a mentor have said how much of a difference this makes when they are identifying who to approach and understanding the suitability.

Practical guidance for the first meeting/getting started

The **GROW** model provides a good framework to help you structure an initial mentoring meeting. GROW stands for (Goal, Reality, Options and Way Forward).



1. Establish the **Goal**

Firstly, the mentor and mentee should start by exploring the behaviour that the mentee wants to change, and then structure this change as a goal. Make sure that this is a SMART goal: one that is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound. When doing this, it's useful to ask questions like:

- What is the desired outcome?
- How will you know that this has been achieved? i.e. the problem or issue is resolved?

2. Examine the Current **Reality**

Next, the mentee should describe their current reality. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering their starting point, and often they're missing some information that they need in order to reach their goal effectively. Useful mentoring questions in this step include the following:

- What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)? What is the effect or result of this?
- What steps have already been taken towards your goal?
- Does this goal conflict with any other goals or objectives?

3. Explore the **Options**

Once the current reality has been explored, it's time to determine what is possible - outlining all the possible options for reaching the objective. The mentor should help the mentee brainstorm as many good options as possible. Then, discuss these and help them decide on the best ones to move ahead with. The mentor can offer suggestions in this step, but the main work and most of the talking should be done by the mentee. Typical questions that mentors can use to explore options are as follows:

- What else could you do?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
- What factors or considerations will you use to weigh the options?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to achieve this goal?
- What obstacles stand in your way?
- What if this constraint was removed? Would that change things?

4. Establish the **Way forward**

By examining the current reality and exploring the options, the mentee will now have a good idea of how to achieve the goal. The final step is to commit to specific actions in order to move forward towards their goal. This helps establish will and boosts motivation. Useful questions to ask here include:

- So, what will you do now, and when? What else will you do?
- What could stop you moving forward? How will you overcome this?
- How can you keep yourself motivated?
- When do you need to review progress? Daily, weekly, monthly?

Finally, decide on a date when you'll both review your progress. The mentoring first meeting guide document (also available to download on the CrickConnect mentoring page) is useful to have completed and provide structure to the first meeting and the mentoring beyond this.

5 How long should mentoring last? Ending the mentoring relationship

Mentoring relationships are organic and can last for differing durations depending on the agreed goals. It might be a few meetings over a period of a few weeks working towards completion of a specific application or could be longer term contact, less frequently. The timing will all be dependent on what you are working to achieve so at the start of the relationship and when setting initial goals, it is worth broadly agreeing when the mentoring will end. In some mentoring relationships the end date may be agreed from the outset, for example if it is to mentor someone through a project with a clear completion point but other times this may not be possible. Reasons for ending the mentoring relationship can vary from:

- The mentee agrees that they have met their objectives,
- The mentor/mentee has tried but one party is not responding/is unable to make appropriate time commitments,
- The original agreed objectives have changed and the mentor is no-longer a suitable match,
- The relationship isn't working successfully and one or both parties wish to end the relationship.

If the mentoring isn't working for any reason, it is fine to admit that and end the relationship. You can do this directly during the course of your meetings and the Academic Training team are also happy to help if needed.