



# The Mentorship Handbook

A step-by-step guide for mentors  
and mentees



Sveriges  
Ingenjörer

## A handbook to support mentorship processes

This handbook has been developed to guide and facilitate your mentorship process. It is useful for both mentors and mentees to have supportive guidelines on how to make a mentoring programme as successful as possible.

This handbook provides an overview of how mentorship processes work. It gives some background to mentoring and suggests how mentors and mentees should take responsibility for their roles. You will also find advice on how to run a mentoring programme, from the start to the final meeting.

In addition to the handbook, we have created some useful templates for meetings, goal setting, evaluation and more. You can find these at: [sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap](https://sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap).



Mentoring is one of the most effective tools for personal and professional development, as it is completely individualised and based on the mentee's current situation and needs.

### The Mentorship Handbook

Produced in collaboration with Mentorerna.se for Engineers of Sweden.

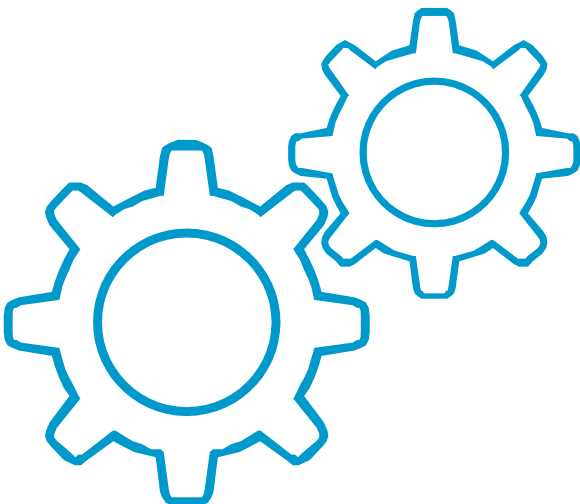
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# Introduction

It is increasingly common for people to have a mentor. This may be one of the effects of the new demands placed on us by society and working life. We are expected to be constantly available and able to adapt quickly to new technological developments and new ways of working. At the same time, we must be able to cope with conflicts, reorganisations and our own stress levels.

Mentorship is inspiring and instructive for both mentees and mentors. As a mentee, you get your very own sounding board and discussion partner that can help you to develop professionally and personally and give you access to a wider network. As a mentor, you gain new perspectives and energy when you use your experience to help your mentee grow, both as a person and in their professional role.

Mentorship always takes the mentee's needs as it's starting point and can take many different forms. For example, it can help young people to find their way into adulthood, recent arrivals to Sweden to enter working life and managers and staff to develop in their professional roles.

## **Mentoring makes a difference**

A mentor can be helpful in various phases of working life: before your first job, as an employee, in a new managerial role or as an entrepreneur. Having a mentor to support the development of your company or your career is fun and inspiring – for the mentor too.

# What is mentorship?

The word mentor comes from the Greek epic The Odyssey. When Odysseus, the main character, set out on his great adventures, he placed the responsibility for his son's spiritual and mental development in the hands of his friend Mentor. Since then, the term mentor has been associated with advisers and guides.

Mentorship means that a person who is more experienced in one or more areas is a mentor to another person, a mentee. The mentor offers competence, experience, time and a network of contacts to the mentee. It is a method or process that inspires, challenges and develops people, both professionally and personally.

The mentor acts as a sounding board and process leader in meetings with a mentee who needs to reflect and find new methods and solutions for their personal development. By extension, this also benefits the company or organisation to which the mentee belongs.

Today, work-oriented mentoring is used in a variety of fields. It can be focused on individual career development, leadership development or trainee programmes. Mentoring has become a way for people to acquire new insights and knowledge. In addition, it expands both parties' networks, which is increasingly important in working life.

## The benefits of mentoring for the individual and for the company

Mentorship is one of the most effective tools for personal and professional development, as it is completely individualised and based on the mentee's current situation and needs.

For the mentee, mentorship provides a unique opportunity to grow in their professional role and as a person. A mentor contributes different experience and knowledge than the mentee already has. Benefits for the mentee include:

- deeper and long-lasting knowledge
- opportunities to use their new knowledge in real-life situations
- open and fruitful dialogue between the mentee and the mentor.

It is not only the mentee that has a lot to gain from a mentorship programme. In the long run, the employer also benefits, through increased profitability, happier employees, reduced staff turnover and lower levels of sick leave.

Mentoring is also more sustainable and cost effective in the long term than traditional corporate training, both for the organisation and the individual. According to research conducted at Linköping University, successful mentorship is a major factor in retaining both experienced employees and young talent, building knowledge and reinforcing company culture. (Mentorship and its Effects – a Study of the Literature, A. Kapteijn, 2009).

In cases where the mentor is not part of the same organisation or does not have a similar professional role, the mentor can give the mentee an "outside-in perspective". This can lead to new approaches and changes to processes, which can benefit both the mentee and the mentee's organisation.



# The four cornerstones of successful mentorship

## **1. Trust and confidentiality**

The basis for trust between mentor and mentee is established during the initial contacts. The introductory meeting that launches a mentorship programme is important for building trust between the parties and setting the framework for the mentorship process. Commitment to mutual confidentiality from both sides is crucial for successful mentorship.

## **2. Personal chemistry**

It is important to strive for good personal chemistry early in the process if the mentorship programme is to be successful. There needs to be an open and reflective discussion climate, with the mentor and mentee giving each other regular feedback.

## **3. Active engagement and clear commitment**

In order for the mentorship programme to fulfil the mentee's and mentor's expectations, commitment is required from both sides.

The mentee has the main responsibility in the mentorship process. The mentee is responsible for booking mentoring meetings, reflecting on the issues raised and carrying out the tasks that they have been given. It is also important for the mentee to formulate goals for the mentorship programme. Before each meeting, the mentee should inform the mentor what they want to discuss.

The mentor is expected to be properly prepared for the mentoring meetings and should take time to reflect on the previous mentoring meeting.

Mentors must understand that mentorship entails a commitment to continuing to be the mentee's mentor throughout the mentorship process. Normally, a mentorship programme is six to twelve months long.

Mentorship must be allowed to take time. A mentor should be able to set aside two to four hours a month. The mentee should set aside more time, for example for reflection after each meeting and dialogue.

The mentee and the mentor are both responsible for defining the rules of their mentorship process, i.e. the structure of the programme. Both also share responsibility for following the terms and conditions they have agreed on together.

#### **4. Mentorship goals**

It is important that the mentor encourages the mentee to define their goals. Clear goals help to provide structure and make it easier to plan future mentoring meetings. The follow-up of the results of the mentorship programme also needs to have clear, although not always measurable, goals.

The mentee's goals may change over the course of the mentorship period, perhaps because the mentee has gained new insights. The mentor should challenge these new goals in the same way as the mentee's original goals.

It is the mentee's responsibility to try out and use the insights and goals that mentorship entails. Much of what comes up in the meetings and discussions should be tested in the mentee's everyday professional role.

Read more under "Setting goals" below.

Notes:



# The role of the mentor

People who choose to become mentors are often curious about other people and want to share their knowledge and experience. A mentor wants to see their mentee develop and sees the mentee's success as their own success.

As a mentor, it is important to listen actively, ask probing questions and inspire new insights that can accelerate the mentee's professional or personal development.

Your role as a mentor is to act as the mentee's personal sounding board. Allow the mentee time for reflection and contribute by sharing your knowledge and experience.

In the long run, a coaching approach is usually better than telling the mentee about your own experiences and giving them advice. One way to coach is to ask open-ended questions and let the mentee try to find the answers themselves.

Making mistakes in life and in your career is natural, as is the desire to share these experiences. But if you want to use a coaching approach in your role as mentor, it is often better to wait to share your lessons until later in the process. Alternatively, you can ask if and when in the process the mentee would like to receive your advice. Use your listening and questioning skills to get your mentoring off to a good start. That gives the mentee opportunities to see a problem from new perspectives.

Ways to be a good mentor:

## A mentor is:

- Genuinely interested in their mentee's development
- Skilful at leading dialogues and listening actively
- Builds trust and is not concerned about their own status
- Honest about their skills and experiences
- Willing to devote time and commitment

- Be an active listener and a sounding board for your mentee. Challenge and question your mentee's behaviour and ingrained ways of thinking.
- You can help your mentee in many ways, for example by establishing a clear structure for your mentoring meetings, creating good personal chemistry and setting realistic goals.
- Act responsibly and be respectful of your mentee's goals and questions.
- Be aware that everything that is written and discussed between you and your mentee is confidential.
- Investigate whether your mentee is interested in getting an "outside-in perspective". Are you the right person to provide this, or does the mentee need a mentor from another organisation?



## The benefits of being a mentor

### A mentor is not:

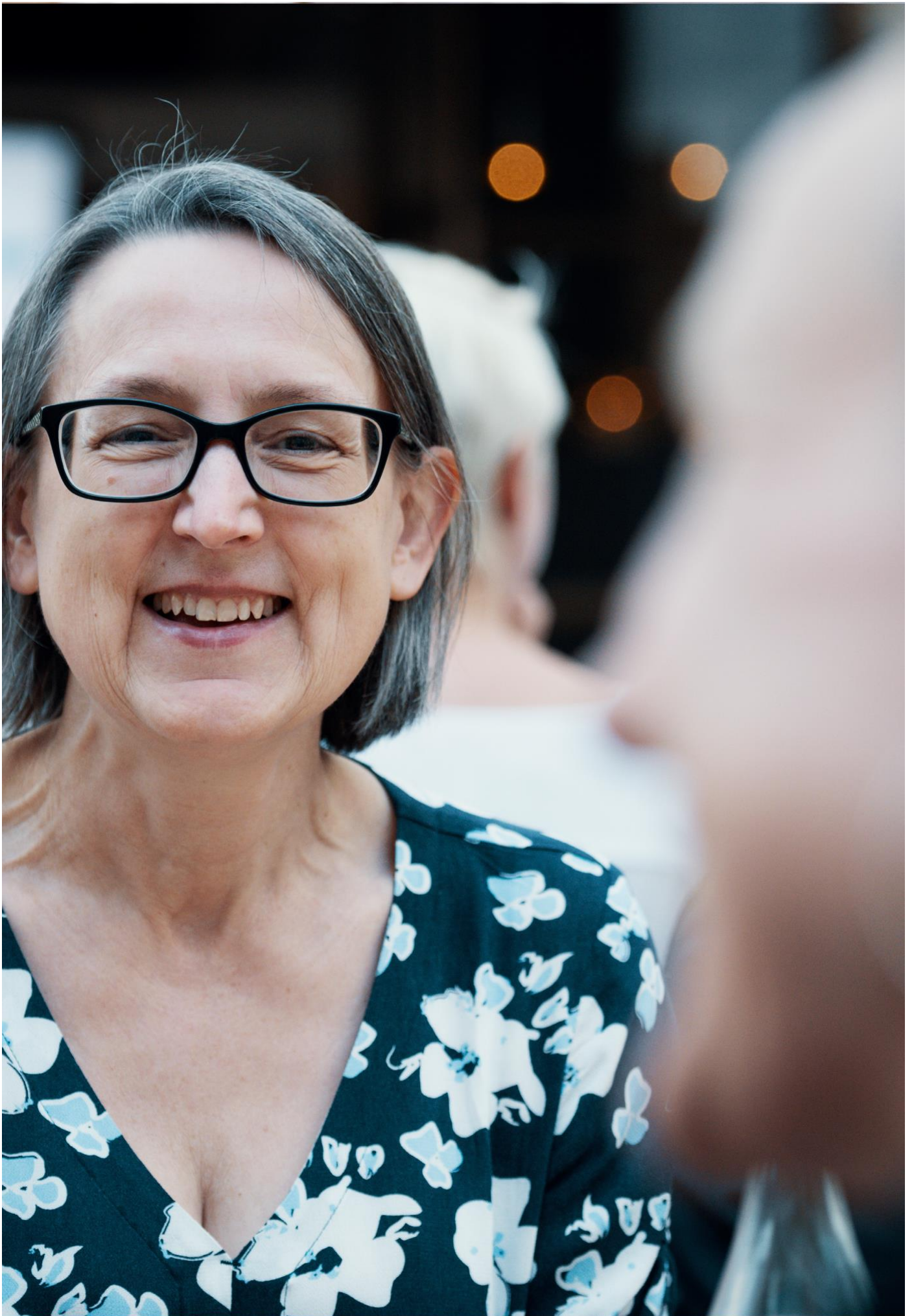
- Manager or leader
- Colleague
- Project manager
- Parent
- Assistant

Mentors often have eye-opening experiences and receive valuable feedback about their own experience and competence. The dialogues and problem-solving processes are both interesting and enlightening.

The mentee's experiences, skills and contact network will also contribute to the mentor's own development. As a mentor, you acquire a broader personal network and gain a greater understanding of other professionals that you would otherwise not have met.

Mentors often talk about to the satisfaction of being able to help their mentee grow as a person and become more successful in their career. Many people feel energised after their first few meetings with their mentee. In the words of one mentor, "My mentee appreciated both my experience and knowledge in a way that I didn't quite understand myself."

Notes:



# The role of the mentee

Mentorship provides many opportunities for mentees. Needs and goals vary, from personal career development to the need for manager to implement a reorganisation.

With the right preparation, you and your mentor will enjoy a positive, fruitful and fun collaboration.



The needs of the mentee determine the agenda.

## What is expected of you as a mentee

You probably already have the will, insight and courage to believe in your own development. In your role as a mentee, you are also expected to be:

- the driver, taking the initiative in the mentorship process with the support of your mentor
- inquisitive and willing to have the courage to challenge yourself and think in new ways
- professional in your approach to the mentorship programme and mindful that your mentor is devoting time to you and your needs
- focused, by putting your goals in writing early in the process, as well as noting which areas you want to concentrate on
- committed and willing to devote the time required.

## Your needs and objectives determine the agenda

As a mentee, you should define your goals at the beginning of the programme, even if they can sometimes be difficult to articulate. In some cases, you may even agree with your mentor to leave the goal setting until you are more comfortable in your relationship.

Think carefully about your goals and try to discuss them early with your mentor. Be prepared for questions. Explain why you have chosen your goals and within what time frame they should be achieved.

It is your goals and needs that guide and set the foundation for the mentorship process and the collaboration with your mentor. Be curious and dare to think in new ways, test new ideas and discuss them. Ask yourself questions like "What will happen if I change my behaviour or approach in different situations?" and "How does this affect me?"

## Choosing a mentor

Having access to a mentor can be compared to having a personal trainer for your physical training. Progress is more efficient, it is more enjoyable and results are achieved faster.

When you choose a mentor, your starting point should be your needs and the goals you have set for your mentorship. Your development needs or the problems you need to solve determine the type of mentor you need, and your goals guide the content of the programme. The selection criteria might include such factors as the mentor's competence, professional background or personality.

You choose the type of mentor yourself. It could be someone with a similar background or someone with completely different experience. Both types can be very rewarding in different ways. If you want to get an outside-in perspective, you can choose a mentor outside of your usual environment, for example someone from another organisation.

The personal chemistry between you and your mentor is crucial for your collaboration and the success of the process. If the personal chemistry between you is not good, it is often better to try to find a new mentor, because an open and confidential collaborative climate is by far the most important factor for successful mentorship.

When you meet your mentor for the first time, you may be a little nervous, but after a couple of meetings, a common reaction is "Why didn't I choose to use a mentor earlier?". Another mentee commented "I am convinced that the experience and insights I get to share through my mentor mean that I am now able to solve many questions with greater confidence and that my career has developed faster, all thanks to my mentor."



A mentor is like a personal trainer for your professional development. What do you need to work on?

# The mentorship process

In this section, we describe a typical mentorship process, including tips on how to set goals, how to set up a structure for the mentoring meetings and how to get a good dialogue going.

The process begins with the introductory meeting, and once the mentor and mentee have agreed to start a mentorship programme, an exciting journey begins for both.

## The introductory meeting

During the first meeting, or as soon as possible, the mentor and mentee must come to a decision on whether to continue the mentorship process or not. Don't forget to communicate a formal decision to the other party.

The first meeting is for getting to know each other better. It is also an opportunity for the mentor to understand what the mentee wants help with and what their goals are.

It is important that you feel that the personal chemistry between you works. Both mentor and mentee need to help create a confidential and open discussion climate. If you do not succeed in creating these conditions in the first couple of meetings, it is often better to end the programme and for the mentee to find a new mentor.

Notes:

**Some things to discuss and think about at your introductory meeting:**

- It may be a good for a number of reasons to hold your introductory meeting digitally, but if you are able to meet in person, that is often better. Try to meet in a neutral and calm environment where you can talk relatively undisturbed.
  - Think about how you want to present yourself and what might be interesting and relevant to the other party. Your presentations should cover both private and professional life. The more you know about each other, the easier and more successful your mentorship programme will be.
  - Listen actively to each other's presentations. Ask open and detailed questions. Do not hesitate to ask again if something is unclear.
  - Describe what you want to get out of your mentorship programme. What are your hopes?
  - It is important that the mentee has the opportunity to present and discuss the areas or issues they want help with. This also provides a basis for formulating the goals.
  - As a mentee, you are responsible for presenting your goals for the programme early in the process. If you have already formulated your goals ahead of the first meeting, discuss them with your mentor.
  - It is useful to take notes during the meeting so that you can summarise it afterwards.
  - When both parties have agreed to start a mentorship programme, it is a good idea to sign a contract about what you want to achieve. For example, you can use the *Mentorship contract template* at [sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap](https://sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap).
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Set smart goals using the SMART model.

## Setting goals

As you get to know each other better, your dialogue will be more frank and open and you can begin to tackle the mentee's goals together.

The mentor should listen actively and ask probing and guiding questions, allowing time for reflection. This may give the mentee new insights about their objectives.

The mentor should also have goals, which they communicate to the mentee at an appropriate time. Without your own goals, it is difficult for you to know whether you have been a good mentor.

### A model for setting goals

SMART is a common model for setting and wording goals. It is of course just as useful to define goals according to another model that you feel comfortable with. Agree with your mentor which model you will use.

- S** – Specific: target a specific area for improvement
- M** – Measurable: quantify or suggest an indicator of progress
- A** – Achievable: make sure the goal is realistic
- R** – Relevant: ensure the goal is pertinent and useful
- T** – Time-bound: specify when the results are to be achieved

It is easier for you and your mentor to understand and strive towards the goals if you write them down. You may find our *Mentee goals template* useful when setting your goals. You can find all our mentorship templates at:

[sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap](https://sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap).

## Regular mentoring meetings

Using a recurring structure for your mentoring meetings builds security for both parties. Remember that you are using each other's valuable time, so do your best to use the time as efficiently as possible.

Make sure you have prepared thoroughly and read through your notes from previous meetings. Think about what you want to get out of each mentoring meeting. As a mentee, if you have something specific that you want to discuss, notify your mentor in advance so that they are able to prepare for the meeting.

We have produced a template for *Mentoring meetings*, which you may find helpful.

### **Dialogue models – goal-driven or situational mentoring**

*Goal-driven mentoring* is the most common form of mentorship. A manager or employee has a mentor for their professional and personal development. The mentee receives individual support and help from the mentor. It is important that the mentor does not act like a manager or set goals – mentees must set their own goals. The mentor supports the mentee and challenges their goals. The goals must be clearly defined, time-bound and preferably in writing. The goals may be reformulated during the mentorship programme if the mentee gains new insights.

This dialogue model is most suitable when there are defined, clear goals that are measurable and time bound. It is a good model for supporting a mentee's professional development, for example a new employee who needs support or an employee who has been given a new professional role.

*Situational mentoring* is linked to a specific problem that needs to be solved, where the mentor's experience in the area helps the mentee to find their own solution. This usually involves a fixed time frame and a clear objective. Companies facing change or restructuring processes can benefit from situational mentoring.

This dialogue model is best suited to processes with clear and time-bound objectives regarding business change or personal development, where the mentor challenges the positions of the management or the individual mentee.

### **Communication and dialogue techniques**

Being able to communicate and have a discussion is essential for a well-functioning mentorship programme. For the mentor, this involves listening actively and asking detailed questions rather than talking yourself. As a mentor, you must give the mentee time to reflect on their new insights and knowledge. You should always end your meetings by evaluating together what was discussed.



Listen  
actively and  
give your  
mentee time.

To move the process forward, you need to maintain a positive dialogue. A confidential discussion climate leads to new insights which, in the best cases, also lead to changes in the mentee's behaviour. Sharing your thoughts with someone who is really listening can provide new perspectives and enable you to see a way forward. Discussions in this kind of spirit and atmosphere are both stimulating and enlightening.

You discuss different options together and, in the end, you find or develop new solutions. This type of discussion is easy for some people, while others need practice. As a mentor, you can try asking open questions (what, how, why). Be persistent and follow up with leading questions.

#### **Examples of open questions and exploratory follow-up questions:**

- How do you feel about the situation?
- Could it be like this or could it be seen in another way?
- What other ways are there to resolve the situation?
- Can you explain what you just said in a little more detail?
- Why do you think you acted the way you did?
- How did you feel when that happened?

As a mentor, you should keep your own views to yourself unless they are asked for. Alternatively, as a mentor, you can ask the mentee if you can give advice. Remember that your role as a mentor should not be to provide answers to your mentee's questions or solutions to their problems. Avoid giving advice too quickly or demonstrating your own competence in the matter.

Sometimes the mentor just needs to be quiet and to listen actively. This gives your mentee time and opportunity to think during the conversation. It is often a more efficient way to move the discussion forward.

#### **How to change a negative attitude in mentorship meetings**

Sometimes a mentor will meet a mentee with preconceived notions and perhaps even a negative attitude towards how things are or will be. It can be a challenge to break ingrained thought patterns that steer the mentee's behaviour.

As a mentor, it can be useful to discuss matters from perspectives other than that of the mentee in order to see new possibilities that could alter their opinion on a particular issue.

Examples of constructive and challenging questions to use in these situations include:

- Is your description of the situation based on facts? Is that how it is or how you think it is?
- Have you described the causes correctly? Can we question them?
- Have you described the consequences properly? How do they affect your everyday work? What does a worst-case scenario look like?
- Do you have the right expectations based on the situation you are in?
- How likely is it that the negative effects will happen and, if so, what will the result be?
- Try using visualisation as a method to paint a positive target picture. What does it look like? What will happen if you get there?

## Keeping a diary

It is important that both the mentor and the mentee take notes during the meetings and discussions. It may also be useful to write a more detailed diary during the course of the mentorship, with notes from each mentoring meeting. This will help you to see how your mentorship process is progressing and is a source of information when you give feedback to each other. The diary notes tie the mentorship together and help you reflect on what has come up in your meetings. Write down new learnings, insights and reflections between and during your meetings.

Our *Mentorship diary* template suggests questions to answer in connection with your notes or your diary writing. You can find all our mentorship templates at [sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap](https://sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap).

” Don't forget to give your mentor feedback.

## Giving and receiving feedback

The foundations of successful mentorship are honesty, trust and commitment. Once trust is established in your relationship, the mentor has a good platform for giving feedback to the mentee. Through positive feedback, the mentee will develop and be able to explore ideas and new directions.

From their neutral position, with no other focus than helping the mentee, the mentor also has plenty of scope to give constructive criticism or raise questions without emotional barriers between the parties.

Remember that it is also important that the mentee gives the mentor feedback. Giving and receiving feedback is a valuable tool for strengthening relationships and driving the process forward. Try to schedule time for regular feedback during your mentorship programme.

It is a good idea to discuss frequently what is working well and what could be improved in the relationship between mentor and mentee. You will find a template for *Continuous feedback* in our mentorship materials bank.



Record insights and thoughts in a diary. Then you will see how you are progressing.

## Concluding your mentorship programme

A mentorship programme can run for a long time, or for as long as the mentor and mentee consider it useful and productive. Many mentorship pairs agree to continue their collaboration even after their formal mentorship programme is over. It is not uncommon for the relationship to continue informally or in some other structured form.

Oral feedback should be given at a final mentoring meeting, and preferably in writing immediately after the mentorship programme has ended. This can be done with the help of our evaluation and conclusion template.

Occasionally, a mentorship programme needs to be terminated early. Reasons for this might be:

- poor personal chemistry and an unprofessional attitude
- working conditions have changed, which then affects the conditions for an open dialogue between the mentor and mentee
- one of the parties has broken confidentiality in a way that has damaged the trust of the other party.

Regardless of the reason, you should have a final mentoring meeting and give each other feedback.

### When a mentorship programme fails

If either of you feels that the mentoring relationship is not working as it should, it is important that you talk to each other about the problem and try to find a solution. Be honest and discuss how you feel about the situation.

If you do not find a solution, you can choose to end your mentorship programme and find a new mentee or mentor. You are also welcome to contact the Membership Benefits Manager at Engineers of Sweden by emailing [mentor@sverigesingenjorer.se](mailto:mentor@sverigesingenjorer.se) if you need help to move on.

If it is the case that you feel badly treated, insulted or abused, you can also contact the Membership Benefits Manager. Both mentee and mentor must abide by Engineers of Sweden's code of conduct and the terms and conditions for the mentorship service. You can find these at [sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap](https://sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap).

Are you concerned about the other party's well-being? If appropriate, bring it up in your dialogue. If you find out something that causes you to believe the person, someone else or the company/organisation is in danger, you can consult with the Membership Benefits Manager at Engineers of Sweden.

If you suspect something illegal, contact the Police on 114 14. In an emergency situation where someone's life is in danger or you suspect a crime is in progress, call 112.

### Look back together

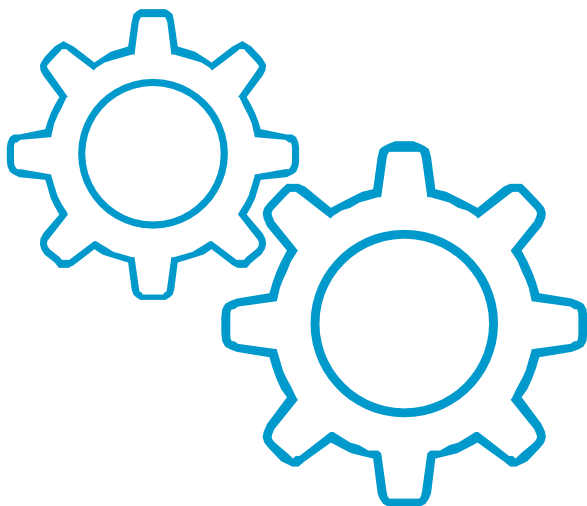
When the time has come to end your mentorship programme, it is also time to evaluate and summarise the progress that you have made.

**Throughout your mentorship programme, you will find a bank of digital support material and tools at [sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap](https://sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/mentorskap).**

You will also find all the templates mentioned in this handbook:

- Mentorship contract
- Mentee goals for the mentoring programme
- Agenda for the introductory meeting
- Agenda for mentoring meetings
- Mentorship diary
- Continuous evaluation for feedback
- Evaluation and conclusion of the mentoring programme

We wish you great success with your mentorship programme.



If you have any questions about the mentoring service, you are welcome to contact Member Services on 08-613 80 00. If you would like to contact the Membership Benefits Manager, please email [mentor@sverigesingenjorer.se](mailto:mentor@sverigesingenjorer.se).

