

## Merton College Mentoring: Information for Mentors and Mentees

Merton College Mentoring aims to support Mertonians after they leave Merton and embark on their future lives and careers. That transition brings many challenges. We believe that Mertonians can help each other by discussing problems, building confidence, considering options and focussing on important decisions.

We want your mentoring discussions to be as successful as possible and for the mentees to have as uniform an experience as possible, which is why we are sharing this guide and providing training to all mentors and mentees.

### What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a personal and professional development partnership in which the mentor shares their experience and knowledge with someone who wants to develop their career and grow.

Mentoring is a personal professional development partnership

The mentor shares their experience and knowledge with someone who wants to develop their career and grow.

Non-judgmental support and challenge to the mentee to help them develop their thinking and an action plan.

Help the mentee find their own solutions. Don't just tell them what to do.

Photo by [charlesdeluvio](#) on [Unsplash](#)



A particular benefit of mentoring is that the mentor can offer unbiased, non-judgemental support and challenge to the mentee to help them develop their thinking and an action plan. It is important that the mentor concentrates on helping the mentee to find their own solutions and does not just tell them what to do.

Mentoring is not sponsorship: Mentors are not expected to provide mentees with jobs. Mentors may be willing to share contacts with them, but this at their discretion. Mentors are not expected to give advice in areas they have no experience in. Mentees might ask questions that mentors do not know the answer to or be working in an industry the mentors are not totally familiar with. That is fine. The role of the mentor is to help mentees to find their own answers to the challenges they face, not to provide the answers to all their questions. We are all different people facing different challenges. So, we are encouraging you to take a coaching-style approach to mentoring. Confidentiality is important. There are exceptional instances when a mentor might have to disclose the content of discussions, but the ordinary rule is that the discussions are confidential.

## The Code of Conduct

In order to ensure successful outcomes from the pilot, mentors and mentees must agree to the following Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>.

1. The mentor and the mentee will not knowingly discriminate on any grounds and will be aware of the potential for unconscious bias. Mentors and mentees agree to take a respectful and inclusive approach which embraces individual differences.
2. The mentor and mentee are responsible for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern all physical and virtual interactions, including contacting or following each other on private social media accounts.
3. The mentor or the mentee will immediately alert the Development and Alumni Relations Office ("DO") [development@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@merton.ox.ac.uk) of any safeguarding issues that arise during the mentoring relationship.
4. The mentor or the mentee may end the mentoring relationship at any point if they (both or either) conclude that the relationship is not working. However, before ending the mentoring relationship, careful consideration should be given to the possibility of resolving difficulties with the help of the DO [development@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@merton.ox.ac.uk).
5. The mentor and the mentee agree to disclose any conflict of interest openly and transparently and if a conflict arises that cannot be managed effectively agree to withdraw from the mentoring relationship.
6. The mentor and the mentee agree to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality and not to reveal the details of their discussions except in exceptional circumstances (for instance, where illegal activity has been revealed, or there is danger to self or others, or where the release of information is required by law).
7. The mentor and the mentee agree not to use each other's personal data for any reason apart from the pursuit of the mentoring partnership and not to transfer any personal data to third parties without the consent of the mentor/mentee.
8. The mentor and the mentee agree to take appropriate measures to keep any notes or records of discussions safe from accidental loss. Mentors agree not to retain notes for any longer than is necessary for the mentoring partnership.
9. The mentor and the mentee enter into the mentoring relationship voluntarily and at their own risk, taking responsibility for any actions taken as a result of the mentoring discussions.
10. The mentor and the mentee agree and understand that Merton College and the Merton Society are not liable for any loss, damage, costs or expenses arising from the mentoring.

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<sup>1</sup> This Code of Conduct is based on the Global Code of Ethics created by the Association for Coaching and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council for those working in the world of coaching, mentoring, and supervision. For more information visit <https://www.globalcodeofethics.org>.

## Expectations of mentees

Mentors are busy people who are giving up their own time to help. That time is given willingly, but the goodwill of mentors should not be abused. It is important that every mentee understands the expectations on them:

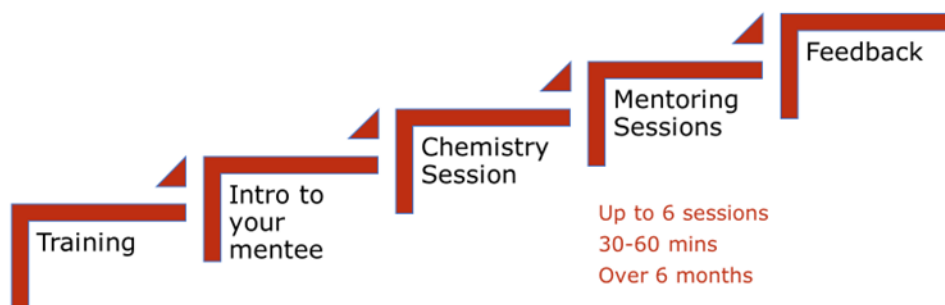
- A mentee should be willing to engage openly and honestly with their mentor during their discussions.
- A mentee should check their inbox frequently and respond quickly to emails about mentoring from the Development Office and their mentor.
- A mentee should arrange all meetings with their mentor (unless the mentor agrees a different arrangement with the mentee).
- A mentee should at all times be respectful towards their mentor.

If a prospective mentee does not feel able to commit in these ways, they should not apply for a mentor within this programme. If a mentee does not meet these expectations, they may be removed from Mentoring College Mentoring.

## How the mentoring will work

- The mentor and mentee need to watch the training video which can be found on [the Merton College website](#) or read this guide.
- You then need to tick the box on the registration form to say that you have watched the video and agree to the Code of Conduct.
- The Development Office will register your details, and you will then be part of Merton College Mentoring.
- If you are a mentor, your form will be put on a secure part of the Merton website, so that prospective mentees can see it. Please let us have a photograph, it helps bring your personality and details to life. We are likely to have many more mentors than mentees, so please do not be disappointed if you are not selected straight away to be a mentor.
- If you are a mentee, the Development Office will send you the confidential password for that part of the Merton website where the mentor details are held. You can look at who is available as a mentor. Once you have a name in mind, you should contact [mentoring@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@merton.ox.ac.uk) and they will take it forward from there. If you would rather the Development Office recommended someone to partner with you as a mentor, email them and they will recommend a match.

## HOW THE SCHEME WILL WORK



- Once they have been introduced, each pairing will have a preliminary discussion to see if the chemistry is right. This is the "chemistry session" – see below. If the chemistry is not right in either party's view, then that party should say so, without hesitation. If that happens, the mentee can ask for another match if they want to try again.
- If the pair agree to work together it is suggested that a mentor and mentee have six sessions together, each lasting 30-60 minutes, over a period of around six months. However, mentors and mentees can adjust this to suit their own needs and schedules.
- Each pair should agree goals for the mentoring at the outset and should monitor progress against those goals as the mentoring proceeds.
- At the end of the chosen period, the mentoring relationship will ordinarily come to an end, though again, mentors and mentees can make this decision for themselves.
- Mentors and mentees will be asked to provide feedback at the end of the partnership. They will not be asked about the content of what they discussed which will remain confidential.

## Chemistry session

During the first session the mentor and mentee agree how they want the mentoring to work. The mentee and mentor are free at any time to elect not to continue. This first meeting is a chance to see if the mentor and mentee will work well together. Here is a suggested agenda:

1. Agreement on confidentiality and the Code of Conduct. A mentoring session should be a safe place where mentees can be vulnerable, open and honest without fear of judgement. Nothing discussed will be used or passed on to anyone else, except in the exceptional circumstances mentioned in the Code of Conduct.
2. Agree how the sessions will be organised: how long will the sessions last? How frequently and how often will you meet? It will be for the mentee to arrange the meetings and send invitations to remote meetings. Agree how you will organise the sessions.



3. Agree what happens between sessions. It might be useful for the mentee to work on some action points between sessions. The mentor should let the mentee know if they are happy to be contacted between sessions.

4. Agree what the mentor is willing to do and not do. Mentors are normally not trained therapists or counsellors so cannot deal with every issue the mentee might have, but they can help them to identify the help they can seek elsewhere.
5. Have a general chat about the mentee's goals. This will help you both to consider whether you will be able to form a trusting and useful mentoring relationship. Mentees have different goals and want different things from mentoring. That is why chemistry is so important: mentors come in all different types and styles too, and you should be confident that your pairing is going to work.

If at any time, either the mentor or mentee feels the mentoring relationship is not working, please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office [development@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@merton.ox.ac.uk).

## Skills and approaches you can use to be a good mentor

The most important tip is this: mentoring is not just about the mentor telling the mentee what to do. It should not be a lecture and you do not need to know the answers to any question your mentee might ask. The mentor is trying to help the mentee find their own solution to their challenges, a solution that will work for them. The approach we recommend is designed to help you do that.

The most important skill is probably going to be listening. Then you can ask questions that help the mentee think more clearly and creatively about their challenge. If mentors do nothing else, listening intently to the mentee and getting them to express their goals and challenges will help the mentee to see them more clearly.

So how do you do that? The best way for the mentor to avoid falling into the trap of telling the mentee what to do is to ask lots of open questions. Avoid yes/no questions which stop the mentee from having to think. Ask the mentee what they want to do, how they want to do it, when they want to do it, with whom they need to do it. Be curious and interested in the other person and draw them out with open questions. That way the mentee will be helped to think through their challenges themselves and are much more likely to identify a solution which works for them.

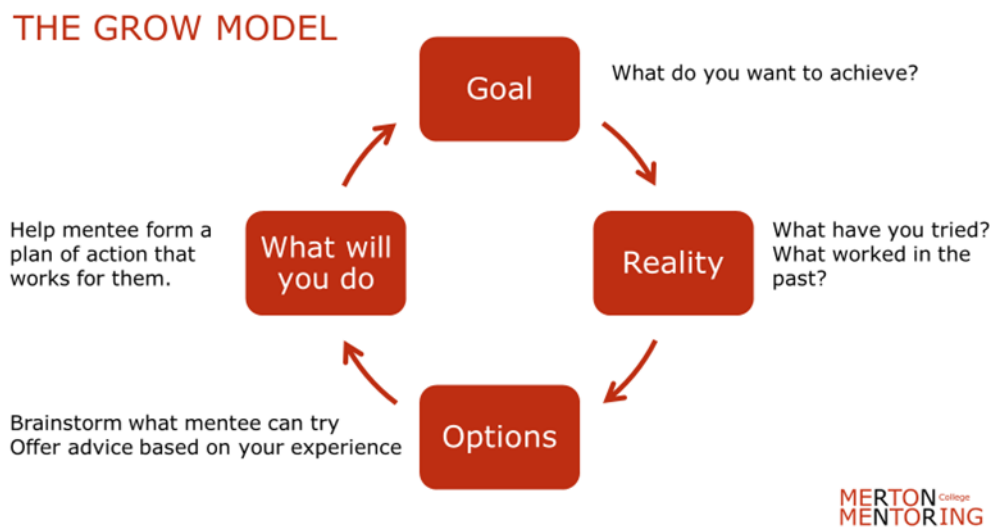


## The GROW model

The GROW model provides a simple framework to help the mentee to find a way to establish a plan of action. It is a standard framework used in coaching and mentoring. It is all about helping the mentee to find a way to establish their own plan of action.

G stands for Goal. Getting the mentee to identify a goal helps to give purpose to the partnership. The mentees will ideally come up with a theme or challenge they want to discuss at each meeting. At the start of the partnership the mentee might want to identify an overall goal for the mentoring. So, this means that the mentees will need to do some thinking about what they want to get out of your mentoring. The more you put into this thinking, the more you will get out of it.

R – Reality: what is happening now. Ask the mentee what they have they tried; what have they not tried; what has worked in the past; what were the factors in previous successes they have had.



O – Options: Brainstorm what the mentee can do. This an opportunity for the mentor to help the mentee find ways they might not have tried before. This is where the mentor can introduce suggestions based on their experience. But make sure you leave it to the mentee to decide which option to adopt. It needs to make sense and work for them.

And the last step is W – What will you do: This is where together you help the mentee formulate a plan of action. Please ensure the choice of actions is the mentee’s not the mentor’s. Mentors should try to avoid telling the mentees what they think is the best approach. Help them to identify what will work for them. But mentees, that means you need to make sure that any actions make sense to you and will work for your situation and personality.

## Ending the mentoring relationship

It is a good idea to set an ending to the partnership and to hold a final meeting to close. Discuss the progress that you have made together. Celebrate the successes and identify what you both have learnt from the experience. You can discuss future challenges for the mentee and how they can meet them after the mentoring relationship has ended.

### Ending the Mentoring relationship

Celebrate successes

Identify what  
mentor and mentee  
have learnt

Discuss how mentee  
can meet future  
challenges based on  
learnings from  
mentoring



## Safeguarding

If a mentor has serious concerns about the wellbeing of the mentee (e.g. that they are at risk of harming themselves or others) then that mentor should raise the issue immediately by email with the Development and Alumni Relations Office [development@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:development@merton.ox.ac.uk). The Development Office can sign-post available sources of help and give information which the mentor can pass on to the mentee at their discretion. Mentees will not, however, have the full benefit of Merton's welfare services which are only available to current students at the College.

Here are some of the things a mentor can do to help in the first instance:

- Investigate with the mentee what resources might be available with their employers (if they are employed), e.g. is there an employee assistance programme or whistle blowing policy?
- The mentor can suggest other possible sources of help, e.g. is there a trade union or staff support body that might be able to help them?
- The mentor can encourage them to see their GP, call NHS 111 or, in an emergency, call 999 if in the UK.
- The mentor could also encourage them to contact the Samaritans <https://www.samaritans.org/>. They can talk to Samaritans about anything that is upsetting them 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call 116 123 (free from any phone), email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or visit some branches in person.

## Conclusion

Thank you particularly to our mentors for taking part. We know you are busy and we are grateful for you volunteering your time and energy.

We hope that our mentees will find support and encouragement through this programme.

We hope that everyone who participates in Merton College Mentoring will find their experience rewarding and constructive. Please let us have your feedback when we ask you for it so we can continue to improve the way the programme works.

## Other resources

If you want to find out more about mentoring and using coaching skills, here are a few links to useful guides.

### [ScreenSkills Mentoring Resources](#)

The ScreenSkills mentoring team has a number of excellent mentoring resources including videos providing training and information on how to be a great mentor and how to get the most out of being a mentee as well as mentoring guides, action plans and session logs. (ScreenSkills is a charity that works to support the screen industries through training and development opportunities.)

### [Performance Consultants Grow Model](#)

Useful video and guides on the GROW model from Performance Consultants, the organisation founded by Sir John Whitmore, that developed the model.

### [Sir John Whitmore demonstrating coaching](#)

An amazing demonstration of the effect you can have by asking open questions and not telling people what to do. This could transform the way you interact with people. The video quality is not great, but worth a watch.

### [EMCC Podcast: mentoring for better gender balance](#)

A podcast produced by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council about the role of mentoring in supporting better gender balance in organisations, and what mentoring can do to drive diversity and inclusion. Beth Stallwood is a coach and mentoring expert who used to work at the Lawn Tennis Association, Crown Prosecution Service, and Invesco. Sally Twisleton is head of Engineering Quality at Rolls-Royce and also a coach and mentor.

### [Harvard Business Review: Mental Health Benefits of Mentoring](#)

Harvard Business School article on the beneficial effect of mentoring on your own mental health.