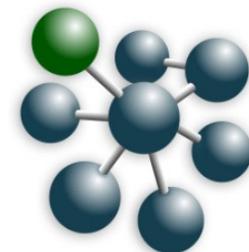




Being a mentee – how to get the most from mentoring



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This booklet provides generic guidance about mentoring with a particular focus on being a mentee and getting the most out of mentoring.

What is mentoring?



Mentoring is a widely used development tool that has proved to have a beneficial impact on effectiveness, confidence and career advancement.

At the heart of mentoring is a relationship based on trust and mutual regard where one colleague uses their expertise and knowledge to support the development of another colleague. Most mentoring occurs between senior and more junior colleagues although peer mentoring, where there is little or no differences in seniority, is also possible.

Through one-to-one confidential conversations the mentee is encouraged and challenged to achieve their potential and aspirations. It can be useful at all stages of a career.

Mentoring provides :

- Safe space to explore options and plan future action
- Place to be challenged and supported
- Sounding board
- Source of advice and guidance
- New perspectives

Mentoring is not:

- A substitute for line management or supervision
- A short cut to promotion
- An alternative to [Networking](#) or friendship
- [Coaching](#)

Mentoring is intended to be supportive of the individual and occurs "at need". Here the emphasis is on ready and confidential access to a "critical friend" who can be used as a sounding board.... (Pennington, 2004)

Benefits of mentoring

Mentoring potentially benefits both mentor and mentee and therefore the College.

Benefits for the mentee include:

- Increased self-awareness, motivation and confidence
- Greater clarity of purpose and productivity
- Increased organisational knowledge and know-how
- Improved skills
- Focus and preparation for the future and career aspirations

Benefits for the mentor include:

- New perspectives
- Keeping in touch with the realities and challenges facing junior staff
- Development of inter-personal skills
- Personal satisfaction
- Contribution to wider departmental/institutional goals

Benefits to the College include:

- Increased job satisfaction and retention of talented people
- Increased productivity
- Improved staff engagement
- Contribution to talent development



The role of the mentor and the mentee



What do effective mentees do?

- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Actively shape the mentoring conversations
- Accept challenge
- Be open and honest about themselves
- Be willing to take risks
- Have realistic expectations that are shared and agreed with the mentor
- Take prime responsibility for the meeting arrangements and the agenda

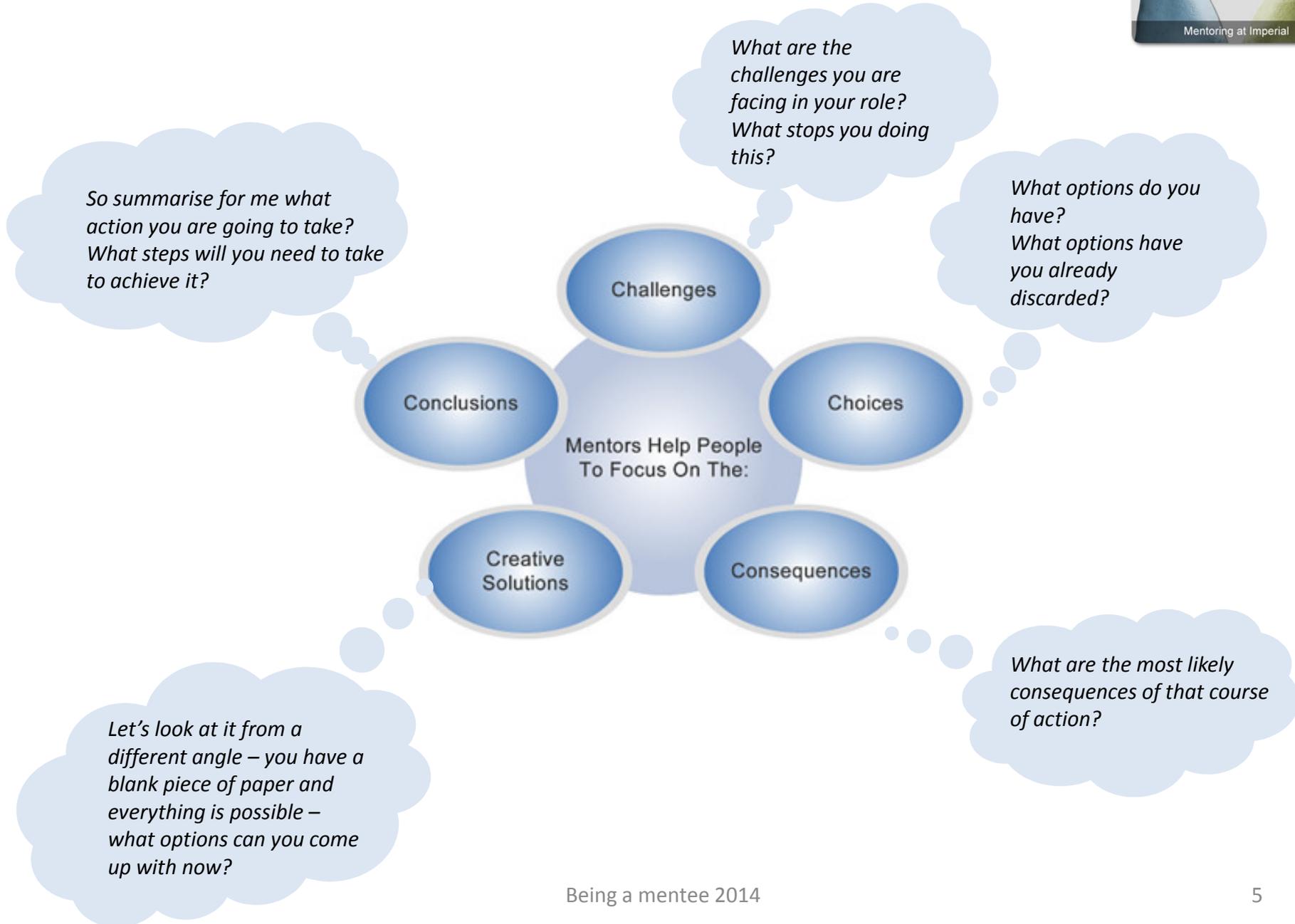
At the heart of mentoring is the relationship between the mentee and the mentor. In common with all relationships it is dynamic – it changes over time. A mentoring relationship that works well for someone at a certain stage of their career might not work at another stage. Sometimes the chemistry just doesn't work. When the mentoring relationship has run its course – it is no longer useful for the mentee – then it is time to bring it to a close.

What do effective mentors do?

- Build rapport
- Listen and accurately ascertain meaning
- Ask questions and encourage others to explore issues
- Structure conversations
- Encourage and allow the mentee to take the initiative
- Provide feedback that is both challenging and empathic
- Offer knowledge and advice with care
- Offer fresh perspectives
- Maintain professional boundaries and confidentiality
- Commit sufficient time and mental energy to the mentoring relationship

...good mentors speak for less than 20 per cent of the time, address issues raised by the mentee, and expect to engage in quality dialogue.....
(Clutterbuck 2004)

Focus of mentoring



Finding a mentor



Where there are active mentoring schemes there will be some form of matching . Most matching systems ask the mentee what they are looking for in a mentor relationship, look at the available mentor pool and suggest 2 or 3 possible matches. The mentee then decides which they would like to work with and a preliminary meeting takes place. This link will provide the most up to date information about the active schemes within Imperial:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/talentdevelopment/mentoring>

Where there is no active mentoring scheme in operation you will have to be more proactive in finding someone suitable. Your PI, line manager, relevant Section or Departmental Manager are likely to know lots of people and may well be able to help identify a suitable mentor and, in some instances, may be willing to make the first contact to check willingness to be a mentor.

Whichever route the prospective mentee takes to find a mentor they will need to consider:

- What it is they want to get out of mentoring?
- What sort of expertise/background would they like the mentor to have?

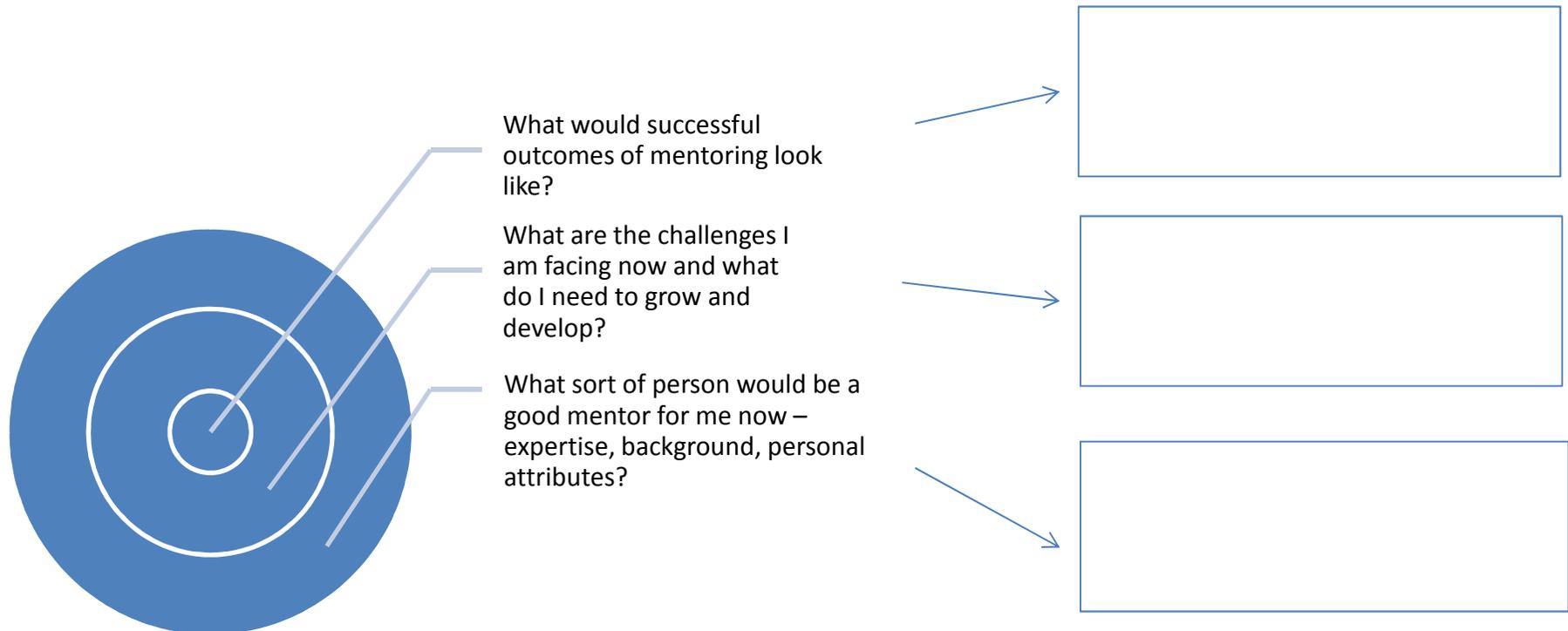
Once a possible mentor has been suggested the mentee should ask themselves whether:

- Could we build a rapport?
- Is the power differential too small or big?
- Would I respect their views/opinions?
- Will they help me achieve my goals?
- Are they likely to have time for me?

Finding a mentor



Mentoring is a great development opportunity and to ensure you make the most of it you need to think through what you want to get out of it and what sort of a person would be the most effective mentor for you at this stage of your career with these mentoring goals.



Stages of mentoring and key tasks



Every mentoring relationship is unique with its own pattern and time frames however all have a beginning, middle and ending phase. The table below outlines the typical tasks in each stage to increase effectiveness of mentoring.

Stage	Beginning	Middle	Ending
Tasks	<p>Both parties will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop rapport • Clarify mutual expectations • Establish appropriate boundaries • Initial exploration of mentee's goals • Talk about the ending – what success might look like • Agree logistics around meetings and communication • Review early sessions to establish the mentoring relationship is working for both parties 	<p>Mentee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive • Come with an agenda • Reflect on the mentoring sessions • Aim to integrate learning from each session <p>Mentor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively listen • Ask exploratory questions • Challenge appropriately • Be empathic • Respect the mentee's agenda • Provide shape and purpose in the conversations • Have a genuine desire to support the mentee • Be in touch with current realities for more junior staff 	<p>Both parties will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware when the mentoring relationship has run its course • Initiate proactive conversations to plan for the ending • Review the original objectives • Review the learning and progress • Celebrate achievements and learning • Agree about future contact/nature of the relationship.

Beginning

Middle

Ending

Tools for the beginning stage



Over the next few pages there are a number of tools/approaches that are particularly relevant to specific stages of mentoring and can increase the effectiveness of mentoring.

Mutual expectations conversation

This brings into the open the expectations that each party has of the other. It enables negotiation and possible re-direction where there is a mismatch and ensures that both parties have the same understanding of mentoring, roles and the ground rules to make it run smoothly.

Either party can initiate a conversation along the following lines:

“Let’s spend a few minutes talking about what we expect of each other.”

“Is there a good match in terms of our expectations?”

“What do we expect of each other in terms of confidentiality?”

Establishing boundaries

Boundaries in this context relate to the limits of appropriate behaviour in the context of the mentoring relationship within Imperial College. Notions of “appropriate” will include issues such as power differentials, degrees of vulnerability and ethics.

A good solid “*Expectations conversation*” will establish a common understanding about what is within the mentoring boundary and what is outside. Over time as trust builds and the relationship matures, where that boundary lies may shift. What would have been inappropriate or uncomfortable at the beginning is mutually acceptable later in the mentoring relationship.

Both mentee and mentor have a role in maintaining boundaries and each, at times, may need to remind the other of boundaries.

e.g. Mentor to mentee: *“I am not sure I am the best person to talk with you about your love life. Shall we see who might be better.”*

e.g. Mentee to mentor: *“I feel a bit uncomfortable hearing stuff about Prof X I wonder if we could shift our conversation a bit.”*



Tools for the beginning stage



Planning for the ending/initial discussion of mentee's goals

An early discussion around the mentee's goals serves the purpose of mapping out the likely areas of discussion and gives an indication of what success will look like and therefore when the relationship might come to a natural end.

The mentor may well ask the mentee the following questions:

"What do you want to have achieved by the end of our mentoring?"

"What will success look like?"

Reviewing the mentoring session

From the very first moment the mentor and mentee meet it is essential to recognise that the matching remains tentative for the first one or two sessions and that only after one or two sessions will both parties know if it will work. It is important to ensure that either party can say that it might not work with no ill feelings. Where there is a power differential it can be very hard for the mentee to let the mentor know that it is not working so the mentor needs to be very mindful of the need for openness and honesty – allowing the idea of it not working to be raised and discussed. At the end of the first session and subsequent ones a short mutual review can be useful:

Either mentor or mentee can initiate a review along the following lines:

"Do we think we have established a good enough relationship for mentoring to work? What could we do to improve/strengthen it?"

"Do you think we have the right balance of talking and listening?"

"Could we do anything different to improve/strengthen the effectiveness of mentoring?"



Tools for the middle stage

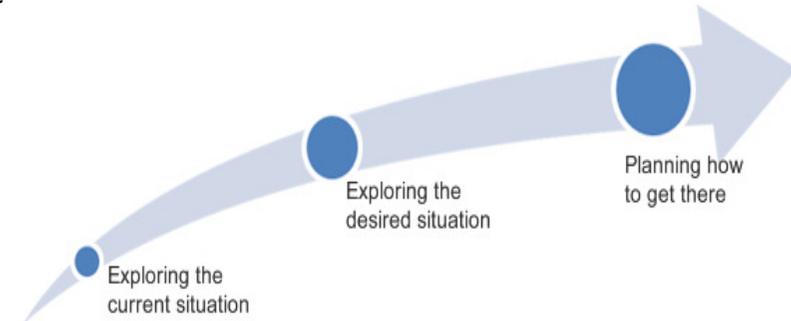


Provides shape and purpose to the conversation:

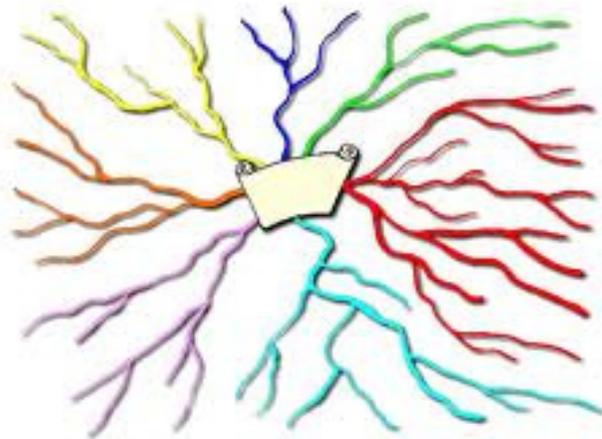
A useful tool is to think of a purposeful conversation as having three aspects that lead towards action:

1. Exploring the current situation
2. Exploring the desired situation
3. Planning how to get there

Almost any issue that comes up in mentoring can benefit from this framework.



Using reflection to maximise learning



© Paul Foreman <http://www.mindmapinspiration.com>

At the heart of mentoring is learning. A good mentoring session will involve new perspectives, challenges and opportunities to think through issues in a new way. Sudden, or slowly dawning, insights can be lost within hours unless the mentee takes action. After each mentoring session take 30 minutes to reflect on the session and your learning. Try using a mind map to capture those thoughts. Re-visit them before your next mentoring session and ask yourself how you have used the learning. The log on pages 14 and 15 can also help keep track of learning and how that learning translates into action.

Beginning

Middle

Ending

Tools for the ending stage



Many mentoring relationships come to a natural ending: the original issues have been resolved, one or other of the parties has moved away or, if there was a time limit agreed at the beginning, it has been reached.

A good ending involves:

- A review of the mentoring process
- Learning and achievements
- A celebration
- Agreement about future contact/relationship

There are some mentoring relationships that falter and come to unplanned ends. This can be for a variety of reasons including:

- The parties can't communicate and connect with each other
- Logistics mean they can never seem to find a mutually suitable time and location
- The mentee is not proactive about setting meetings, coming with an agenda and making best use of the mentor's expertise
- The mentor is telling the mentee what to do and not listening to their issues

Both the mentor and the mentee can initiate conversations along the following lines:

"I feel we have achieved a lot and wonder if its time to review and take stock."

"I am wondering if our mentoring may have run its course and think it would be a good idea to review and decide what we want to do in the future!"

Using the initial success criteria

Review what was said in the first session about the goals and what successful mentoring would look like. This is the basis for discussing achievements and learning.

Beginning

Middle

Ending

Boundaries



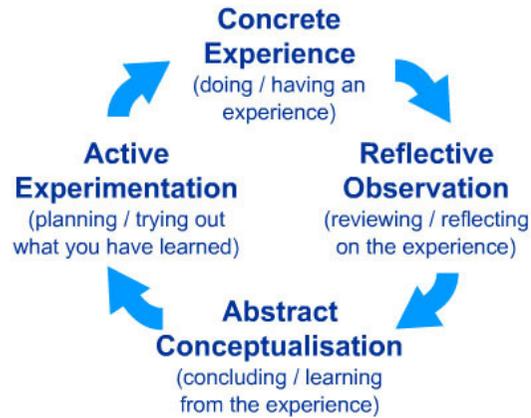
Boundaries: the limits of appropriate behaviour in the context of a mentoring relationship within Imperial

Why are boundaries important?

Why do boundaries continue to be important as the relationship goes on?

What would constitute, for you, a breach of boundaries?

Mentoring log



Kolb's learning cycle is a reminder of how to strengthen and accelerate learning. After each mentoring session some time spent reflecting leads to drawing conclusions which are then put into practice. A log can help you keep track of your learning and actions arising.

Date	Reflection	Learning/action

Mentoring log



Date	Reflection	Learning/action

Further sources of support



If there is something that is causing you concern about the mentoring there are a number of people they could talk to depending on the concern:

- Raise it with the mentor directly
- Talk with other people who are being mentored to get the perspectives of other mentees
- Discuss it with the scheme administrator if there is one
- Ask advice from a local manager

There can be issues that you want to explore but they are not appropriate for mentoring. Here are some alternative sources of support or development that may be more appropriate:

- The Coaching Academy <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/talentdevelopment/coaching>
- Occupational Health <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/occhealth>
- Confidential Care Service for employees <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/occhealth/services/eap>

A selection of books about mentoring



The Mentoring Pocketbook

by Geof Alred and Bob Garvey

Paperback: 128 pages

**Publisher: Management Pocketbooks;
3rd Revised edition edition (1 April 2010)**

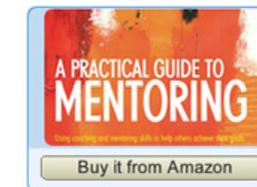


Practical Guide to Mentoring

by David Kay

Paperback: 134 pages

**Publisher: How To Books;
5th Revised edition edition (27 April 2012)**



Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent in Your Organisation

David Clutterbuck

Paperback: 208 pages

**Publisher: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development;
4 edition (1 May 2004)**

