

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR MENTORING IN THE DWP FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Purpose of this document

This document is intended to give trainees, mentors and prospective mentors guidance about mentoring in the context of the DWP Financial Management Development Scheme.

The DWP Financial Management Development Scheme

The DWP Financial Management Development Scheme [FMDS] has 3 components:

- (a) Professional Accountancy qualification training for either the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) or the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and existing Certified trainees (ACCA)
- (b) A structured programme of practical experience
- (c) Management skills training.

The aim is to produce a financial manager, who is not only a qualified accountant, but who has a comprehensive range of practical and managerial skills, giving them the potential to advance quickly to senior positions within the finance function.

The role of the mentor is key to helping trainees realise their potential. Therefore we actively encourage all trainees to have mentors. This encouragement is given via information on the benefits of mentoring, and training on mentoring from the trainee's perspective

What does a mentor do?

A mentor facilitates and helps guide the overall development of a FMDS trainee. FMDS mentors are qualified accountants. The mentor is generally not the trainee's regular line manager. However, there may be some instances where the mentor may be the line manager during a short placement, subject to both parties' agreement.

One individual may mentor more than one trainee. However, potential mentors need to recognise that mentoring is a serious commitment that requires significant investment of time. The maximum number of trainees per mentor will depend on the mentor's circumstances, the geographical location of the trainees and other factors. However, we advise that mentors should seriously consider the commitment involved if they take on more than one trainee.

Mentors work with the trainees to help them:

- Develop their skills
- Learn how to apply their skills
- Understand their role and their environment. For newly recruited graduates in particular, this will include helping them to settle into the organisation, and to obtain an understanding of the Department
- Provide a source of informed opinion and a sounding board.
- Reflect on their successes and failures and learn from them

The mentor is provided for the duration of the trainee's membership of the scheme, unless difficulties arise in the relationship. In this instance we would advise either or both parties to contact the Mentor Co-ordinator who will arrange an alternative match if a resolution is not found.

Recruitment, selection and matching of mentors to trainees

The mentor, who is always a qualified accountant, should be:

- Committed to management development
- Able to encourage self-reliance and self-managed learning
- Approachable
- Familiar with, or willing to learn about, the FMD Scheme
- Not the trainee's line manager, except for a limited period during a placement
- Where practicable, from a different part of the organisation to the trainee
- Knowledgeable of, or willing to learn about, the current requirements of CIPFA and/or CIMA
- Willing to support and oversee the development of the trainee(s) for the full duration of the Scheme, including transition into a post-qualification role at the end of the Scheme
- Prepared and able to give the necessary time commitment to the mentoring role
- Able and willing to fulfil all aspects of the mentor role as described in this document

To encourage qualified accountants to become involved in the mentoring process the Mentor Co-ordinator will write to all known accountants in advance of publication of the advertisement seeking their active participation in the scheme. A questionnaire is issued to prospective mentors and trainees to gain an

understanding of their expectations of the role. The potential mentors are then matched to the trainees by the Scheme Co-ordinators.

Training is provided for mentors and for trainees.

The relationship between the mentor and trainee is a confidential one. It requires mutual trust. Thus, both the mentor and trainee have the opportunity to veto a proposed matching.

Trainees are not asked to arrange their own mentors, because:

- (a) It is likely that a significant percentage of our intake will be graduates who are new to the organisation. As they have not at this stage developed a network of contacts within the organisation; they are not in a position to approach individuals to be potential mentors.
- (b) To make best use of the mentoring relationship, we encourage individuals to mentor someone from outside the area that they work in. Doing this increases the time commitment, but gives both the mentor and trainee a broader perspective of the role of the finance function in the DWP. Again this does make it more difficult for trainees to arrange their own mentor.

Where the trainee and mentor do not already know each other, after the first meeting the mentor or trainee may find that they do not consider a match will work. If this is the case, they should contact the Mentor Co-ordinator, who will arrange for an alternative match.

Nature of the mentoring relationship

The mentor is there to help the trainee. They do not report back to the line manager or the Scheme Co-ordinators on the trainee's performance and development.

The mentor will in particular cover the areas of:

- Helping the trainee to assess their development to date, triggering self-awareness
- Helping the trainee to plan their future development. Throughout the Scheme, trainees are encouraged to take the initiative in planning their development. Trainees receive training in the preparation of Personal Development Plans See note 1. Familiarity with this process enables the mentor to help the trainee to draw up their Personal Development Plan. From this the specific management skills training which the trainee requires may be identified
- Assisting the trainee in planning and achieving the most from their study for their professional qualification
- Assist the trainee in reaching his or her own conclusions and solutions. The role of the mentor is most effective when the mentor does not offer solutions too readily, but rather encourages the trainee to find their own solutions

- Reviewing the trainee's practical experience to date against the practical experience requirements of the relevant professional body with the trainee. Assisting the trainee in considering how best to remedy any shortfall identified
- Encouraging professional behaviour
- Helping build self-confidence, and offering encouragement, praise and constructive criticism

The mentor may also cover any other areas as they and the trainee see fit, including for example:

- Talking through any work problems or tasks
- Suggesting ways of overcoming problems or improving work quality
- Giving advice about the most effective way of approaching colleagues in order to gain co-operation
- Acting as a sounding board for ideas
- Setting expectations of performance
- Encouraging the trainee to keep their record of practical experience up to date

The trainee may wish to raise personal problems for discussion with the mentor. However, the mentoring relationship is not one of general counselling. The mentor should only discuss personal problems with the trainee where:

- they are comfortable doing so, and
- the nature of the problem is relevant to their performance at work or in studying, and
- they have the relevant skills to do so

Otherwise a diplomatic statement to the effect that this area is outside the mentoring area should be given, with referral to other suitable assistance where appropriate. The Mentor can always contact the Mentor Co-ordinator (in confidence) to ask for guidance as to where other assistance can be found if necessary.

The mentor does not need to provide academic or course related instruction. The tutors will cover this area. However, the mentor should be familiar with the syllabus and practical experience requirements for the trainee's proposed qualification.

Other Individuals Involved

The other parties involved in the mentoring relationship are set out below. The mentoring process must recognise these roles, so that boundaries are not overstepped.

1. Line Manager

The line manager's primary responsibility within the scheme is to enhance the individual's performance and technical development in a particular post. The mentor needs to bear in mind that some line managers may be uncomfortable about the mentoring relationship. Building up a relationship with the line manager should help minimise this potential difficulty.

See note 2

In managing the relationship with the line manager, the mentor needs to be sensitive to the line manager's needs. For example the mentor should seek the consent of the line manager if they wish to arrange for the trainee to be away from the workplace, for example to accompany them to a meeting or working group.

When communicating with the line manager, the mentor must safeguard the confidentiality of their relationship with the trainee. The mentor does not feed into the trainee's appraisal, which is conducted by the line manager in accordance with the usual DWP arrangements.

2. Co-ordinators

The FMD Scheme Co-ordinator and Mentor Co-ordinator are responsible for the following areas around mentoring:

Mentor Co-ordinator

- Arranges Mentor & Mentee training
- Recruitment / Selection of mentors
- Matching of mentors and trainees
- Dealing with any individual problems that may arise
- Updating 'Good practice Guide'

FMD Scheme Co-ordinator

- Design of the scheme
- Arranging technical training for Trainees
- Monitoring and evaluating the scheme

Other areas that the FMD Scheme Co-ordinator is responsible for include:

- Ensuring log books are completed
- Liaison with the colleges
- Liaison with the professional institutes
- Arranging placements in consultation with the trainee to meet the organisation's needs and the practical experience requirements of the relevant professional institute
- Annual review of the trainee's training and development needs performance and suitability to remain on the Scheme. The mentor does not feed into this review

The mentor may wish to encourage the trainee to complete their logbook, and may give advice to the trainee about this. However, the responsibility for chasing up overdue logbooks lies with the FMD Scheme Co-ordinator. The nature of the relationship between the mentor and the trainee is one of advice, development and facilitation, but not instruction.

If the trainee is having problems with their college, then we ask that the trainee informs the FMD Scheme Co-ordinator. The FMD Scheme Co-ordinator has a responsibility for monitoring the service received from each of the Colleges that we use, and needs to be aware of any problems or issues.

The FMD Scheme Co-ordinator has also established links with each of the professional institutes involved in the Scheme. For example each of the Institutes has agreed to attend our induction sessions, and to attend meetings that we will be arranging for line managers and mentors. Thus, to ensure co-ordination of work, it will often be appropriate for the mentor or trainee to contact the Co-ordinator, rather than the relevant institute directly. However, the following are instances when the Institute should be directly approached:

- Registration
- Exemptions
- Notification of change of address
- Literature requests [provided it has already been confirmed that a copy of the relevant item is not held by the FMD Scheme Co-ordinator]

2. The Training provider

We only use education establishments approved by the Institutes. Establishments currently used include CIPFA Education and Training Centre (CETC) for CIPFA, and FTC for CIMA.

The training provider is responsible for providing academic services to the level required. The mentor should familiarise themselves with the contents of the syllabus that the trainee is studying, but the mentor is not expected to supplement college tuition in any way. If the training provider is not providing a

satisfactory level of service, or the trainee has suggestions for improvements, then the trainee is requested to feed these through to the FMD Scheme Co-ordinator.

Mentoring contracts

A mentoring contract is a means of agreeing ground rules for the relationship. The mentor and trainee, in discussion at their first meeting, set the terms of the contract, if they choose to have one. A sample contract is at Appendix 1. Please note that the rules in the sample are only suggestions. Each contract will be different.

Mentors are asked to provide the co-ordinators with a copy of the mentoring contract.

Meetings

Frequency The frequency of meetings is mutually agreed between the mentor and trainee. An example of a suitable frequency is monthly. The meetings should be regular, rather than ad hoc. If there is a significant geographical separation, the trainee and mentor may wish to consider meeting for example monthly by telephone at agreed dates and times, with quarterly meetings face to face.

Structure The structure of the meetings will also be agreed between the mentor and trainee.

Preparation Both parties need to properly prepare for the meeting. However, the meeting itself needs to be run in a flexible manner that allows any issues raised to be dealt with at the time.

The logistics of venue etc should be arranged by the mentor for the first meeting, with agreement between both parties for how this will be dealt with for future meetings.

General During the meeting, the trainee should be encouraged to do most of the talking.

Records The trainee is asked to keep a record of meetings. This will then feed through into their Personal Development Plan. Review of the records will also help the trainee to evaluate their progress, and the usefulness of the mentoring relationship. A sample form that the trainee may wish to consider is included as Appendix 2 of this document.

Benefits to the mentor

The mentor benefits through:

- Personal satisfaction from helping another individual to realise their potential
- Development and practice of skills in areas such as listening and influencing
- May count toward continuing professional development
- Keeping up to date with current requirements for professional qualifications

- Networking opportunities
- Status

Benefits to the trainee

The trainee benefits through:

- Improved self-confidence
- Having a ready, impartial and trusted source of advice and support
- Help with developing managerial and/or technical skills
- A role model is provided to help focus career aspirations and work towards objectives
- A knowledge of wider business issues

What happens if the mentor and trainee do not 'get along'?

Both the mentor and the trainee can consult the FMDS management for confidential advice, if any problems with the relationship arise. It is hoped that any problems can be resolved. If the mentor and trainee find that they are not able to work together, then the arrangement will be dissolved. An alternative mentor will be found for the trainee as quickly as possible.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the overall training scheme will be done by career tracking in the long term.

To evaluate the mentoring element of the scheme, we will seek formal feedback from the trainees, mentors and line managers. Mentoring contracts will be a key element of this. The types of questions that we will be asking are:

- Have the mentor and trainee established good rapport?
- Are there clear objectives to the relationship?
- Are both parties committed to these objectives?
- Are meetings sufficiently frequent and focussed?
- Do the mentor and trainee value meetings?
- Do both parties find the 'meetings' learning experiences?
- Is the trainee developing towards their objectives, and gaining confidence?
- Does the line manager feel that the mentoring scheme is beneficial to the trainee?
- Were the selection criteria for mentors adequate?
- Has the training in respect of mentoring been sufficient, for mentors and for trainees?

Communication

Mentors may be copied into training scheme communications addressed to all trainees or to all line managers, so that they are aware of developments. The Professional Development Team intranet site is updated regularly with FMDS information.

Further information

Further guidance or information can be obtained from the Professional Development Team:

Sandra Somers - FMD Scheme Co-ordinator 0113 232 4044
Sara Field – Mentor Co-ordinator 0113 232 7472

Also please see Appendix 3, which gives contacts with phone numbers for other sources of support and information.

Appendix 1 Sample of Mentoring Contract

This is a statement of commitment to a mentoring relationship between:

-----(trainee) and ----- (mentor)

We agree to commit ourselves to the development of -----
(trainee).

----- (mentor) commits to helping the trainee to assess their development to date, to meet career objectives, and to plan their future development, and to working for an open and honest mentoring relationship.

----- (trainee) commits to actively progressing the agreed learning goals and working for an open and honest relationship.

Signed ----- (mentor)

----- (trainee)

Rules of the mentoring relationship: N.B. **These are only examples.**

1. The mentor and trainee will meet on a monthly basis, with one meeting a quarter being face to face.
2. The mentor will only enquire about the trainee's personal life by invitation.
3. The mentor and trainee will not make excessive demands on each other's time.
4. The trainee will only use the mentor's name or authority with the mentor's consent.
5. The mentor will assist the trainee in achieving objectives, but will let the trainee do things for him/herself as much as possible.
6. The mentor or trainee can end the relationship at anytime, with no blame being attached to either party.

Appendix 2 Mentoring Meeting Record

Mentoring Event / Task

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What Happened

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My Behaviour

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What I have Learnt

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Action – Including Development Needs

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Appendix 3 Sources of Support and Information

Financial Management Development Scheme

Any queries or concerns should be directed to the scheme manager:

Sandra Somers	Tel: 0113 232 4044 or GTN 513 extension 24044
Sara Field	Tel: 0113 232 7472 or GTN 513 extension 27472
Alison Lally	Tel: 0113 232 4044 or GTN 513 extension 24044

Employee Assistance Programme – Right Corecare

Personal or legal issues may arise that the mentor does not feel they can or should deal with. In these circumstances, they may wish to suggest that the trainee uses the Employee Assistance Programme. This can provide advice, information, and where relevant a number of counselling sessions. The helpline numbers are:

General helpline	0800 652 3304
Legal and financial helpline	0800 652 3308

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy [CIPFA]

3 Robert Street
London
WC2N 6RL

General	Tel: 0207 543 5600
Education and Training Information	Tel: 0207 543 5678
Student Services Co-ordinator	Tel: 0207 543 5625

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants [CIMA]

26 Chapter Street
London
SW1P 4AP

General	Tel: 0207 663 5441
CIMA Student Services	Tel: 0207 663 5441

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

29 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London
WC2A 3EE

General	Tel: 020 7396 5820
Training	Tel: 020 7396 5957
Education	Tel: 020 7396 5891