



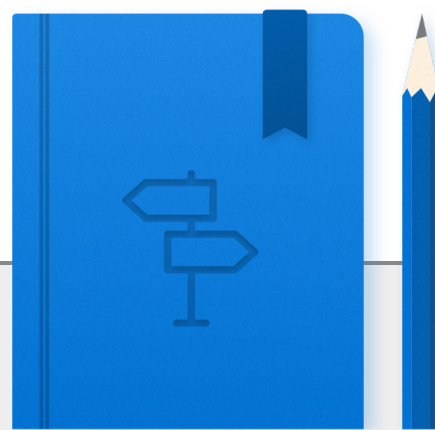
together

A UN MENTORING PROGRAMME

Mentee Handbook

Get help with your UN mentorship journey.

This handbook offers tips and practical guidance for mentees.





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Mentee Handbook

Introduction

Dear mentee,

Welcome to **Together: a UN Mentoring Programme** and congratulations on your new role as a mentee.

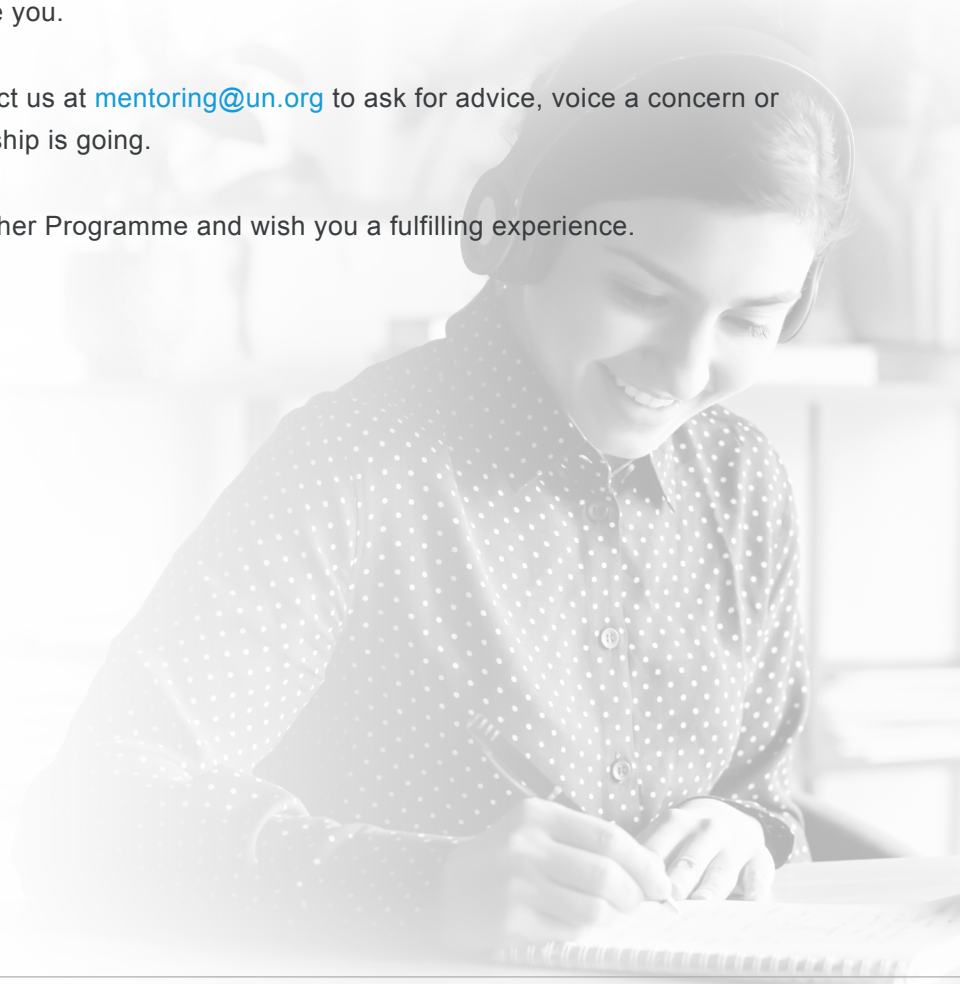
This handbook provides an overview on how to approach your participation in the Together Programme. We recommend you review it before the first meeting with your mentor and revisit it as often as you wish. We hope it can help you navigate the mentoring relationship in a structured and effective manner.

You can also find resources on the Together platform including proposed agendas for mentoring sessions and other resources to prepare and inspire you.

At any point of the process, you can contact us at mentoring@un.org to ask for advice, voice a concern or simply tell us how your mentoring relationship is going.

We thank you for being a part of the Together Programme and wish you a fulfilling experience.

Together Team





1 Mentoring Overview

1.1 Benefits for mentees

Mentoring is a relationship between two people aimed at professional development. It is based on mutual respect, trust and integrity.

Why is mentoring important? Relationships drive growth, motivation and inspiration in an organization. Mentoring relationships are proven to improve productivity, staff engagement and retention.

And connecting with mentors and building these relationships can be a fulfilling part of one's career. Some benefits we hope you will gain from this programme include:

- Receive feedback from a more experienced colleague
- Reflect on your career goals and challenges
- Reduce isolation during COVID-19
- Learn about positions in other duty stations
- Expand your network
- Enhance confidence when interacting with more experienced colleagues



1.2 What Mentoring Is and Is Not

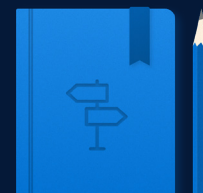
It is important to understand what constitutes a mentoring relationship.

Mentoring Is...

- **Development tool** — a mentoring relationship can help you understand more about the Organization and what you want out of your career.
- **Knowledge-sharing opportunity** — mentoring facilitates the flow of information and ideas among staff in different departments and duty stations.
- **Organizational culture support** — mentoring can help staff better understand the Organization's cultural norms, some of which are not captured in written policies and rules.
- **Candid and Specific** — a good mentoring relationship provides honest and specific feedback and a route to growth.

Mentoring Is Not...

- **Replacement for formal development** — Mentoring cannot take the place of formal training but can augment it.
- **Management replacement** — A mentor should not take on the role or responsibilities of a mentee's manager.
- **A guaranteed promotion** — A mentoring relationship provides no assurance of a promotion. However, both parties may develop competencies and skills that improve overall job performance.
- **Personal counselling** — It is best to seek help on personal issues from a life coach or mental health professional.



1.3 Mentoring and Coaching: What's the Difference?

Mentoring and coaching differ in their objectives, impact, and duration.

Mentoring

- Tends to focus on an individual's overall career goals and aspirations
- Mutually benefits the mentor and mentee.
- Formal mentoring period may be finite, but the relationship may continue

Coaching

- Assesses and improves an individual's performance in a particular area.
- Benefits the coachee more than the coach
- Often has a time-bound relationship defined to meet specific goals

1.4 Cornerstones of Mentoring Relationships

Self-reflection



Some important traits of a mentor include empathy, curiosity, authenticity and the ability to connect and impart trust. Research shows that these are more important than the professional skills a mentor may have. Reflect on which of these traits will be important to you in a mentoring relationship.

Building Trust



Trust is a cornerstone of effective mentoring relationships. Most people would agree that it is impossible to have authentic and meaningful conversations with someone you do not trust.

The nature of a formal mentoring programme requires trust to be built faster than we are probably used to in "real life." If you only have a mentor for four months, you need to be able to trust them quickly in order to accomplish your goals. Everyone has a different trust profile. There are some of us who trust people quickly and others who withhold trust until the other person has truly proven worthy. It is helpful to think about where you fit on that continuum and how this will affect the relationship.

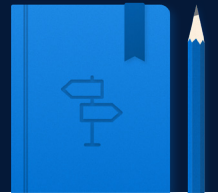
There are actions that erode trust in a mentoring relationship. These may include:

- Cancelling meetings for more important priorities
- Lack of preparedness
- Lack of follow-through on planned actions
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Impatient or unfocused listening

Confidentiality



Personal and professional information divulged during a mentoring relationship may be confidential. It is expected that both parties not disclose such information to anyone else unless both mentor and mentee agree otherwise.



2 Getting Started

Some mentees may just know what they want to ask their mentors from the first meeting onward. Some may prefer a more freestyle format to meetings without much planning. Other mentees may be keener on more structure. Or they may be unsure how to approach the meetings and what to ask.

There is no right mentoring formula. All of these approaches and preferences are okay! Aim to simply get to one another at first and communicate expectations and preferences. Together you will figure out what works best for both of you.

Generally, however, we recommend that mentees consider the following key phases and related steps as they can help maximize learning and fulfilment.

Phase 1: Establish expectations and build trust (pre-work & sessions 1-2)

- Identify your expectations for the mentoring relationship
- Hold introductory meeting
- Before your first meeting, do some research on your mentor – check out their digital footprint – are they on LinkedIn, Twitter? Do they have a blog?
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Share your expectations and goals with the mentor

Phase 2: Create an action plan (sessions 2-3)

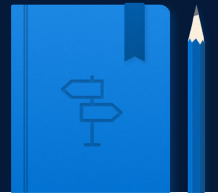
- Discuss your strengths and challenges
- Identify goals and actions you can take
- Complete the Mentorship Agreement in the platform

Phase 3: Meet consistently and revise your action plan (session 3 onward)

- At each meeting review progress on actions items
- Discuss items of interest, current challenges and recent successes
- Use the suggested practical exercises from the session agendas (in the platform)

Phase 4: Reflect on your experience and determine next steps (last session)

- Acknowledge your relationship and what you accomplished together
- Discuss next steps: challenges ahead and new goals
- Provide feedback on the Together mentoring programme



The next section provides more details on how to address each phase.

2.1 Phase 1 – Establish Expectations (pre-work & sessions 1-2)

The start of a mentoring relationship is an important time for both parties. As a mentee, it's important that you think about your expectations and goals. You can start by asking yourself the following questions:

- What do I want from this relationship?
- Do I want to learn more about a different duty station?
- Do I expect to develop my managing skills?
- Do I feel stuck at my level and want to learn some tips on how to move up?
- Do I feel lost and need some perspectives on career development paths?

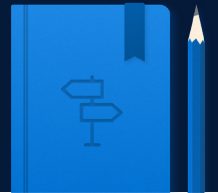
Like in every other relationship, communication is key. Once you've identified your expectations and goals, share them with your mentor.

In the beginning, spend time getting to know one other. Share your preferred names, current positions, job histories, why you decided to participate and your hobbies, if you like. You might use some of the following questions to help drive conversations:

Questions for the First Meeting

- What is your motivation for signing up for the mentoring programme?
- What have been some high points in your UN career? Some low points?
- What is interesting about life in your duty station?
- What is your next big challenge?
- What do you hope to accomplish in the next 6 months, 1 year, 3 years and 5 years?
- What has been useful for you in terms of career development activities?
- Ask about personal interests that intrigued you.
- Discuss things about the mentor's profile that interested you.





Some key traits or habits of a successful mentee include the following:

- Be willing to discuss failures and successes
- Identify professional development goals, priorities and career interests
- Listen actively
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in being helped by mentor
- Exhibit a desire to improve in a certain area or learn a new skill
- Provide honest feedback to the mentor
- Seek ways to achieve goals and contribute ideas toward solving problems
- Demonstrate application of learning obtained through the relationship
- Try to be an active participant in furthering the development of your mentor

Also discuss some ground rules for the relationship, like how often you will meet. In the Together mentoring programme, participants may define this. We suggest twice-monthly but this is not required. Meeting lengths are flexible.

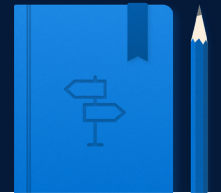
Mentees are responsible for scheduling and leading each session but we recommend that in the beginning you decide on a time that usually works for both. Having sessions booked in advance in your calendar will help you prioritize them.

Below are some tips for mentees on how to handle meetings and the time they require. The Together platform can help you stay organized with your sessions. Consider scheduling all future sessions and adding them to your/mentor's work calendar.

Time Commitment Obligations

- Mentees should be accountable for scheduling meetings with mentors
- Be respectful of mentor's time and schedule
- Commit the requisite time and energy
- Do the necessary pre-work for mentoring conversations
- Follow up on action items identified during conversations
- Informally communicate on a regular basis with mentor

Mentoring programmes can contribute to the civility and “good citizenship” in an organization. In other words, in places where mentoring programmes are successful, staff tend to treat each other well, staff engagement is high, and staff focus more on their development goals. We hope the Together Programme will have the same effect in the United Nations.



Please help us reach this goal by following these mentoring citizenship tips.

Mentoring Citizenship Tips

- Attend mentoring-related meetings and events
- Maintain privacy/confidentiality of conversations with mentors
- Provide input to assess and improve the Together mentoring programme
- Take advantage of other UN learning resources
- Track your development and career progress

2.2 Phase 2 - Create an action plan (sessions 2-3)

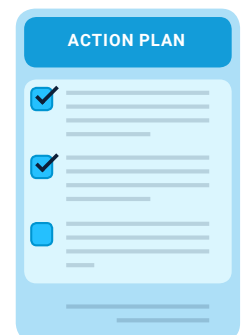
After the first couple meetings with your mentor it's helpful to have a focused conversation about your goals and concrete actions you can take to achieve them. How might your mentor help? What about their background would be useful to learn from?

You may want to focus on long-term career goals – such as becoming a leader of large teams - or a shorter-term one for the next 6-12 months like improving written communication skills or interviewing for higher-level posts.

Writing things down in an action plan can help you stay focused and maximize the time with your mentor.

The Together platform has an action plan called the Mentorship Agreement that you can fill out and update online if you wish. Or you can create your own action plan offline.

To access the Mentorship Agreement, click your mentor's name (left-hand menu bar of the platform) and then click 'Mentorship Agreement'.

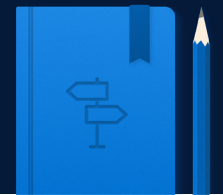


2.3 Phase 3 - Meet consistently and revise your action plan (session 3 onward)

Try to meet consistently with your mentor. Things may come up and you both may have good reasons to cancel meetings or postpone them. But aim to be assertive about rescheduling them.

Also keep your action plan in mind and update it as your relationship progresses. Maybe you'll realize that it won't be feasible to accomplish some actions you had originally planned – such as getting feedback from your mentor on a report you wrote. Maybe you've discovered that your mentor seems to prefer giving other types of help - like talking through specific problems. If so, adjust your action plan accordingly.

You can aim to keep your conversations focused on your goals but remember that they might flow into other areas that are equally important and interesting.



Exercises or activities during mentoring sessions can help you accelerate your learning and growth. Take a look at the list below.

Ideas for Exercises and Activities

- Situation-based exercises: discuss with your mentor how to best address past or upcoming situations you want help with.
- Role Play: do you have a tough conversation or presentation ahead? Take time to talk it through and practice ahead of time.
- Shadowing: join your mentor for a day, an event or a meeting and learn from observation. This can work in a virtual environment too!
- Networking: can your mentor introduce you to someone you can learn from?
- Peer Feedback: make a commitment to get feedback from someone you work with. Use your mentor as a sounding board to discuss the feedback you got and how to improve on it.
- Reverse it: remember to give opportunities for growth to your mentor. If you see there is a specific situation or topic your mentor would appreciate your feedback on, save time to work on it.
- Attend a UN webinar or event on a topic that interests you both and discuss what you have learnt later.

For more detailed descriptions of some of these, please check the session agendas on the platform.

2.4 Phase 4 – Reflect on your experience and determine next steps (last session)

Your last session is approaching. Consider the following steps in this last phase.

1. Reflect



- Thank each other and acknowledge what your time together accomplished. What were the most useful exercises? What were the biggest takeaways?

2. Going forward



- Determine if or how you want to stay in touch. If there's more you can accomplish together, set up more monthly sessions!
- Pay it forward: maybe now is the time to join another mentoring programme and find someone else to connect with.
- Share your success: as you make traction, update each other. Send an email when you have news to share.
- Spread the word: did you find the experience rewarding and fulfilling? Invite other colleagues to sign up for the next programme.

3. Feedback



- Respond to the survey from the Together Programme team. You can also share feedback with the project team through mentoring@un.org. Your comments will help the programme grow.



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More information: hr.un.org/mentoring

Questions, comments or feedback?

mentoring@un.org

