



M25 Mentoring Scheme

Mentor Guidelines

For full details of the scheme please refer to the [M25 Mentoring Scheme Guidelines](#).

1. Introduction to M25 Mentoring

1.1 Scope and purpose

The M25 Mentoring Scheme is intended to support non-senior staff in the Consortium's member libraries. The scheme will dovetail with SCONUL's mentoring scheme for senior staff. The core purpose of the M25 Mentoring Scheme is to support library staff in their professional growth by facilitating mentoring relationships with more experienced colleagues. The scheme also aims to support the progression of LGBTQ+ and BAGM staff by giving mentees the opportunity to be matched with a mentor from a specific group or background. Both partners in the mentoring relationship will learn and gain from the experience, and this in turn will sustain a continuous learning cycle within the Consortium.

This will be achieved by:

- promoting M25 Mentoring as a valuable tool within an individual's own development portfolio.
- managing a process within which those seeking a mentor can be supported in identifying a suitable partner.
- providing guidance and support for those participating in M25 Mentoring.
- providing opportunities for mentees to be matched with a mentor from a specific background or group.
- monitoring and evaluating M25 Mentoring so as to deliver continuous improvement and demonstrate impact.

1.2 Objectives

Our objectives are:

- a) to promote M25 Mentoring across the community.
- b) to recruit and match mentors and mentees according to the scheme's eligibility criteria.
- c) to support mentors and mentees in making the most of the mentoring partnership (support for memorandum of agreement, goal-setting, managing expectations, reflecting, concluding, etc.)
- d) to enhance the personal and professional growth of mentees through their contribution to the mentoring partnership.
- e) to draw on the learning and experience of mentors for the benefit of mentees and the wider academic library sector.
- f) to develop the Consortium as a learning organisation through the process of mentees becoming mentors in their turn.
- g) to demonstrate the impact of M25 Mentoring through continuous monitoring and evaluation.
- h) to maintain awareness of best practice in mentoring and ensure that the M25 scheme continues to meet the highest standards.

1.3 Eligibility criteria

M25 Mentoring is aimed at non-senior library staff. Senior library staff looking for a mentoring scheme to support progression into leadership roles are encouraged to use the SCONUL mentoring scheme.

Mentors should have at least two years' experience at a level equivalent to or higher than the proposed mentee. Mentors and Mentees must be working for an M25 Member library to apply to the scheme and have approval from their line manager to take part.

These eligibility criteria are guidelines, and M25 will use its discretion and common sense when proposing a mentoring partnership.

2. Getting involved in M25 Mentoring

2.1 About mentoring

The Consortium follow the general mentoring guidance provided by SCONUL for their leadership scheme. In their guidance SCONUL defines mentoring as "a professional relationship in which an experienced person (mentor) assists another person (mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the mentee's professional and personal growth. It is an effective way of helping people to progress in their chosen career, and is a helpful relationship based upon trust and respect." There are different definitions of both mentoring and coaching. Mentoring has more focus on professional development, whereas coaching may also encompass more personal and life-related issues. Typically a mentor will be someone from a similar professional background but with more experience than the mentee.

2.2 How to apply

Please also look at the separate guidance notes for mentees and mentors. Application forms for both mentor and mentee roles are available from the M25 website. The M25 will confirm receipt of your application and contact you if there are any queries.

Mentors will be added to the M25 Mentoring register. Mentors will be contacted as soon as a potential match with a mentee has been identified. This may be very quickly, or may take some time if there are no mentees currently seeking mentors. You should be prepared for potential mentees to make contact with you on a provisional basis, as they are encouraged to approach more than one possible mentor with a view to making a choice based on whether the 'chemistry' feels right for them. You should also keep an open mind, and be prepared to say so if the proposed match does not feel right for you.

3. Guidance for mentors

The following notes are intended as a guideline to help you think through your role as a M25 mentor. There is no one way of doing this, and M25 is not prescriptive in its approach. The main thing is that you should both support and challenge your mentee, and help them to benefit from your experience (including your mistakes and subsequent learning, as well as your successes).

3.1 Applying to become a mentor

Think about the role of mentor, and how it differs from that of a line manager, coach, or counsellor. Think about your own previous experience of any of these roles. What approaches and techniques might be useful in your role as mentor? What elements do you want to avoid? What experiences can you bring to the partnership that might be helpful to your mentee? Think especially about when you moved from one role to another, and the steps along your professional journey. What helped you to make those moves? Is there anything you might have done differently, in retrospect? Are you happy to give some of your time to this process? You and your mentee will agree together how frequently and over what period of time you want to engage – but you are making a level of commitment by putting yourself forward as a mentor, and you need to feel sure that you can accommodate this appropriately.

3.2 Preparing for your mentoring session

- What do you know about your mentee (their background, previous roles)?
- What have they said about their goals and challenges?
- What have they 'not' said, that you might want to explore with them?
- What do you need to learn more about in order to understand their situation better?

3.3 In the session

Remember this is the mentee's time – they should drive the agenda. As well as supporting and challenging them as a mentor, your role is to hold the process, keep track of time, and check that your mentee has had a chance to cover everything they wanted to raise in this conversation. Think about the questions you might ask to help guide the discussion. You might want to open things up and help your mentee to see a bigger picture, so consider open questions such as:

- Tell me more about ...?
- Are there other ways you might approach ...?
- What else was going on there? How did you feel about ...?
- Why might that be?
- At other times you might need to help your mentee to focus, so a different approach might be needed, such as:
 - What do you need to focus on right now? Today? This year?
 - What is most important for you?
 - When do you need to do ...?

Remember to listen – actively – to what your mentee is saying, and check your understanding regularly (e.g. 'so what I think I heard you say is... Is that right?' 'Can you clarify what you mean by...'). Keep your own experiences (current and previous) in mind while listening to your mentee, and bring these in at an appropriate moment if you feel that your mentee might benefit. Are there practical things you can do to support your mentee, such as put them in contact with people or suggest things they could read? Are you (or your contacts) involved in anything they could join in with and benefit from? As the mentoring session closes, you should confirm actions and next steps with your mentee, for example:

- What is the mentee going to do / think about / try out after this meeting?
- Are there actions for you?
- Date of next engagement, etc.

3.4 After the session – reflection and review

- How did the mentoring dialogue go? Are there ways you could use your time together more usefully in future (things to focus on, things not to get stuck on)?
- Is there anything you don't understand or feel unsure about? Why might this be?
- Was the balance right (between each of you talking, listening, reflecting)?
- What about actions? If you've ended up with all the actions you might want to re-think.
- Have you been able to help your mentee see things more clearly? Have they made any progress with their original goals and concerns? Have these changed at all?
- Have they gone away with something practical to focus on?

3.5 Ending your mentoring partnership

You will have considered at the start of your partnership how frequently you want to meet, and over what period of time; and you may have changed this by mutual agreement at some point along the way. Your mentee should normally take the initiative to indicate when they feel it is time to draw things to a close – this is usually evidence of successful work together, and you should not feel concerned if they are ready to finish. However, you might need to take this initiative yourself if you sense that you have made as much progress as feels reasonable. Let M25 know when you have concluded your work together, to assist in record-keeping and monitoring of the scheme. When you have successfully concluded work with a mentee, you may of course continue to be in touch with them, through social media or other informal routes (an occasional coffee for example). This is for you to agree together. If the partnership is not going well for any reason, you should raise this honestly and openly with your mentee. (It is quite possible that they feel the same, but they may feel more anxious than you about raising the issue.) Ideally you should explore together whether there is anything that either of you might do differently to help the partnership to become more effective. It may also be that one or other of you finds that their circumstances have changed so that they simply cannot honour the original commitment to the mentoring partnership – in which case again this should be raised straightforwardly. If you feel that you do not wish to continue in a particular partnership for whatever reason, you can recognise this amicably and agree to conclude your work together. Again, please let M25 know that your partnership has come to an end, and if appropriate confirm that you are available to work with a new mentee. And don't forget that you can seek a mentor of your own at any stage, either via the M25 or SCONUL scheme or independently, depending on your level of experience. Learning and development are continuing processes.

For full details and guidance please refer to the M25 Mentoring Scheme Guidelines.