



**Law Society  
of Scotland**

# **Career Mentoring**

## **Mentee Briefing**

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## Foreword

Thank you for your involvement in our mentoring programme. Throughout the programme we will be keen to hear from you as to what is working well, and what could be improved. Please keep in touch with us by emailing [mentoring@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@lawscot.org.uk).

## Aim and objectives

The aim of the scheme is to help students, trainees and solicitors manage and develop their careers and our main objectives are:

- Support mentees with goal - setting and career management
- Encourage mentees to take responsibility for their own skills and career development
- Enhance the experience by accessing experienced solicitors' knowledge and expertise
- Provide information about different options and career paths
- Enabling mentors to "give back" to the legal profession and be role models for the next generation

## What is mentoring?

The original 'Mentor' was a wise and trusted counsellor or adviser from Greek Mythology but mentoring is a term now used to describe a developmental relationship between colleagues, one of whom will (normally) be a more experienced practitioner.

Mentoring relationships facilitate personal and professional development through support, challenge and review. The role of mentors can involve:

- listening to concerns
- helping to see new perspectives
- identifying barriers and opportunities
- role modelling appropriate behaviour
- challenging assumptions and mind-set
- improving self-awareness
- challenging views and actions
- reviewing current practice
- helping to learn and to develop capabilities
- acting as an independent 'sounding board'

**You should note that the mentor is not there to give you advice and instructions.** The mentor may in the course of the conversation share his/her experiences, he/she may offer suggestions or ideas and give you feedback, but it is your responsibility to take ownership for the solutions and outcomes of the mentoring conversation.

## What will you, as a mentee, get out of it?

The advantages of having a mentor can include:

- Help to clarify your career goals and ambitions
- Help with career planning and development
- Learning more about yourself and what may be holding you back
- Help to see yourself, your challenges, and your opportunities, from a new perspective
- Improving your self-confidence
- Receiving impartial guidance and encouragement
- The development of a supportive relationship
- Assistance with problem solving
- Professional development
- Increased network

## The LSS Career Mentoring Process

### Matching mentor and mentee

The LSS online mentor matching platform will provide a list of potential mentors, using a matching algorithm, depending on the information you provide in your profile therefore it is extremely important to enter as much relevant information as possible.

The mentee should then thoroughly research potential mentors using the information in their profiles and send a mentoring request to their chosen mentor. The mentor will then either accept or decline your request (providing an explanation if the request is declined) and if accepted, the mentor will contact you to arrange an initial meeting to agree development areas, arrange a meeting schedule and prepare a mentoring agreement. There is also an option to ask your potential mentor a question before selecting them.

### Mentor training

We believe that it is very important that our mentors are well trained and prepared for their mentoring assignments therefore all of our mentors will have attended a 1-day mentoring training course with The Law Society of Scotland in association with Get The Gen .

### Your role

It is important that you are well prepared for mentoring.

The mentoring is for your benefit and so you should ensure that you communicate your needs and expectations to your mentor. Before your first meeting you should:

- Consider what you hope to gain from the mentoring
- Be clear on what areas you would like to cover in the mentoring

To get the most out of the mentoring relationship you should

- Ensure you are motivated to develop and grow
- Be open in your communication
- Take ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of the conversations
- Take action as agreed in the sessions
- Reflect on the learning you experience
- Give feedback to the mentor on your experience of the mentoring, the mentor's style and the effectiveness

You will want to prepare for each meeting so that you both get best use of your time.

- Ensure you are in a 'good place' to concentrate on discussing and exploring your development areas
- Review the agreed objectives for the mentoring
- Review your meeting notes from previous sessions
- Review your progress since the last meeting
- Be at the meeting point in good time

### Arranging mentoring meetings

You will need to agree with your mentor how often, when, and where you will meet. We would recommend committing to a regular arrangement, such as one meeting a month. The meetings should primarily be face-to-face.

- Meeting for an hour once a month is thought to be a suitable norm, but you are free to agree a timetable with your mentor and to change it by agreement when that is appropriate
- Your meeting place will usually need to be away from your workplace. It could be at the mentor's office, a quiet corner of a coffee shop / cafe / hotel lounge, or through prior arrangement at the Law Society offices. You will need to consider comfort and confidentiality for both of you
- It will not usually be possible to hold mentoring meetings in normal working hours. Your commitments and those of the mentor will therefore influence timing. Lunch times may be appropriate for most meetings. Others could be just before or just after work

### Mentoring agreement

We have created a short "Mentoring Relationship Understanding" document. This is intended to be a short outline of what the mentor and mentee is expecting from each other. It should be used in the first session to write-up your shared understanding of the relationship.

See the form in appendix A. This form is available in softcopy from [mentoring@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@lawscot.org.uk).

## Feedback to the mentor and to LSS

As a mentee you should review the progress of your mentoring relationships at regular intervals.

Ask yourself questions such as:

- Am I progressing well towards my objectives?
- Am I able to identify progress as a result of the mentoring support?
- Do I feel that my mentoring is effective? What is working well? What isn't?
- Are the practical arrangements working well?
- Am I enjoying this?

Be prepared to give feedback to the mentor on how you feel your development is progressing and on his/her style and approach on a regular basis.

The Law Society of Scotland is not expecting to be informed about the content of the conversations, but in order to evaluate the success and effectiveness of our mentoring programme we will be asking for updates on a regular basis from both mentors and mentees in terms of how well the mentoring relationship is working. We may also ask the mentor and mentee if they will be willing and able to offer examples of successes and recommendations that we can use in our marketing of the service.

## Ending the Mentoring relationship

### *Manage expectations*

The mentor will discuss at the outset the expected length of your mentoring relationship. This is likely to depend on what you want to achieve and can be changed by mutual agreement if the circumstances change.

Generally, we would expect the relationship to last no less than one year, and could last far longer if both parties continue to find it beneficial and productive.

We suggest that you agree an initial end-date such as after one year, with the understanding that if you both agree the relationship may continue.

### *“Job done” ending*

If you achieve the objectives within a shorter timer than originally planned, celebrate your success and end the relationship on a high. Alternatively, you may agree together to a new set of objectives and continue the mentoring relationship. We would however suggest some caution in the latter case. Ask yourself whether you are continuing just because it is comfortable and convenient? Would you benefit from getting a different perspective from another mentor?

### *“No-fault” ending*

There can be a number of reasons for ending the relationship before the objectives have been achieved:

- Practical changes in circumstances
- Changes in priorities or commitments
- The chemistry is not good
- The relationship is not achieving its objectives.

Either party should always have the option to end the relationship on a “no-fault”, “no-blame” basis. To avoid awkwardness, we encourage the mentor and mentee to discuss at the beginning how you will end the mentoring relationship e.g. how you will let each other know. It is better to be honest and stop, rather than labour on.

There may also be other alternative sources of support that suits your needs. You are welcome to consult with the LSS Mentoring team if this is the case (see Additional Support section below)

## Confidentiality

To be effective and enjoyable the relationship between mentor and mentee needs to be based on trust and confidentiality. Building trust takes time, but both parties must be comfortable as they share information. Confidentiality parameters should therefore be discussed at the outset of the mentoring relationship.

As a guideline we suggest that the agreement should be that the conversations remain confidential unless it is explicitly agreed between the parties or if the mentor or mentee believes there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the mentor, mentee or others if the information is withheld. This is in line with The European Mentoring and Coaching Council's Code of Ethics as referred to below.

## Additional Support

### Students / graduates / trainees looking for traineeships / NQ positions

The LSS Education, Training & Qualifications team can provide one-to-one support and advice for individuals looking for traineeships or NQ positions. If you would like to receive more help and advice on this, please contact the mentoring team by email [mentoring@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@lawscot.org.uk) or call 0131 476 7907 to speak to a member of team ETQ.

### Individuals returning to employment

If you are returning to work after a period of unemployment and you have questions relating to your practising certificate, or restrictions in what you can do, please contact the Registrar's team at the Law Society of Scotland: [registrar@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:registrar@lawscot.org.uk) or call 0131 476 7902.

### Trainees

If there is an issue in relation to the traineeship itself, please contact the Trainee Support Service. The Society provides a dedicated help and support service specifically aimed to meet a trainee's needs.

Trainees can contact the Society to discuss any issue you might have with your traineeship on a confidential or anonymous basis. An experienced member of staff will be able to offer you guidance, advice and assistance should you need help in dealing with issues or difficulties affecting your traineeship.

The Society aims to assist, whether you, as a trainee, is seeking formal intervention or simply looking to discuss the issue without formal action being taken. We have helped many trainees who have not wished to identify themselves or their employer, but the Society is unable to intervene directly if not made aware of the name of the individual, firm or organisation.

The Society's Admissions Sub Committee has the power to intervene in training contracts if, after investigation, it is thought necessary.

Katie Wood, a manager in the Society Registrar's team and Secretary to the Admissions Sub Committee, is the Society's contact for any trainee who is looking for help, support or advice on their traineeship. She can also refer individual cases to the committee if appropriate.

For additional information, please contact [katiewood@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:katiewood@lawscot.org.uk) or phone 0131 476 8162.

### **Professional practice**

If you require any assistance with any query related to rules, guidance or any related item please contact the Professional Practice team on 0131 476 7903 and one of the team will be happy to take your call and assist you.

### **LawCare**

LawCare is an advisory and support service designed to help lawyers, their immediate families and their staff to deal with issues such as stress, depression, addiction, eating disorders and related emotional difficulties.

The service is free and entirely confidential. Although LawCare is funded by professional bodies, it will not, in any circumstances, report back to those bodies about any calls received.

If you are dealing with any of the issues outlined above, please contact LawCare to discuss their problems on 0800 279 6869 or visit [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk).

### **Mentor and Mentee Support**

If you are experiencing any issues, challenges or problems relating to the mentoring programme itself please contact Lyndsey Thomson on 0131 476 8143 or email [mentoring@lawscot.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@lawscot.org.uk).

## Appendix A: Example of mentoring agreement

*Example*



### Mentoring Relationship Understanding

This document outlines our shared understanding of the expectations we both have of the mentoring relationship we are entering into.

#### Duration of the relationship

Our mentoring relationship is expected to last for 12 months from the start date. After the 12 months we may agree to continue the mentoring relationship.

#### Frequency and place of meetings

We expect to meet once a month at ....

The first meetings will take place [date/time], [date/time] and [date/time]

#### Goals and objectives

The goals and objectives of the mentee are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

#### Confidentiality

Both parties agree that we will not disclose information discussed in our mentoring conversations to any third party unless

- It is explicitly agreed by both parties
- Either of us believe that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the mentor, mentee or others if the information is withheld

This mentoring programme pilot is run under the auspice of the Law Society of Scotland (LSS). The LSS is not expecting to be informed about the content of the mentoring conversations. In order to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the pilot programme the LSS will be contacting the mentor and mentee on a regular basis to get feedback on how well the mentoring relationship is working. The LSS may also ask the mentor and mentee if they would be willing and able to offer examples of successes and recommendations that the LSS use in the future marketing of the service.

#### Ending the mentoring relationship

We agree to a no-fault, no-blame conclusion if one or both of us requires the mentoring relationship to end.

Mentor

Mentee

Date