

The Value of Mentoring

Mentoring is a learning development partnership comprised of a 'mentor', someone who has the skills and experience required by a 'mentee', an individual who is seeking to learn from and develop as a result. In the museum and heritage sector, mentoring is most visible for Arts Council England's Accreditation Scheme as a requirement for organisations without a museum professional. Mentoring also features in other programmes of activity such as the Associateship of the Museum Association professional development programme and projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Mentoring can also take place outside of a scheme or formal training programme. It can be a one of meeting or take place over an agreed period of time.

During 2014/15 the South West Museum Development Programme undertook research with mentors for the Accreditation Scheme and their host employers. Only 31% of mentors stated that their mentoring duties were acknowledged formally as part of their Continual Professional Development (CPD) or annual appraisal process. In response employers stated it was challenging to include mentoring in formal processes as they can have limited influence over CPD and appraisal mechanisms. This document is therefore designed to help mentors engage their employers more effectively on the value mentoring they undertake and to facilitate the support of their CPD activity.

How to use this document

This document highlights competencies and aptitudes which employers can look for within their employees, it also highlights outcomes from the mentoring process to raise awareness of the benefits mentoring can bring to an organisation.

We recommend that prior to an appraisal that mentors look through the list and find examples from their mentoring practice which demonstrates the competencies and aptitudes they have developed/improved upon and the outcomes they have achieved as a result of their mentoring as part of their wider review.

What do we want to achieve?

We want to instil confidence in mentors to be able to highlight and ultimately advocate the valuable work they are undertaking as a mentor, to raise the profile of mentoring and increase recognition of mentors within museums.

Competencies and Aptitudes	Outcomes
Enhances effective communication skills; The ability to talk to people	Improves workforce confidence as it demonstrates information is being shared in an open way
Enhances effective listening skills	Supports workforce to be able to clarify information being shared in the organisation. Demonstrates respect to other members of the team
Encourages the use of initiative and creative thinking; provides space to think	Demonstrates openness, to engage and respond to a range of ideas
Reinforces analytical skills and problem solving through asking challenging questions; focusing on solutions or actions	Supports a two way learning process, showing the value of mentoring to explore new ideas and approaches
Enhances time management skills; in working effectively with an agreed amount of time	Demonstrates how time and resources
Demonstrates flexibility in responding to changing needs and circumstances	Supports a positive learning environment
Develops leadership and influencing skills to effect positive change	Enhances relationships within the museum as well as between museums
Develops conflict management strategies by discussing challenges faced by the mentee	Demonstrates the ability to identify options to promote collaborative working
Builds connectivity and knowledge of sector priorities.	Reinforces the value of peer learning
Builds professional experience and confidence through personal development; dual learning; time to reflect and learn; partnership and collaboration.	Develops a reflective practice for the benefit of host organisation
Builds awareness of networks; enhances learning across different agendas	Raises the profile of the host organisation and highlights its credibility within and beyond the museum sector

Notes

This is an advocacy document and to ensure it is advocating effectively for mentors we welcome comments or suggestions for improvement.

We are also seeking examples from mentors where they have successfully used this document to raise awareness of their mentoring role. Let us know at museum.development@bristol.gov.uk if you have an example to share.