

Career Mentoring

How mentoring can help you and your career – explained by the ICAS Professional Development Team

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Mentoring can bring a range of benefits to the person being mentored and to the mentor themselves. Here we explain what's involved, on both sides of the process, and how mentoring could be the ideal way to give your career a boost.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring facilitates personal and professional development by providing challenge, support and review from a third-party, usually more-experienced, perspective. The relationship between mentor and mentee is an opportunity for both parties to learn and benefit from one another. A mentor can help you to focus on what is achievable and be the vital difference that helps you achieve your goals and objectives. And for a mentor, the benefits arise from exposure to new ideas and networks and the opportunity to hone leadership and problem-solving skills.

Help to set and reach goals

A mentoring relationship encourages you to put time aside to think about where you are now, where you want to be and, importantly, how you're going to get there. A mentor will help you to consider your strengths and required areas for development and work with you to set and reach achievable goals. These goals can be progression-led, such as getting through exams and completing a training contract, applying for a promotion or branching out into a new area of practice. For others, goals might relate to specific workplace skills they need to gain or improve upon, such as taking on management responsibilities, working through periods of transition, presenting or project management.

What's in it for the mentee?

As a mentee you will benefit from receiving support to help reach your goals and clarify your career ambitions. You will also gain access to an enhanced network of CAs working in a specific and relevant area of interest. It's a great opportunity to get a different perspective, to learn more about yourself and what may be holding you back. By providing constructive feedback, a good mentor will challenge and encourage you out of your comfort zone, to boost your self-confidence, help you recognise your strengths and highlight the areas in which you need to develop.

What does the mentor get from it?

There are many benefits to being a mentor that will carry over into your own career. The process can be an ideal way to develop your leadership, people-management and problem-solving skills. It allows you to give something back to the profession by sharing your expertise and insight. And through exposure to younger generations and new ideas you will gain fresh professional perspectives and be challenged to think and see from outside your own career comfort zone.

What does it take to be a mentor?

Anyone can be a mentor, regardless of where they are in their career. There is no requirement to be at a specific level within an organisation, to have a specific number of years of experience or to be an expert in a specific area of practice. Instead, what makes a good mentor is a balance of interpersonal skills and the ability to apply them when required. The mentor's role is to provide support and guidance to the mentee by developing trust and confidence.

Generally, the qualities of a good mentor include:

- Good interpersonal and listening skills
- Trust
- Commitment
- The ability to give honest but constructive feedback
- Being able to provide challenge and support
- Understanding and empathy

Why mentoring matters – even when you are well established in your career

Mentoring can prove invaluable no matter which stage you are at in your career - it's not just for those looking to climb the ladder. Mentoring can help you relate to the younger generation and newer Members of the profession. It can offer access to people from different backgrounds with different perspectives therefore, as a more experienced Member or leader of an organisation, getting to know the next generation's perspective can really help to influence your own thinking and development. Mentoring can also offer an insight into how younger generations and professionals work, talk and communicate.

Considering getting involved?

One of the key ingredients to successful mentoring is managing expectations. A successful mentoring relationship will be driven by the mentee and supported by the mentor. Whatever the goal, the mentee should be proactive and motivated to pursue personal or professional development. The mentor's role is to support, guide and empower that process.

Before signing up to be a mentor, it's important to understand what you can offer. Consider any personal or professional experience you have that might be of benefit to a potential mentee, such as having changed your area of practice, applying for promotions, project management, returning to work after a period of absence or a move from full-time to part-time working. It's also important to reflect upon any mentoring you may have had yourself and your reasons for wanting to mentor.

Before seeking a mentor, it's important to consider what you really want to get out of the experience – what are your specific career goals and objectives? It's important to remember that a mentor is not simply the key to a new role or easy access to new contacts. The mentor is not there to solve your problems but instead, to assist you in solving your own problems.

The ICAS Career Mentoring Programme is being moved to a new, bespoke mentor-matching platform. Career Connections, which launches in early 2022, will help you to find the best mentor or mentee match according to your specific needs and enable you to easily connect with CAs who might not previously have been in your network. We're currently recruiting mentors therefore if you would like to become involved with us in this capacity, all you need to do is log in to [Career Connections](#), complete your onboarding and upload your mentor profile. Career Connections will open to mentees from April 2022. If you would like to learn more about mentoring or the process of becoming a mentee, please [register your interest](#) and we'll be back in touch to confirm the next steps as soon as the platform launches.

Disclaimer:

This help sheet is designed to assist members with an important issue of general application and is not intended to be a definitive statement covering all aspects of this area. No responsibility for any person acting or refraining to act as a result of any material in this help sheet can be accepted by ICAS.



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