



MENTORING
PROGRAMME
GUIDANCE
INTRODUCTION
AND OVERVIEW



Providing you with the information you need

RIBA 
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The RIBA has conducted research with the Construction Industry Council (CIC) that shows we need to find ways of supporting people working in construction to help our industry grow. Mentoring is a positive way of supporting both individuals and practices.

A mentoring programme can bring a number of benefits. A diverse and productive staff team will improve your bottom line. It will improve confidence and help develop staff, from students through to retirement. It can stimulate professional aspirations of people from different backgrounds and help address barriers to career progression. Mentoring programmes also help to strengthen personal, professional and business relationships which have a positive impact on the industry.

My personal message to you is: be confident and proactive about taking on the challenge of running your own mentoring programme. This guidance has been developed to support you through the process. I believe this will result in an empowered workforce. Working together to promote essential career support for staff when they need it will help to attract and retain talented people in our industry.



Jane Duncan

Jane Duncan
RIBA President

Introduction

The RIBA recognises the need to support architectural practices across the UK to develop Mentoring Programmes to help retain our diverse workforce. In 2014 while RIBA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion, Jane Duncan established the 'Breaking the Barriers to Women in Architecture' group who identified mentoring as one of the most important ways of supporting career progression. We hope that this new Mentoring Programme Guidance will encourage and help support more architectural practices and practitioners to take up the challenge of running or joining a programme.

The guidance brings together practical help in establishing a programme but with insights into existing successful programmes. Whether a practice or individual has been part of a programme in the past or is new to mentoring, this guidance outlines ways of establishing and delivering a programme.

Whether you chose the formal or informal route, the case studies, guidance, audio clips and speed mentoring toolkit provide an overview of the best way to establish, manage and monitor a mentoring programme.

We would encourage sole practitioners, small, medium and large practices to seek out the best fit for your business and to work together to change the way mentoring programmes are delivered for the benefit of the profession as a whole.



Listen to Beth and Michael talk about the role of the RIBA in mentoring.





Information

The Mentoring Programme information within this document has been designed to give you a brief overview of the benefits of setting up a mentoring programme.

The Mentor and Mentee Guidance includes useful information about the role of a mentor and mentee, and will help to answer any questions prospective candidates may have.



Audio Clips

Seven audio recordings of candid conversations between mentors and mentees from a range of practices and backgrounds reflect on the challenges and positive experiences in the mentoring relationship. The clips can be used to help you promote and encourage participation in your Mentoring Programme or just to provide more information about what is involved.



Case Studies

The case studies provide more in-depth examples representative of people's experiences from across the UK. We'll continue to publish case studies as the resource develops.



Guidance

The Mentoring Programme Guidance provides information for those planning to run a formal mentoring programme in practice. The step-by-step guidance provides practices with the practical information they need for setting up their own Mentoring Programme. Any practice can use elements of the guidance according to the resources available to them.



Appendices

The Mentoring Programme Guidance also includes a number of supporting documents as appendices. These include various *pro forma*, templates and checklists to ease the task of setting up a programme. Feel free to adapt and share these best-practice documents according to your own needs.

This information provides prospective architectural practices with a brief overview of the Mentoring Programme.

The RIBA Mentoring Hub which hosts this Mentoring Programme Guidance and other supporting documents is core to a new initiative to encourage more architectural practices to take up the challenge of providing employment support and development through the use of mentors.

Business benefits to your practice

Mentoring programmes play an important part in improving expertise and capacity within the profession. They help to build leadership qualities in both the mentors and mentees. Offering a Mentoring Programme can help to retain staff and improve return to work rates, as individuals feel supported in their career development.

Improved employee engagement can lead to better-motivated workforces who are more productive; this leads to improved business outcomes. Staff that are supported to develop their careers in this way are more likely to be satisfied with their employment situation and

will actively seek ways to improve their career progression. They are more likely to resolve challenges and set more ambitious objectives and goals for themselves.

Mentoring programmes also help employees with their CPD as they gain better communication, leadership and evaluation skills. Mentors should be encouraged to capture and use the informal learning they gain from volunteering for a programme towards their CPD. For more information please see the [‘Take Part and Use It’](#) section on the RIBA website.

Leadership and Mentoring Programme Champions

Good leadership and support from the partners and leaders in the practice are important aspects of any programme. Appointing a senior member of staff as a Mentoring Programme Champion for the programme will help to ensure that the programme remains focused and delivers not only the objectives of the programme but also the business objectives of the practice.

The Mentoring Programme Champion needs to be an individual who shares the vision for the programme, can bring people together, is respected by all employees and is a good communicator. These qualities will help to ensure buy-in from both management and the employees for the programme.

Successful and effective Mentoring Programmes

There are four steps to a successful and effective Mentoring Programme, all of which require management support and guidance to be truly effective:

- design and planning
- programme management and coordination
- delivery
- evaluation and closure

Time and resources

Mentoring programmes do not have to be time and resource heavy; a coordinated approach with a Mentoring Programme Champion will help to ensure quality in the delivery.

Who should benefit?

A good mentoring programme should be open to everyone and provide support and development across the board. When thinking about your target audience, consider people who may be **new to the profession**, have **experienced barriers to career progression**, or people who are **under-represented** in your management structure.

The important thing is to make sure the marketing of and selection process for any programme is inclusive and open to all staff across all levels.



Listen to Virginia and Beth talk about support and confidence-building nature of mentoring.

Delivering in partnership

There are many business benefits for all sizes of practice and for people at all stages of their career. Large architectural practices are in a position to offer smaller practices and sole practitioners access to a formal programme through the 80:20 initiative. Our aim is for larger firms to offer 20% of the mentoring/mentee places to local smaller firms, sole practitioners, and students to help increase the number of people able to access the programme.

Training facilities, programme co-ordination and evaluation can cause barriers and be prohibitive to smaller practices and individuals engaging in mentoring. Sharing these resources will extend benefits across the profession.

