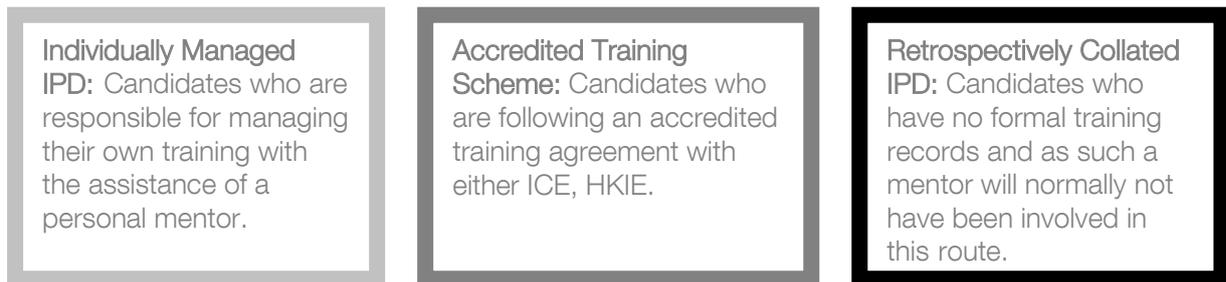


Mentoring – Candidate Guidance

Mentoring is a powerful personal development and empowerment tool. It is an effective way of helping people to progress in their careers and is becoming increasingly popular as its potential is realised. It is a partnership between two individuals and occurs when they enter into an agreement to spend time sharing questions, insights, knowledge, ideas, and experiences, for the development of the candidate (and in many instances, also the mentor).

The role of the mentor is to guide you towards becoming a competent professional, able to contribute to the company, the engineering profession and the community.

There are three routes candidates can follow through the IPD regulations:



Mentors are only required to be involved in assisting candidates progressing through the Individually Managed route; however they may choose to act as a mentor to any candidate regardless of the route they are applying through. Therefore you are able to have a mentor even if you are progressing through the Accredited Training Scheme or Retrospectively Collated Route.

Candidates following the Individually Managed IPD route take responsibility for their own professional development and should approach a mentor or mentors who will be able to guide them through the Institution's 12/13 core objectives. It is important to recognise that you may have a number of mentors if you so wish – some mentors may have the relevant experience in analysis and design, whilst another mentor may have detailed knowledge of law or health and safety.

The Institution has developed a Mentor Handbook offering guidance on mentoring for professional development (CEng, IEng, or EngTech).

A mentor should preferably be a member of the Institution of Structural Engineers (Technician member, Associate-Member, Chartered member or Fellow) or an individual of equivalent standing. However a willing work colleague can also have the attributes to be a mentor, even if he/she is not a member of the Institution.

A mentor should be someone who knows you well professionally (or can spend sufficient time to get to know you) in order to appreciate your strengths and weaknesses and help you achieve your goals in professional development. If you are unable to secure a mentor within your workplace a business contact or someone you know through local branch/division meetings can also suffice.

Benefits of having a mentor in the workplace:

- a chance to test ideas and strategies
- insight into the organisation's goals, structure and values
- assistance in defining personal career and other developmental objectives
- someone to talk to outside of the day-to-day work environment
- transfer of knowledge, skills and/or expertise
- personal growth and reflection
- guidance and assistance through the IPD process in preparation for the Professional Review Interview

Once you have secured a mentor it is important that you maintain your mentoring relationship and get the most out of it. After all, the mentor is working to help *you* in *your* development and career. *You* are responsible for managing the relationship and ensuring that you get the most benefit from it. Here are some practical tips to help you maintain an on-going relationship:

- Try to set a regular time for meetings and take control of maintaining regular contact.
- Prepare for your meetings beforehand so that you don't waste valuable time. It will definitely be beneficial to plan or structure the discussion before meeting or communicating. It is certainly a good idea to think ahead about the issues you will wish to cover. Some aspects should be led by you but don't forget that it is the mentor's role to help you explore new ideas and new possibilities.
- Don't make too many demands on your mentor's time. Try to give them notice if you need to cancel a meeting, and be reasonable about contacting them during their working day or personal time.
- Be willing to learn from the guidance that your mentor will provide. Be open to suggestions and try out their ideas. Tell your mentor if you acted on their advice, and what the outcome was.
- Providing feedback is essential for a successful relationship. It is important for your mentor to know that you are interested in developing your skills and making use of his/her knowledge. This, in turn, will encourage your mentor in his role and will help maintain a strong relationship.

During your relationship, you might even be able to give something back to your mentor. You might have valuable information that you can share, or you might provide some useful contacts and networking opportunities. This will all help to create a mutually beneficial relationship that will last for as long as you need it to.

Based on the sacrifices, i.e. time, being made by you and your mentor always arrive on time or contact your mentor at the time scheduled – don't be late. Also ensure that you prepare thoroughly before you make contact or meet. This will allow you to utilise the time with your mentor most effectively.

Prior to your first meeting with your mentor, list/indicate:

- your career and life achievements

- items to discuss with your mentor and your main objective(s)
- where you are on the path to achieving your objective(s)
- what you need to do to reach completion
- your expectations of your mentor and what he/she can do to help you

During your first meeting establish the following with your mentor:

- how often and where you will meet
- how much time you will spend on each meeting
- what to do if a meeting has to be cancelled or rescheduled
- what method of communication in between meetings will be acceptable

For subsequent meetings you will be required to:

- Review your progress since your last meeting by noting:
 - your current achievements and future targets
 - what you have learnt
 - successes
 - improvements
- Decide what you want to discuss further with your mentor.
- Decide what you want to get out of your next meeting – be clear about your objectives and how you would like to use the time effectively.
- The same as an appraisal, you should be doing most of the talking.

With careful thought and consideration to the above guidelines you should find your mentoring consultations to be extremely rewarding and beneficial for your future personal and professional development.