



## Mentoring Scheme Guidelines

Through the RMS alumnae mentoring scheme we want to create a supportive and valuable community of professionals so that alumnae can share its collective knowledge and experience.

The scheme has an informal structure to fit around the needs and aspirations of everyone involved. A mentor-mentee pair could involve an experienced professional supporting someone at an early stage of their career or a career-changer. Most importantly, we hope you enjoy it!

### Why Mentoring?

Mentoring is a well-established technique that helps individuals achieve their potential. Mentors provide their mentees with support, encouragement and a constructive example.

### What makes a successful mentoring relationship?

A successful mentoring relationship allows individuals to access a pool of experience that is larger, or at least different, from their own. It is a trusting relationship where mentees can discuss issues and concerns in confidence, benefitting from their mentor's advice and experience.

### Preparation

Some things to consider:

- What am I hoping to get out of this mentoring relationship?
- How much time am I prepared, and able, to give to this, will it be a one off meeting or a regular meeting?

What are the practicalities and who will take primary responsibility for:

- Deciding whether to meet regularly, how often and how long for
- Setting the agenda of each meeting
- Defining the goals of your mentoring relationship

Setting ground rules for the partnership:

- If meeting more than once, should you be in touch in between meetings or not?
- Get a better understanding of each other's background, experience and current situation.
- Discuss any previous mentoring that either of you has been involved with. Use this learning to work out what worked well and what didn't

To get you started you should probably agree and/or commit to the following:

- You may wish to meet just once, once a month or once every three months for a year, whatever is appropriate for you both
- Agree the preferred mode of contact if anything needs to be discussed between meetings

### Meeting up

As the meeting will be remote (for now at least), be sure to give your full attention to the meeting away from the distraction of phones, devices, family members or pets(!)

## **The following elements will encourage a helpful mentoring relationship:**

- Listen actively and show empathy
- Use different questioning techniques
- Give constructive feedback that can be acted upon
- Have the ability to suspend your judgment and prejudices
- Help to define the mentee's objectives
- Be willing to share your own work experiences, skills and networks
- Have the ability to discern when boundaries are being approached/crossed e.g. personal issues, departmental politics, conflict of interest regarding job applications etc.
- Make time for the meetings and any preparation beforehand
- Use the opportunity to develop yourself
- Confidentiality

## **The first meeting: setting goals and objectives**

As a mentor, you may wish to ask the following questions of your mentee during the first meeting so that you can plan how to progress, how you will track your success, and what steps you both need to take. This will be an ongoing process, as your goals and objectives are likely to evolve over a few conversations.

- What would you ideally like from this mentoring relationship?
- Is there something you would like to have achieved in six months' time which I might be able to help you with?
- What specific help from me would be most useful?

## **Example first session agenda**

### Introduction

- Mentor outlines her expectations of the session
- Mentor asks mentee her expectations of the session
- Agree agenda and clarify how long the meeting will last

### Getting to know each other

- What the mentee currently does in relation to work activities
- Explore education and career history and career aspirations
- Discuss motivation
- What does she want to get out of the mentoring relationship?

### Let mentee know about you

- Your current job and your career history
- What has motivated you? Have you always been clear about your chosen career path?

## **Next steps**

- Discuss the objectives of the mentoring relationship
- Decide what will be covered in the next session if agreeing to meet regularly
- Set a date and time for next meeting and how long the session will last
- Agree any pre-meeting work either of you needs to do
- Confidentiality, set an understanding that the discussions are confidential

## **Follow up**

We will use the experiences of this pilot to refine the mentoring programme in the years ahead, so if you have any comments, advice or ideas we would like to hear about it.

Please email your thoughts and comments to [development@rmsforgirls.com](mailto:development@rmsforgirls.com).