



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# Mentoring Guidelines

For Mentors and Mentees in the JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme

# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
What is Mentoring?.....	3
JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme .....	4
Objectives of the Programme .....	4
How Do I Become a Mentor/Mentee? .....	5
For Mentors .....	6
Why Should I Become a Mentor?.....	7
What is Expected of a Mentor?.....	7
Do's and Don'ts .....	7
Tips for Mentors.....	8
For Mentees .....	9
Why Should I Get a Mentor?.....	9
What is Expected of a Mentee?.....	9
Tips for Mentees.....	9
15 Questions to Ask.....	10
The Mentoring Process .....	11
First Encounters.....	11
Mentoring Sessions.....	12
At the End of the Mentoring Programme.....	13

# Introduction

## What is Mentoring?

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*“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”*

*-Steven Spielberg*

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Mentoring refers to the developmental partnership between someone with a specific skill set or is a subject matter expertise (the mentor) and someone who desires to learn skills or knowledge in that area (the mentee).

To be able to use mentoring as the strategic development tool that it is, it is useful to delineate what mentoring is and is not. Mentoring is a mutual learning-based relationship that takes place outside of formal reporting and supervision lines. A mentor is a trusted guide and advisor but can and should not assume the role of manager, mediator, or recruiter. Mentors do not conduct or provide input to performance reviews. The role of mentors is to help mentees find their own solutions and hold up a mirror for the mentee while sharing their own story and experience.

Mentoring should be:

- ✓ *Confidential:* The mentoring relationship is - discretion and confidentiality are expected from you. Mentors should never reveal to anybody else what is being discussed between them and a mentee, unless the mentee has consented to this. Mentors should also be careful not to undermine line management at the duty station.
- ✓ *Mentee driven:* The mentoring relationship is fundamentally driven by the mentee, who is expected to take the initiative and shape the partnership according to her or his learning needs. The mentoring relationship will only be successful if the mentee sets aside time and energy to define his/her own needs, is open to feedback and willing to reflect and find his/her own solutions.
- ✓ *Mutual respect:* Successful mentoring is a dynamic process whereby each mentor-mentee pair learns to respect and trust the other's commitment and expertise, while embracing individual choice and style.



## JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme

The JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme is to support JPOs/SARCs/SDPs with their assignments and contribute to a meaningful learning experience that will empower JPOs to make decisions and take action in their assignment and on their career choices.

The programme is in alignment with UNDP's priorities and initiatives in the area of Career Development. It will be a framework, giving a lot of freedom to mentors and mentees on how they want to approach their mentoring relationship.

The mentors participating in the programme are current UNDP staff members who are former JPOs or SARCs. All mentors participate on a voluntary basis.

It is a 6-month long programme. You may of course continue with the mentoring relationship beyond the initial 6 months if there is an interest and need. However, should you, for various reasons, decide to put an end to the mentoring relationship beforehand, you are free to do so as well.

## Objectives of the Programme

The JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme was established to further strengthen the learning element that has always been an intrinsic part of the JPO Programme. The intention is that the Career Mentoring Programme will give the mentee an opportunity to draw on the experience of a former JPO or SARC with more years of experience in the UN system. Hence, in our definition, a mentoring relationship is a relationship between two partners where one introduces to and shares with the other organizational, personal and professional insights related to a job.

From an organizational perspective, the objective of the Career Mentoring Programme is to further support the career development of JPOs in a challenging and at times difficult (work) environment and hence to increase the positive experience of the JPOs/SARCs/SDPs.

It is the intention that the mentoring will cover a variety of issues:

Careers	Other Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offering career development advice</li><li>• Developing a clearer understanding of potential career paths available</li><li>• What do I do after my JPO assignment?</li><li>• Finding future employment in the UN system and elsewhere</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share knowledge on a particular topic/work area, or to assist with any challenge that surfaces during their assignment</li><li>• Work-life balance</li><li>• Supervisory issues</li><li>• Sharing personal experiences</li></ul>

## How Do I Become a Mentor/Mentee?

In order to facilitate the management of the JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme, including the matching of mentors with mentees, the JPO Service Centre has designed a [Mentoring Platform](#).

Both mentors and mentees need to fill in a [User Profile](#) on the Mentoring Platform. It will only take a few minutes since most of your personal information is automatically uploaded from Atlas. When setting up your profile it is important that you enroll yourself as a mentor or a mentee in the JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme.

The screenshot shows the 'Mentoring' section of the UNDP Intranet. The user profile for Pierre Alain NOEL is displayed, including personal information, contact details, work and education, and practice area. The profile is currently active.

Section	Details
<b>Personal Information</b>	First Name: Pierre Alain Last Name: NOEL Gender: Male Nationality: France
<b>Contact Information</b>	Mobile Phone: 0019292382603 Work Phone: Home Phone: Email: pierre.noel@undp.org Skype Name:
<b>Work &amp; Education</b>	Functional Title: Learning Resource Analyst Business Title: UN Experience: In UN since 2010 - Currently with UNDP Grade: P2 Contract Status: Active Organization: BOM/OHR/SAS/JPO Service Centre Duty Station: New York, United States
<b>Other Personal Information</b>	Language(s): Click 'Edit Profile' to add languages Career history and other relevant information: Please click edit to add comments

To access the platform you may click on the following link: <http://sas.undp.org/internal/mentor/> You will need your UNDP or UN Women email address and intranet password to access it. Should you encounter problems at any of these steps, please do not hesitate to contact the Mentoring Team. In case of a technical problem, we would like to ask you to provide a screenshot, which makes it a lot easier to find a solution.

## To Become a Mentee

Within the platform, you may follow these steps:

1. **Fill in a user profile** by going to the “My User Profile” section and clicking on “Edit Profile” at the top right corner. Please establish very clearly your personal objective in your profile so that mentors would understand what your needs and expectations are when you ask them to become your mentor.

2. **Enroll as a mentee in the JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme.**

3. **Search for the mentor of your choice at “Mentee sign up” based on criteria:**
  - a. Duty station
  - b. Gender
  - c. Practice area
  - d. Unit

The screenshot shows the 'Search for a Mentor - UNDP JPO Mentoring programme' interface. It includes search criteria filters and a table of potential mentors.

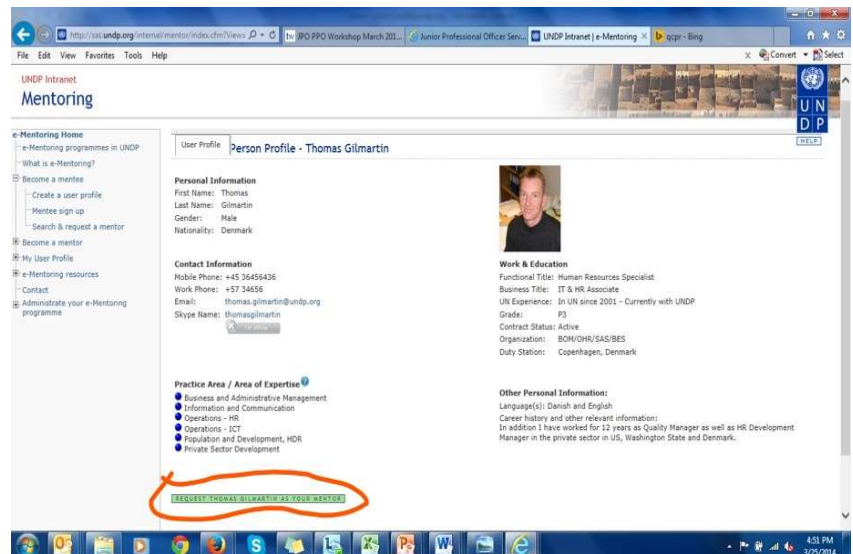
Mentor	Title	Nationality	Language	Focus area	Duty Station	Entry UN System	Current Agency	Profile
Thomas Gimartin	Human Resources Specialist	Denmark	Danish and English	Onboarding and Career Development	Copenhagen, Denmark	22/10/2001	UNDP	View Profile - Request as a mentor
Giuseppe Bellini	Representative	Italy			Amman, Jordan	01/11/2005	UNIFEM	View Profile - Request as a mentor
Tajja KONTINEN-SIARU	Programme Specialist	Finland	English, Finnish, basic French		New York, United States	20/04/2007	UNDP	View Profile - Request as a mentor
Michael SCHMIDT	Strategic Planning Specialist	Denmark	English, German, Danish and some French		Amman, Jordan	09/02/2012	UNDP	View Profile - Request as a mentor
Alfonso BUIKENS AZCONGA	Procurement Specialist	Spain			Copenhagen, Denmark	01/01/2009	UNDP	View Profile - Request as a mentor
Hari HUSEBY	Special Asst. to Res Coord	Norway	Norwegian, Spanish, English		Amman, Jordan	21/05/2007	UNDP	View Profile - Request as a mentor
Anne Nylin	Programme Advisor	Sweden	Swedish, English, French		New York, United States	24/03/2002	UNIFEM	View Profile - Request as a mentor

#### 4. Connect with your mentor.

a. Once you have identified a mentor on the platform, you will need to click on “Request as a mentor”, still in the “Search for a mentor” section.

b. You will be taken to that person’s profile and, at the bottom, you will find a button called “Request Xxxx as your mentor”.

i. A standard email will be generated. You may edit the email as necessary and send it.



5. The mentor will then have to decide whether to accept or decline your request. And you will get notifications via email.

Unless otherwise agreed, it is expected that you as **the mentee will take the next step**, i.e. get in contact with your mentor and agree how to proceed from here.

#### To Become a Mentor

1. **Fill in a user profile** by going to the “My User Profile” section and clicking on “Edit Profile” at the top right corner. You will notice that some of your information is already there, as UN staff member.
2. **Enroll as a mentor in the JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme**
3. It is the mentee who takes contact to mentors on the platform. You will then have to decide whether to **accept or decline the mentee’s request** to enter into a mentoring relationship. To accept it, you will have to click on the link included in the mentees email.

Please note that signing up as a mentor does not guarantee that you will be needed as a mentor right away.

## For Mentors

### Why Should I Become a Mentor?

As a mentor, you are expected to set aside part of your time and resources for your mentee, and while it is the needs of the mentee that will be the focus of the mentoring relationship, there is substantial value and rewards to be gained by the participating mentors as well.

Apart from being a role model and experiencing the joy of helping a younger colleague, as a JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme mentor you can also expect to gain the following:

- To gain new perspectives and a broader knowledge of the organization
- To be stimulated with new ideas in career management
- To develop better management competencies
- To become a better communicator

### What is Expected of a Mentor?

The most important role for the mentor is to **guide** the mentee and to **assist the mentee in finding own solutions** to their **career problems**. A general principle in good mentoring is that you should not make decisions on behalf of the mentee – even if the mentee should ask for it.

The way that you can help a mentee to find a solution to a given situation is by creating a reflective space. This can be done through listening, offering restrained advice and guidance and through asking questions. A mentor is also a **role model** and can give the mentee an external view on his/her career, put things in a context and **provide new perspectives**.

It is a pitfall, however, for a mentor to relate everything to his or her own experiences and to wish to set an own agenda for the mentee. A mentor is a resource person in the mentee's development and it goes without saying that the mentoring relationship should evolve around the mentee's needs rather than the needs of the mentor.



### Do's and Don'ts

Although the responsibility for maintaining contact lies primarily with the mentee, it is a good idea for you to sustain the contact if the mentee fails to do so.

Due to cultural differences and the sensitive nature of a mentoring relationship, misunderstandings can easily occur. If a mentoring relationship seems to be in a shaky period, it is recommendable to discuss regularly how the evolving process is perceived and whether both parties are satisfied and if anything could be improved.

DOs	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a sounding-board</li> <li>• Listen and be patient</li> <li>• Show empathy</li> <li>• Create an open space that will enable the mentee to approach you</li> <li>• Demonstrate confidentiality and respect</li> <li>• Be open and honest</li> <li>• Be constructively confrontational</li> <li>• Help your mentee with access to resources and support</li> <li>• Be aware of expectations and limitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide answers</li> <li>• Be judgmental</li> <li>• Be domination – keep yourself at the background</li> <li>• Except to know everything or to have a solution to everything</li> <li>• Ignore your own need for help</li> <li>• Give up – hang in there, even if the relationship is shaky for a period</li> <li>• Do not take the lead and tell the mentee what to do</li> </ul>

If the mentee has issues in an area where you do not have any particular expertise, **cross-mentoring** is strongly encouraged, where you refer your mentee to other resource people with knowledge and skills relevant to the mentee's needs. In order to facilitate cross-mentoring, you may want to look at the list of JPO mentors on the Mentoring Platform. You may also want to refer to resource people not participating in the Mentoring Programme.

### Tips for Mentors

- 📌 **Career planning**- help your mentee to set long term goals and strategically plan out the next steps to reach their career objectives. Carefully read through the Mentoring Process chapter which involves detailed information about how to have effective career conversations
- 📌 **Relationship is key**- Don't let mentoring fall into a check box. Be authentic and relationship-based in your approach. Propel passed formal roles and titles and find common ground as people. Be curious about your mentee: their interests, passions, and experiences.
- 📌 **Encouragement**- You can serve as the professional cheerleader for mentee's career. Encourage your mentee to reach the finish line and to keep pursuing his or her goals.
- 📌 **Shout loudly with your optimism, and keep quiet with your cynicism**- If a mentee comes to you with an idea that seems unrealistic to you, think positively first before discarding the idea - also called [the 24 x 3 rule for optimism](#). If possible, spent 24 seconds, 24 minutes, or a day thinking about the reasons that an idea is good before criticizing it.
- 📌 **Be patient and kind**- At the initial stages, your mentee may appear to be hesitant or unresponsive. This attitude is often simply a manifestation of his/her insecurity about the relationship. The mentee's attitude will gradually take a positive turn as s/he realizes your sincerity about supporting him/her. *Be patient!* Don't try to speed up the process.

## For Mentees

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*“Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.”*

*-John C. Crosby*

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### Why Should I Get a Mentor?

The JPOSC Career Mentoring Programme is intended to support JPOs/SARCs/SDPs with their assignments and contribute to a meaningful learning experience that will empower them to make decisions and take action in their assignment and on their career choices. It will assist mentees in taking a proactive approach to their careers. Mentorship can help to develop expertise, enhance performance and facilitate professional growth.

### What is Expected of a Mentee?

A mentoring relationship is first and foremost the responsibility of the mentee in the sense that the mentee is the main beneficiary, and it is the responsibility of the mentee to gain what is intended from the mentoring relationship. To put it in popular terms, the mentee owns the problem and the solution. Hence, a good mentoring process depends on whether the mentee is sufficiently aware of what he or she wants to work on at the personal level in relation to the job and his or her capability of formulating needs and expectations.

As the Career Mentoring Programme revolves around the needs of the mentees, it will only be successful if you **set aside time and energy to define your own career needs, be open to feedback and be willing to reflect and find your own solutions**. If these conditions are met, the potential benefits are tremendous in terms of personal and professional development, improved self-confidence, better understanding of how the system works, etc. according to the defined needs.

### Tips for Mentees

- ✚ **Take ownership-** You, as a mentee, are responsible for the relationship and for your own professional growth and development. Set clear objectives and expectations, take an active role in getting there and make an effort regarding the relationship.
- ✚ **Be curious-** Asking questions is your opportunity to learn as much as you can from your mentor. Be prepared for your first meeting by arriving with a series of open-ended questions that will help stimulate your discussion and enable you to learn as much as you can about your mentor's profession or field of work.
- ✚ **Listen-** Listen actively, make the most of feedback and take advantage of the mentor's expertise and experience. As your mentor could have a different approach to the issues you are discussing, you may first feel that he or she are not answering your questions in the exact way you expected. This is normal, especially at the beginning of the relationship, and we therefore recommend you to listen carefully as their input can help you manage your situation.

- ✚ **Write-** It is helpful to keep a learning journal throughout the mentoring process as this can help ensure continuity from one meeting to the next. A written account of what has been discussed can be very useful for you to look back in and reflect on at later stages.

## 15 Questions Mentees Can Ask Their Mentors to Make the Most of the Relationship

The following questions can be used over time or repeatedly. There is no need to use them all at once.

1. *What would you do if you were me?*  
Don't waste your time looking to impress your mentor with how smart you are. Tell them about your specific career interests, and ask for their recommendations.
2. *Is this where you thought you would end up?*  
Few people tend to go straight point A to point B. Most experienced professionals take the scenic route in their career. How they got there is usually an interesting tale with mistakes and revelations. Learn from them. See what are the opportunities after your JPO assignment.
3. *What suggestions do you have if I want to find another position in the UN system after the JPO assignment?*
4. *What used to be your biggest weaknesses?*  
A good answer reveals the number one trait of a great mentor — self-awareness.
5. *What are you most proud of?*
6. *What do you do to live a balanced life?*
7. *What do you wish you knew at my stage?*  
It could be eye-opening to hear about the experiences the mentor had and the recommendations they make so that you don't make the same mistakes.
8. *What are the toughest problems and decisions with which you must cope?*
9. *What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?*
10. *What would you recommend to someone looking to gain insight into becoming a better leader?*
11. *What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?*
12. *What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?*
13. *What is one mistake you witness leaders making frequently?*
14. *What are the best daily habits to develop and commit to?*
15. *Who else would you recommend I connect with?*  
This question might be better suited for later meetings when there is more trust. It can exponentially expand your network.

## The Mentoring Process



### First Encounters

The first contact is made at the **mentee's initiative**. In order to facilitate the first encounter(s), it might be a good idea to follow some of the points mentioned in the **Checklist for first encounters** below. The mentor and mentee should establish together which mode(s) they prefer to use to keep in contact (video call/Skype, phone, e-mail or in-person). It can be a good idea at the beginning to spend time to get to know the counterpart. For this purpose, you may wish to start talking on issues not necessarily related to work.

One very important step to ensuring the success of a mentoring process is to **clarify expectations** from the outset. It is of primary importance to clarify the expectations of the mentee, who is at the core of the mentoring process, but it is also important to clarify the expectations of the mentors. Furthermore, needs may change over time, and therefore it may be useful to revisit the issue regularly throughout the process.

#### Checklist for first encounters

- How do we meet (video-call/Skype, telephone, e-mail, in person)?
- What is the expected duration of the meeting?
- What would we like to know about each other?
  - Socially (education, job history, personal life/interest)
  - Skills and qualities, strengths and weaknesses (How does the organization view them?)
  - Career development goals (What would be good to improve in relation to present and future jobs within and outside the UN?)
- What will make this mentoring relationship satisfactory and useful to both parties?
- Which expectations do we have of each other (values, rules)?
- Should we have an agenda for the next encounter?
- When, by what means and how often to have contact?
- When an email/voice mail is received, how fast should we get back to our partner (within 24 hours, 1-2 days, 3 days, other)?
- If we can't make an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?

It will take some effort in most cases to build a relationship of trust and openness. When people do not meet in person, feelings cannot be decoded and facial expressions cannot be read. This of course hampers communication. If possible, we encourage mentors and mentees to arrange for at least one face-to-face meeting - preferably relatively early on in the mentoring process.

## Mentoring Sessions

In order to achieve the greatest benefit, it is important that **you are clear on what you wish to obtain** from the mentoring relationship, and also, that you are realistic about what a mentor can do for you. You should also be careful as to how you spend your mentor's time.

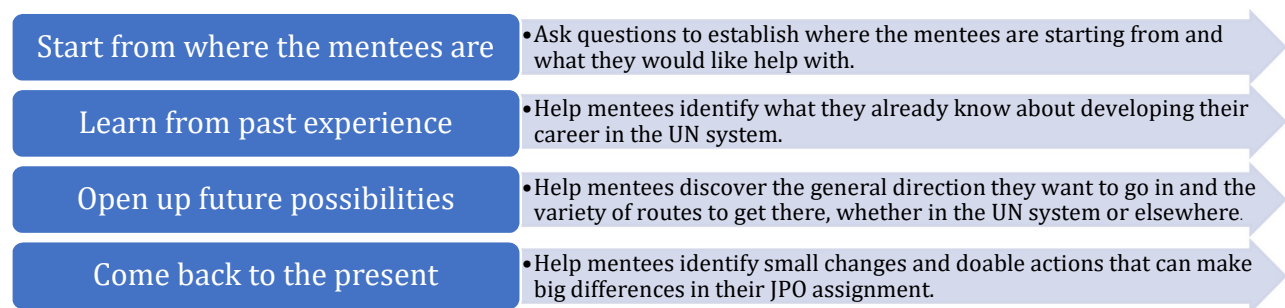
Once the first encounter has taken place, you should have a clearer idea about what you can expect and what your mentor expects from you. It is a good idea to **check regularly that you have a similar understanding of how things should proceed.**

It might be helpful to some to keep a **log book or diary** of the mentoring process as this can help ensure continuity from one meeting to the next. Furthermore, a written account of what has been discussed can be very useful for you to look back in and reflect on at later stages.

Finally, it is recommendable at the end of each encounter to arrange for an approximate time for the next encounter, as well as what to discuss. Below is some information about **having effective Career Conversation sessions during your mentorship.**

### Career Conversations

Career Conversation Model



The mentors could

- share educational and professional background and their current role at UNDP
- focus on who the mentees are, what they want and why
- help the mentees reflect on their experience, skills, and values
- enable the mentees to gain clarity of direction and ambitions
- encourage them to commit to doable actions which will help them make progress

Examples of key questions to ask the mentees:

- What's your goal for your time with UNDP?
- What do you enjoy most at work?
- What skills do you like to use?
- What does success look like to you?
- What would you like to focus on in your next job after your JPO assignment? Are your current actions and thinking leading you in that direction?
- What would you like to do that you can't do now?

The mentees could

- develop self-awareness, reflect on their skills and performance
- think about the feedback they've received from others in the organization
- develop an understanding of how things are done in the UN system
- evaluate different career opportunities, look at the pros and cons

Examples of key questions to ask the mentors:

- What useful experiences/skills have helped you get where you are today?
- What career opportunities do I have after my JPO assignment?
- What career development strategies can I use to make progress?
- What actions can I take?

Additional resources on having effective career conversations

- eBook: [It's Good to Talk! A Practical Guide to Career Conversations in the Workplace](#)
- Career Conversation [Toolkit](#)

### At the End of the Mentoring Programme

Finally, once your mentoring partnership is formally completed, we strongly suggest you to reflect on your six-month experience and revisit the goals when you first joined the programme.

We hope that the mentees will come away from the training with a clearer understanding of potential career paths available after the JPO assignment and how to find future employment in the UN system or elsewhere. We also encourage mentors to use this experience to mentor others and practice your leadership skills.

Online Resources:

- (1) [Why Mentoring Matters \(Video\) - Lynda.com](#)
- (2) [Best Mentoring Practices - University of Albany](#)
- (3) [10 Ways to be a Good Mentor](#)