

Evaluating Mentoring

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Measurement and Review in Mentoring

One of the paradoxes of formal mentoring programmes is that the essence of the relationship is its *informality* – the ability to discuss in private a wide range of issues that will help the mentee cope with and learn from issues s/he encounters, putting aside any power or status differences that might operate outside the relationship. So the idea of measurement and review is, on the face of it, to some extent at odds with the need to retain a high degree of informality and *ad hoc* responsiveness. In practice, a certain amount of measurement provides the foundation, on which the informal relationship can grow most healthily. It allows:

- Scheme co-ordinators to recognise where additional support is needed and to improve the operation of the scheme – not least the training
- Mentors and mentees to work together to build the relationship, understanding more clearly what each can and does bring to the discussions

Where attempts to measure mentoring become unacceptable, they usually involve:

- An attempt to assess and report upon mentees' performance to a third party
- A link between the mentor's opinion and a specific reward for the mentee (a promotion or a diploma, for example) – here the role has become more that of a tutor
- Disclosure of the content of discussions

In such circumstances, measurement is likely to make the mentee – and sometimes the mentor – less open, less willing to admit weaknesses and less trusting; hence limiting the potential of the relationship to deliver high quantity and quality of learning.

By contrast, effective measurement in mentoring is:

- Relatively unobtrusive
- Valued by all parties as helpful
- Timely
- Straightforward and easy to apply

The Measurement Matrix

Mentoring measurements fall into four categories, illustrated in the matrix below.

1. *Relationship Processes* – what happens in the relationship. For example: how often does the pair meet? Have they developed sufficient trust? Is there a clear sense of direction to the relationship? Does the mentor or the mentee have concerns about their own or the other person's contribution to the relationship?

2. *Programme Processes* – for example, how many people attended training? How effective was the training? In some cases, programme processes will also include data derived from adding together measurements from individual relationships, to gain a broad picture of what is going well and less well.
3. *Relationship Outcomes* – have mentor and mentee met the goals they set? (Some adjustment may be needed for legitimate changes in goals as circumstances evolve.)
4. *Programme Outcomes* – have we, for example, increased retention of key staff, or raised the competence of the mentees in critical areas?

	Start	Middle	End
Scheme Outputs	Have all mentees acquired a mentor? Have they met?	Frequency of meetings	Retention (in the company) Successful promotions Measured increase in competence Achievement of diploma/ certificate
Scheme Processes	Major concerns by participants (e.g. confidentiality)	Major difficulties encountered (e.g. time pressures, skills gaps, cancelled meetings) Do the mentors/mentees feel supported?	Are mentors willing to continue with a new mentee?
Relationship Outputs	Has mentee's selected mentor /mentor been appointed?	Have they set clear (learning) goals? Are there clear expectations on both sides?	Has the mentee achieved the desired improvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competence • confidence • clarity of career direction Has the mentee progressed in his/her career? Has the mentor learned from the relationship?
Relationship Processes	Have they met? Mentor/mentee's confidence in being able to take part Have they established trust?	Frequency of meetings Who is managing the relationship? Are they preparing sufficiently for meetings? Is mentor's behaviour appropriate? (skill gaps) Is mentee's behaviour appropriate? (skill gaps) Level of rapport? Level of commitment?	Has the relationship come to a formal conclusion? Are both parties happy about that? Would the mentee eventually like to become a mentor?