

RTS Mentoring Guidelines

Mentoring is a partnership where a more experienced mentor shares their knowledge and expertise with a less experienced mentee. Mentoring is designed to be a safe space where the mentee should feel encouraged, challenged, supported and informed. The mutual goal is to empower the mentee by developing their abilities.

Whilst mentoring focuses on the mentee, there are lots of benefits for mentors too including developing your communication, leadership and coaching skills, increasing your network, enhancing your CV, giving back to the industry and learning from the ideas/experiences of others.

What is mentoring in this context?

In this context, mentoring is a supportive relationship between an industry professional and a second or third-year undergraduate seeking to work in a similar role after they graduate. We would hope that the mentor would be able to support the mentee by providing helpful comments on the quality of work produced, helping the student to develop their CV and portfolio and if appropriate, helping them to approach potential future employers.

Every mentoring relationship will be different; but all mentoring relationships present the opportunity to learn from each other. The relationship is not intended to provide counselling for mentees or long-term support.

What are the Expectations of a Mentor?

It is important at the outset to be clear about the time commitment you can make, and how and when mentoring support will be available. We would expect mentors and mentees to agree objectives for the mentoring relationship, the time period over which this will happen, and the support the mentor is able to provide, during the first meeting. A mentoring set up form which you can complete during your first meeting is included at the end of these guidelines if helpful.

We suggest that the mentoring relationship formally ends a year from its commencement date, or earlier if, by mutual agreement, it has achieved its purpose before that date. We suggest one contact every 6 – 8 weeks, either by phone, Zoom or face to face. Meetings generally last between 45 minutes to 1 hour. After the yearlong mentorship period, you may decide to continue or to stay in touch in a less formal way.

What are the Expectations of a Mentee?

It is very important to recognise that this support is provided voluntarily in addition to a 'day job', and to value the time provided by the mentor. You are expected to be proactive in this relationship, remembering to set up and keep appointments, responding promptly and keeping requests for support to the agreed time available are all very important. It is also important to think about the sort of help that would be most valuable, and when you would most appreciate input – we recommend planning a couple of discussion points in advance of each meeting, and do feel free to send your mentor a link to your work or showreel if you feel this would be helpful. It is your responsibility to keep your mentor informed about your progress and to ensure contact is maintained. We have included a mentoring log format the end of this guidance as well as a mentoring set up form if you would find it helpful to structure your meetings.

Person Spec for Mentors

An industry mentor should:

- Provide an outside industry-led perspective
- Be a sounding board for ideas
- Facilitate decision-making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience
- Provide support and encouragement
- Help to action plan

Key attributes and skills:

- Thorough understanding of the specified area of work
- An interest in and desire to help talented people from diverse backgrounds gain access to roles in the industry
- Listening and questioning skills
- Providing honest and constructive feedback
- Supporting the young person to develop action plans as appropriate

Feedback and keeping in touch with RTS

We will check in with both parties from time to time to gauge how the mentorship is going. However, please do get in touch with Emma at any point if you have any feedback, questions or concerns. We will contact both parties to request written feedback at the end of each academic year – mentees will feedback as part of their annual report. We will use this feedback to help us to develop successful future mentoring relationships.

What if it doesn't work out?

Most problems arise through lack of communication – students may be wary of 'bothering' someone they regard as at the top of their profession. Mentors are invariably busy people. They will sometimes miss emails or take time to respond and will not have time to chase students. It is important that the mentee recognises that it is their responsibility to keep their mentor updated as to their progress and takes responsibility for maintaining contact – it is after all the mentor who is doing you the favour, so you do need to put the work in!

Should either the mentor or the mentee feel that the mentoring relationship is not going well, please contact Emma Nicholson at the RTS – enicholson@rts.org.uk and we will explore appropriate ways to resolve any problems. If you are having difficulty reaching your mentor or mentee, feel free to chase once or twice within a reasonable timeframe and then please contact Emma – RTS is much more likely to be able to help as and when you are having issues, as opposed to months down the line.

Both mentor and mentee should be open and truthful about the relationship itself, and review from time to time how it might be made more effective. Both the mentor and mentee are volunteers; either party may end the relationship if they feel it is not working for them. We would recommend consulting RTS in the first instance if you are having reservations about your mentorship. Don't let the relationship just fizzle out.

A Professional Relationship

We do not expect there to be any inappropriate behaviour, but it is always sensible when meeting someone for the first time to take some simple precautions. We recommend you take note of the information and recommendations below about safeguarding. We also recommend you read and take note of the RTS Code of conduct below. If you have any issues with regard to safeguarding or believe there has been a breach of the RTS code of conduct, please contact Emma in the first instance. Matters discussed in these industry meetings are confidential and both parties should honour this. However, please note that confidentiality can be broken in order to follow safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding

Meetings must take place in a suitable environment – a shared meeting venue, office space, etc. Coffee shops and public meeting areas are suitable place to hold mentoring meetings. **Never have a mentoring meeting at a home address of either Mentor or Mentee or somewhere either of you feel vulnerable or uneasy.**

We appreciate that you may create your own network and develop contacts through individuals you meet during your time on the Bursary Programme, and that this is an understood and organic element of the business we operate in. This might include taking business meetings, attending external events, or exchanging contact information to engage in communication outside of RTS and our programmes. Please be aware that our ability to enforce RTS policies and complaint procedures is limited to events and activities arranged and overseen by RTS.

RTS Code of Conduct

All RTS staff, volunteers, bursary recipients, mentors, event attendees and members are expected to act in a considerate manner at all times and follow these guidelines to ensure a positive experience and respectful environment at all meetings and events.

The Royal Television Society will not tolerate any disrespectful behaviour that could bring the Society into disrepute, including, but not limited to:

- The use of abusive language related to religious beliefs, race, ethnicity, physical appearance, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender, gender identity and expression
- The use of offensive or sexualised materials, images or content on social media or within the venue of the event
- Stalking or aggressive and harmful behaviour towards event attendees, speakers and RTS staff
- Photography of an inappropriate nature
- Unwelcome sexual attention or physical contact that is inappropriate


Accessibility

If you have any access needs (e.g. regular breaks, note taking, interpreter, remote meetings only) please communicate these directly with your mentor if you feel comfortable doing so, so they can best support and communicate with you. Please let Emma know if you would prefer RTS to do this on your behalf.

Travel for in person meetings

RTS will cover standard class UK travel for up to two in person meetings across the yearlong mentorship period (the mentorship period starts from the day you are matched.) We would recommend that all other meetings either take place virtually, are personally funded, or for the mentee, funded through the main bursary RTS provides. Please email Emma to ask for an expenses form, and ensure you retain any relevant receipts as proof of travel to enable us to reimburse you. Please note RTS can only cover travel, not accommodation. These funds need to be used responsibly – we won't be able to cover travel for meetings that are cancelled or rescheduled, except in exceptional circumstances.

Mentoring Set Up Form – First Meeting

 <p>ROYAL TELEVISION SOCIETY</p>		
Mentee:	Mentor:	
Meeting Date:	Location:	Next Meeting Date:
<p>Mentees Objectives:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we will work together: • Frequency of meetings and platform used (Zoom, phone calls etc.): • Who to set up: • Contact between meetings: • Preparation for meetings: • Duration of mentoring relationship – initial commitment: 	
<p>Actions for next meeting:</p>		

Mentoring Log – Ongoing use

Mentee:	Mentor:	
Meeting Date:	Location:	Next Meeting Date:
Review of Agreed Actions from Previous Meeting:		
Goals/Focus of this session:		
Mentor's suggestions and advice:		
Summary of Agreed Actions/Outcomes:		