

## ***The International Standards for Mentoring Programmes in Employment (ISMPE)***

These standards have been generated to fill a gap in the evaluation of mentoring programmes, with particular emphasis on programmes in adult employment and development. Six Core Standards have been identified, as follows:

- 1. Clarity of purpose**
- 2. Stakeholder training and briefing**
- 3. Processes for selection and matching**
- 4. Processes for measurement and review**
- 5. Maintains high standards of ethics**
- 6. Administration and support**

## 1. CLARITY OF PURPOSE

- The intended outcomes and benefits of the programme are clearly defined and understood by all the stakeholder audiences
- The outcomes are translated into viable and well understood objectives for each mentoring relationship

### Performance criteria:

1.1. There is a published and readily available statement of programme purpose
1.2. There is a published and readily available statement of values. Mentoring is clearly defined and terms of reference are understood by all participants.
1.3. Stakeholders are engaged in discussion about the meaning and implication of the programme purpose and values; and have an opportunity to influence these
1.4. Where appropriate, the programme purpose is linked clearly to the overall objectives of the organisation, under whose auspices the programme takes place, and/ or achieving change in the organisation
1.5. Each mentoring pair is encouraged to establish learning and/ or other goals from the relationship; their goals may extend beyond organisational goals, there is a process to monitor whether this has been done
1.6. Both mentors and mentees have clear and complimentary expectations from the programme and from their relationship
1.7. The target audience(s) for the programme is clearly defined
1.8. There is a process to test both programme and where appropriate individual goals against reality
1.9. Participants understand clearly why mentoring is an appropriate process for achieving the programme and relationship purposes

## 2. STAKEHOLDER TRAINING AND BRIEFING

- Participants and stakeholders understand the concept of mentoring and their respective roles
- Participants are aware of the skills and behaviours they need to apply in their roles as mentors and mentees; and have an opportunity to identify skills gaps
- Learning support is available throughout the first 12 months of their involvement in the programme

### Performance criteria:

2.1. Participation in a process to learn the basics of mentoring is a non-negotiable condition of taking part in the mentoring programme, for both mentors and mentees
2.2. There is a clear and well-founded conceptual framework to explain mentoring functions and behaviours
2.3. Participants obtain a clear distinction between mentoring and other forms of help and learning (eg coaching, counselling, tutoring)
2.4. There is a clear and well-founded framework of competencies for mentors and mentees, upon which the training is based
2.5. There are opportunities to reflect on personal experience and to build self-awareness
2.6. Appropriate diagnostic instruments are applied to build understand of self and each other
2.7. The training deals in depth with issues of confidentiality and ethicality
2.8. The training deals in depth with issues of relationship management
2.9. There is opportunity to practise the skills of being an effective mentor/mentee and/or evidence of prior competence in the role
2.10 Other stakeholders (such as line managers, teachers, parents) are informed about the programme, are aware of how it can benefit them, and have an opportunity to discuss how they can provide appropriate support
2.11. The training design is appropriate for the cultural environment, in which the programme takes place
2.12. Time is allocated to the initial training process, to allow participants to begin the relationship with confidence and an awareness of the behaviours required of them
2.13. Training and/ or learning extends beyond the initial awareness raising event; mentors in particular have opportunity to reflect upon and discuss learning as they experience the relationship
2.14. Trainers a) have prior experience as or exposure to the role of mentors/ mentees in their own right b) have a knowledge of mentoring beyond the

immediate requirements of the training workshops and c) have a wider knowledge of developmental dynamics

2.15. There is a process to counsel would-be mentors, who demonstrate a lack of core skills/ behaviours during training

2.16. Participants and stakeholders are able to influence the conduct and content of future training/ briefings

2.17. The quality of training is assessed at the point of delivery and changes made to future training programmes as appropriate.

### 3. PROCESSES FOR SELECTION AND MATCHING

- Mentors are selected to meet the specific needs of mentees
- Both mentors and mentees have an influence on whether they participate and who they agree to pair with
- The experience gap permits significant learning by the mentee
- There is a process for recognising and unwinding matches that do not work; and for reassigning the participants, if they wish

#### Performance criteria:

3.1. There are clear criteria for participation and/or selection of mentors and mentees
3.2. Participation is voluntary, even where the programme is targeted at specific groups
3.3. There is a consistent process for identifying mentees' needs and comparing these to mentor characteristics
3.4. Participants have a say in who they are matched with wherever possible
3.5. Mentors and mentees are aware of the "no-fault divorce" arrangements available to them
3.6. The success of matching processes is reviewed regularly to enable repairing or additional support where necessary
3.7. People, who have requested to be mentors/ mentees, but are not selected, receive appropriate feedback
3.8. The experience gap permits significant learning by the mentee (NB this does not necessarily imply a status differential – peer mentors may have equal, but dissimilar experiences and therefore a high experience gap)

#### 4. EFFECTIVE PROCESSES FOR MEASUREMENT AND REVIEW

The programme is measured sufficiently frequently and appropriately to:

- Identify problems with individual relationships
- Make timely adjustments to programme processes apart from 4.3 below (see comments) there is nothing to measure this.
- Provide a meaningful cost-benefit analysis and impact analysis

##### Performance criteria:

4.1. Measurements are based upon the goals defined in the programme purpose and programme values; and upon the goals defined within the individual pairings
4.2. Mentors and mentees receive clear feedback from each other on their performance in the role
4.3. Wherever possible best practice is reviewed and relevant learnings incorporated into the programme
4.4. Measurements relate to both processes and outcomes
4.5. Measurements relate to both the programme and individual relationships (within the bounds of confidentiality)
4.6. Review meetings are held to discuss feedback from participants, including line managers
4.7. Feedback from mentors and mentees is analysed by the coordinators to identify recurring themes relevant to the programme or to other development issues within the organisation
4.8. Review meetings are held with the programme sponsors
4.9. At appropriate timings, improvements are made to the programme as a result of information received in items 4.1-4.7

## 5. MAINTAINS HIGH STANDARD OF ETHICS AND PASTORAL CARE

- The programme adheres to clear guidelines on the behaviour and responsibilities of all stakeholders
- There is a process for recognising and managing conflicts of interest between stakeholders (eg between mentees and the organisation)

### Performance criteria:

5.1. Has a Code of Conduct for all parties (mentors, mentees, line managers, programme support staff and the organisation in general)
5.2. The Code of Conduct is understood by and discussed with all stakeholders
5.3. Performance against the Code of Conduct is monitored
5.4. There is a process for dealing with breaches of the Code of Conduct
5.5. Participants understand clearly the hierarchy of interests (mentee, mentoring pair, organisation) and have discussed the implications for managing relationships and the programme

## 6. SUPPORTS PARTICIPANTS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS/ SYSTEMS OF PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATION

- Participants have adequate support throughout the formal programme and, where appropriate beyond
- The programme is managed professionally

### Performance criteria:

6.1. The programme co-ordinator and other support staff have a clear, written description of their roles and responsibilities and are assessed against them
6.2. A central database is maintained to track the overall progress and outcomes of relationships
6.3. Participants are encouraged to maintain personal learning logs
6.4. There is a budget and a financial administration process where appropriate
6.5. The mentoring process is clearly linked to other development activities, where appropriate (e.g. appraisal, personal development planning or a process of continual personal development)
6.6. There are processes to remind participants of responsibilities at key points in the relationship (e.g. initial "are we suited?" review; winding up)
6.7. There is a practical and accessible support resource for participants to seek advice on the conduct of their relationship
6.8. There is a clear and accessible process to assist participants in dealing with issues, which fall outside the remit of the relationship (e.g. an Employee Assistance Programme)
6.9. There is a documented quality control process

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