Further Forces Mentoring Scheme

MENTOR HANDBOOK
School of Education
October 2018
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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your commitment to mentoring trainees on the Further Forces teacher training programme.

Further Forces is a national programme backed by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and the Ministry of Defence. It is aimed at supporting service leavers preparing to leave or who have recently left the Armed Forces with expertise in technical subjects to become fully qualified teachers within the Further Education (FE) sector. The University of Portsmouth has been commissioned to provide this programme for service leavers.

Further details about the teacher training programme can be found at: www.port.ac.uk/school-of-education-and-childhood-studies/further-forces/

The University of Brighton (UoB) has been commissioned to recruit high quality mentors and provide a national mentoring scheme that supports trainees for the duration of their Further Forces training programme. Mentors will be employed by UoB on a part-time hourly paid contract.

This handbook provides key information about the UoB mentoring scheme including the role and requirements of being an external mentor and a description of our distinctive, non-evaluative approach to mentoring based upon the ‘ONSIDE’ mentoring framework (Hobson 2016, Hobson 2017). This handbook sets out guidance for mentors recruited to the scheme and will be used in mentor training and development sessions.
# Key Contact Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Provides administrative support for all aspects of the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Additional Project Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Havers</td>
<td>Contract Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:J.Havers@brighton.ac.uk">J.Havers@brighton.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Management responsibility for overall delivery of the contract.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Andy Hobson</td>
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<td>Provides expert support and advice esp. in relation to ‘onside’ mentoring development. Responsible for mid-point evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equality and diversity

The University of Brighton (UoB) is committed to creating a stimulating and supportive learning and working environment based on mutual respect and trust in all our external engagement. We continue to celebrate and value diversity, promote equality of opportunity and challenge and strive to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The UoB equality and diversity policy is informed by law. However, the university also seeks to encourage and promote equality of opportunity amongst those groups and individuals within society who experience discrimination and disadvantage on the basis of particular social circumstances and who are not covered by existing legislation.

UoB adheres to the Equality Act which protects individuals against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

As a public sector body the University of Brighton is required to ensure that we pay ‘due regard’ when making decisions to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act (2010)
- Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

This is ensured through recruitment and admissions practices, programme design, collection of data, monitoring and review and ongoing developments and initiatives. The university’s commitment to equality and diversity is made explicit throughout its Corporate Plan. Staff with responsibility for teaching, support and welfare of students and those who manage others have a responsibility to identify, value and respond appropriately to varying needs and perspectives.

Further information on UoB equality, diversity and inclusion processes and policies can be found on the website: www.brighton.ac.uk/equality
1. Effective mentoring

1.1 Bridging the career transition for service leavers

The UoB mentoring scheme seeks to ensure that service leavers on the Further Forces (FF) Programme make a successful transition from their military career into a career as confident and proficient post-compulsory teachers within the FE sector.

The period of transition from a service career to a civilian career is not always straightforward and the Ministry of Defence acknowledge that service leavers can frequently move quickly from one opportunity to the next before settling on a new career. However, research (e.g. Hobson et al., 2009; Hobson et al., 2015) shows that the opportunity to engage with appropriate mentoring can have a significant impact and enhance trainees’:

- induction and socialisation into the profession and the particular institution in which they are employed
- professional learning and development
- teacher effectiveness
- well-being and
- retention

1.2 Outcomes and intended impact of mentoring scheme

- FF trainee teachers will have received a strong and robust bridge to support their career transition.
- FF trainee teachers’ subject and vocational content knowledge, subject and vocational pedagogy and general pedagogical techniques will have been strengthened through individualised mentoring.
- FF trainee teachers will have engaged in their new career making a positive impact within their employment setting.

1.3 Approach to mentoring

Traditionally the mentoring relationship in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is based on the premise that the mentor is internal to the place of work, usually hierarchical (such as being mentored by the line manager) and involves formally evaluating and assessing the mentee/trainee within a framework of professional standards (see Appendix). The University of Portsmouth is responsible for arranging this aspect of internal mentoring support and assessment.

However, FF trainees will also receive additional mentoring through the UoB FF mentoring scheme that is ‘offline’ – that is, separate from formal line management and assessment processes, and external to the place of employment. This approach draws on the findings of research into effective mentoring practice in teaching and other professions undertaken by Professor Andrew Hobson (e.g. Hobson et al, 2012; Hobson et al, 2015; Hobson et al, 2016).

In addition to the key principles of being ‘offline’ and mentors not being involved in mentees’ formal evaluation or assessment, this body of research has established that mentoring has a greater positive impact where:

- the mentoring scheme is well-structured and overseen by a mentoring coordinator
there are rigorous mechanisms for mentor selection and matching mentors and mentees
there is effective provision for initial preparation and ongoing development
there are training and development opportunities for mentees
opportunities are created to ensure that mentors and mentees have regular and frequent contact, including face-to-face meetings
mechanisms are in place to sustain confidentiality and other conditions for non-judgemental mentoring relationships
there is (light touch) monitoring of mentoring relationships and evaluation of the scheme, to inform their ongoing development and improvement.

In relation to ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to sustain confidentiality and provide conditions for non-judgemental relationships, trainees and mentors will be introduced to the ‘onside’ mentoring framework (Hobson 2016, 2017). This framework underpins all aspects of the UoB mentoring scheme and mentors and trainees will be provided with an opportunity to explore the framework in more depth during their initial training.

1.4 ‘Onside’ mentoring framework

‘Onside’ mentoring is a framework informed by research into mentoring within the FE sector (e.g. Hobson et al., 2015), on external mentoring for teachers in primary and secondary schools (Hobson et al., 2012), and effective mentoring practice in other sectors (Hobson et al, 2016).

The key features of ‘onside’ mentoring are that it is:

- **‘Offline’** (i.e. separated from line-management or supervision) and non-hierarchical – because where mentoring that takes place within hierarchical and power relationships (e.g. where mentors formally assess the work of their mentees), it proves difficult to establish relational trust and for mentees to openly share their professional learning and development needs with mentors

- **Non-evaluative and non-judgemental** – because evaluative or judgemental mentoring (or ‘judge mentoring – Hobson & Malderez, 2013) also impedes the establishment or maintenance of a trusting relationship between mentor and mentee, and (partly in consequence) mentees’ professional learning, development and well-being

- **Supportive** of mentees’ psychosocial needs and well-being – because mentees’ well-being is important in its own right and impacts on their capacity to learn and develop, their motivation and commitment to teaching, and their retention in the profession

- **Individualised** and tailored to the specific and changing learning, development and emotional needs of the mentee – since any given mentoring strategy is more or less relevant to and produces different (positive or negative) responses in different mentees

- **Developmental** and growth-oriented – not deployed as a remedial strategy to ‘correct’ perceived deficiencies in professional practice, which can discourage mentees from taking advantage of mentors ‘support’ and encourage them to fabricate their learning and development needs
• **Empowering** — progressively non-directive to support mentees to become more autonomous and promote their learnacy (Claxton, 2004) – that is, their ability to manage their ongoing learning from their own and others’ experiences of teaching beyond the end of the mentoring relationship (Hobson & Malderez, 2013; Hobson, 2016).

Finally, ‘onside’ mentors are ‘on mentees’ side’, acting as champions and advocates for, and confidantes of the trainees they are supporting.

In order to realise the full potential benefits of mentorship for service leavers who are becoming teachers and lecturers, it is imperative that the mentoring is independent of other aspects of their programmes and employment, that mentors undertake appropriate preparation and training, development and networking opportunities, that trainees are also provided with training in how to make the most of the mentoring offer, and that mentors and trainees have opportunities for both face-to-face and remote interaction. All of these elements are provided in this UoB programme of support.

Mentors are appointed based on key criteria found to influence the effectiveness and impact of teacher mentoring, including their subject and vocational knowledge, teaching experience and knowledge of the sector (Hobson, 2012; Hobson et al., 2015). They will need to be able to provide support and appropriate degrees of challenge that contribute to the intended impact outcomes listed in section 1.2 above.

### 1.5 The role of the mentor

Mentors will:
- utilise online preparatory materials
- take part in a training and development session (with trainees where possible)
- carry out a professional needs analysis with trainees
- make her/himself familiar with appropriate handbooks
- provide trainees with appropriate support for their professional and subject/vocational knowledge development
- undertake a minimum of three face-to-face meetings with trainee over two years
- provide online/remote support as per guidance in section 2 of this handbook
- where requested, cooperate with and participate in the mid-point evaluation (see section 3.1 below)
- attend a mentor web conference
- maintain regular contact with the UoB mentor coordinator.
2. **Project overview and expectations**

There will be a rolling programme of recruitment dates and training events in order to respond to University of Portsmouth trainee recruitment patterns. However, all mentors will engage in the following aspects of the mentoring scheme.

2.1 **Completion of online preparation unit and attendance at one training and development session with other mentors**

**Key Purpose**
The key purpose of the online training materials and subsequent development session is to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the mentoring scheme and the principles underpinning the ‘onside’ mentoring framework. Both provide an opportunity for mentors to understand how to establish a professional relationship based on clear boundaries and protocols that support trainees’ learning, development and well-being. It is important that all mentors and trainees involved in the FF mentoring scheme complete at least the online training unit.

Through completion of the training unit and attendance at a development session mentors will:

- have a clear understanding of the UoB mentoring scheme and how it works in practice
- understand the principles behind effective mentoring informed by the latest research
- have begun to establish and explore supportive mentor/trainee relationships unrelated to assessment and judgement and informed by individual trainee needs.

In addition, mentors will have had the opportunity to develop their skills of non-evaluative and non-directed mentoring and trainees (where possible) will have developed their knowledge and understanding of how to be an effective learner and capitalise on this mentoring opportunity.

2.2 **Face-to-face support**

2.2.1 **Expectations**

It is important that trust is established and maintained throughout and that mentors are able to demonstrate empathy and understanding with the challenges that a trainee will face as they progress through their programme. Trust is built over a period of time and face-to-face meetings should be staggered over the two years training. Mentors are required to carry out three to five face-to-face meetings. We suggest two in the first year and one in the second as a minimum so that trainees are well supported in their early identity transition from service leaver to teaching professional.

We recommend the following pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First face-to-face meeting</th>
<th>Within first few months of starting training</th>
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<tr>
<td>Second face-to-face meeting</td>
<td>Typically 6 months following the first</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third face-to-face meeting</td>
<td>Typically within first 2 months of the second year</td>
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Each of the meetings should be for a two hour period, the equivalent of 6-10 contact hours in total. However, the meetings may be shorter if more meetings are arranged but this would need to be agreed by the UoB Mentor Coordinator in order to ensure financial arrangements for travel are within contractual expectations.

The face-to-face meetings will be most effective if they:

- are planned for in advance
- have a structure that is mutually agreed upon
- set in a space free from potential interruptions and distractions
- result in action/s that can be reviewed at the next meeting or contact
- include at least one hour of professional discussion

### 2.2.2 Rationale for professional discussions during face-to-face meetings

A key purpose for the face-to-face meetings is to identify how to tailor support to specific and changing learning, development and emotional needs of the trainee. Underpinning the structure of the face-to-face meeting is the belief that we learn through critical reflection on practices and that this reflection can be effectively supported by others.

It is expected that mentors will support trainees to increasingly make independent and effective pedagogical decisions that are informed by research and evidence. Mentoring has the potential to support the exploration of complex ideas and to enable trainees and mentors to engage critically with practice in an environment where expectations for roles are made clear.

This model of how trainees learn relies on a co-construction and has an emphasis on articulation of practice to make explicit what is usually taken for granted such as what is the trainee’s philosophy of learning and why we make the professional decisions that we do in teaching. From a socio-constructivist viewpoint language and dialogue are viewed as important tools for mediating learning (Gergen, 2001:5). This is applicable to the mentoring process when opportunities are given to discuss and unpack teaching and learning from practical experience. Professional learning is promoted through professional relationships and dialogue about teaching and learning.

One of the aims of mentoring is to increase reflective activity and improve practices. Effective mentors are able to explain practices. There are a multitude of decisions being made in interactions in the classroom such as:

- reading the room
- thinking on your feet
- responding to the rhythm of the lesson to continuously assess if learning is happening.

Criticality is a valuable skill because it has the potential to turn our instincts and intuitions into evidence-informed theory. Pollard (2009:23) raises that teacher knowledge is “often practically relevant and directly useful” but also suggests that it can be “impressionistic” with analysis being “sometimes over-influenced by existing assumptions.” Mentoring can help to challenge and unearth assumptions as a way to capitalise on the former whilst simultaneously addressing the latter.

This relates specifically to the 'empowering' aspect of the 'onside' framework (the ‘E’) where mentoring is viewed as progressively non-directive to support mentees to become
more autonomous and to be able to manage and sustain their ongoing learning beyond the end of the mentoring relationship (Hobson, 2016; Hobson, 2017).

2.2.3 Suggestions for other face-to-face support activities

Subject and vocational pedagogy can be strengthened through a range of activities before and during the face-to-face meetings including:

- agreeing pre-reading to discuss at face-to-face meetings
- carrying out coached observations (although care will need to be taken to ensure that principles of ‘onside’ mentoring are adhered to and not compromised)
- co-planning and assessment
- analysing videos of practice
- reviewing subject association websites and articles
- creating a personalised action plan that can be reviewed at the next meeting/contact point
- team teaching.

2.3 Ongoing online/remote support:

There is an expectation that mentors and trainees will decide upon the best way to make contact in-between face-to-face sessions as part of establishing protocols during their initial communications. Consideration will need to be given to frequency and timings and this will be dependent upon the needs of the trainee and the availability of the mentor but at the very least should be once a month. It is advised that short and sustained contact is more supportive and effective e.g. 20 minutes each week.

2.4 Recording and monitoring

Expectations for monitoring and recording mentoring support will be ‘light touch’ in paperwork in line with recommendations from research findings (Hobson et al., 2016). Guidance and pro-formas will be provided to support mentoring provision, log visits and record outcomes centrally at UoB. This will be overseen by the UoB Mentor Coordinator.
3. Project development

3.1 Internal mid-point evaluation

A mid-point formative evaluation of the external mentoring support will be undertaken by Professor Andy Hobson. The purpose of this is to enhance subsequent mentoring provision, and specifically to inform the mid-point conference for mentors. It is anticipated that the formative evaluation will include:

- secondary analysis of completed mentor and trainee evaluation forms from the training and development sessions
- interviews with the Project Manager, Mentor Coordinator and Mentor Recruitment Lead
- a survey of trainees
- focus groups with or a survey of external mentors
- any ad hoc feedback trainees and mentors email to Andy – you are welcome to send any comments (positive and/or areas for improvement) on any aspect of the external mentoring scheme, at any time to a.hobson@brighton.ac.uk

The formative evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the Ethical Guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). In particular, all data will be treated in confidence and anonymised in any reporting of findings, so that individuals cannot be identified.

3.2 Mentors' web conference

The content of this web conference will be informed by the findings from the internal mid-point evaluation. It will be a webinar event for mentors that allow us to share best practice and target support where potential improvements to mentoring support have been identified. Mentor skills will be revisited with a focus on how to adapt mentor support as the trainee develops greater autonomy in self-directing their own learning.

3.3 External evaluation of Further Forces

A further external and independent evaluation of the Further Forces programme (including the external mentoring element) will be commissioned by the ETF. Further information will be provided about this in due course.
References


Appendix

Professional standards for teachers and trainers in Further Education and Training

PROFESSIONAL VALUES & ATTRIBUTES

Develop your own judgment of what works and does not work in your teaching and training.

1) Reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners.
2) Evaluate and challenge your practice, values and beliefs.
3) Inspire, motivate and raise aspirations of learners through your enthusiasm and knowledge.
4) Be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners to learn.
5) Value and promote social and cultural diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion.
6) Build positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and learners.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

Develop deep and critically informed knowledge and understanding in theory and practice.

1) Maintain and update knowledge of your subject and/or vocational area.
2) Maintain and update your knowledge of educational research to develop evidence-based practice.
3) Apply theoretical understanding of effective practice in teaching, learning and assessment drawing on research and other evidence.
4) Evaluate your practice with others and assess its impact on learning.
5) Manage and promote positive learner behaviour.
6) Understand the teaching and professional.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Develop your expertise and skills to ensure the best outcomes for learners.

1) Motivate and inspire learners to promote achievement and develop their skills to enable progression.
2) Plan and deliver effective learning programmes for diverse groups or individuals in a safe and inclusive environment.
3) Promote the benefits of technology and support learners in its use.
4) Address the mathematics and English needs of learners and work creatively to overcome individual barriers to learning.
5) Enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that stretch and challenge.
6) Apply appropriate and fair methods of assessment and provide constructive and timely feedback to support progression and achievement.
7) Maintain and update your teaching and training expertise and vocational skills through collaboration with employers.
8) Contribute to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others.