



Coaching and Mentoring Strategy

HR People and Organisational Development

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Introduction

Coaching and Mentoring (C&M) are widely recognised as incredibly useful and personalised ways of helping staff learn and develop. We want to develop a culture in which C&M helps strengthen our capacity for knowledge sharing, reflection, and empowering people. C&M services can also be changed or redirected easily in response to our changing institutional requirements.

Aims of this strategy

This proposal sets out our approach and implementation plan for the development of our C&M provisions at the University. Many approaches to C&M exist, ranging from highly centralised and structured approaches to more organic and emergent ones. For C&M to flourish, we will take a tailored middle ground approach, which combines aspects of centralised control and organic approaches. Our middle ground approach aims to provide some consistency in C&M practice and working to professional standards, whilst (where appropriate) still encouraging informal C&M relationships to continue. Our aim is to have high quality C&M embedded at every level and throughout the organisation.

Context

Our University is facing increasing pressures from a combination of factors, and operates within an ever more competitive environment, especially since the Covid 19 pandemic. Within a sector where doing more for less can increasingly present challenges for staff, C&M can help staff find their own ways to manage change more effectively which in turn can help them, their teams, Schools, and Services to become more productive as well as helping individuals to manage their own wellbeing.

Scope

This strategy applies to all staff working at our University, full and part time, permanent and temporary. Wherever possible, P&OD activity will be integrated for both academic, professional services and technical services staff, and across Schools and Services, to help foster better collaborative working and learning.

Alignment to our 2025 Strategy Map

Our 2025 University Strategy Map's 'People First' agenda is to Grow an inclusive community of leaders and managers to develop people to achieve excellence. The KPI for which is for the University to be in the Quality of Working Life sector upper quartile measure good management practice. To support these ambitions, this strategy puts effective C&M at the heart of the University's commitment to delivering our Strategy Map.



Benefits of Coaching and Mentoring

Embedding coaching into our workplace culture will give us some of the following benefits:

- ❖ Empowering staff to think independently, and helping people to generate their own solutions to problems rather than rely on what has been done in the past.
- ❖ To be more strategic, rather than always focussing on day-to-day issues.
- ❖ To deal with change, coaching is highly effective for people or teams in transition or faced with new challenges. It encourages people not only to adapt to change but also to generate changes.
- ❖ Fostering an innovative and entrepreneurial culture, by encouraging people to generate ideas and be creative.
- ❖ Increasing people's confidence and self-reliance and be able to make decisions effectively.
- ❖ Sharing of new ways of working, thoughts, and concerns.
- ❖ Clarifying career aspirations, supporting talent management succession planning.
- ❖ Helping newly appointed or promoted managers to come to grips with their new role.

Embedding mentoring into our workplace culture will give us some of the following benefits:

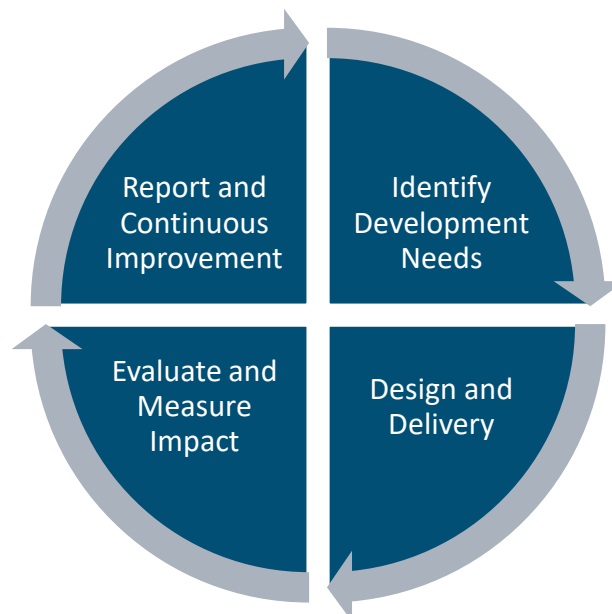
- ❖ Retaining knowledge. When key and experienced people leave, a lot of valuable information leaves with them. An effective mentoring relationship encourages mentors to share their knowledge and experience with others.
- ❖ Knowledge Transfer. Mentors will elevate peoples understanding and shorten learning curves, helping them perform in their roles in a much shorter period. Mentors will support people's questions or concerns, or how to deal with an array of issues. Mentors are especially important when a person is new to our University.
- ❖ Reducing Turnover Rates. A high percentage of turnover is caused by people not knowing how to do their role. A mentor can help to ensure that people can discuss any frustrations or concerns they may have.
- ❖ Management and leadership. Mentors can assist in sharing management and leadership best practice.
- ❖ Career Growth and Succession Planning. Mentors can help provide a career guidance and help prepare people to fill key roles as part of future School, Service or University succession plans.

NB: There is an increasing body of evidence to highlight the positive impact C&M can have during the transition of new managers from one role into another, or staff who have recently become managers for the first time.



Our Development Cycle

We take a systematic approach, as outlined below:



Please see our People and Organisational Development Strategy and Evaluation, Impact and ROI Strategy for further details about the stages of our development cycle.

Implementation Plan

Defining Our Approach to Coaching and Mentoring

We must maintain a clear sense of purpose and understanding about the roles C&M have both independently and collectively, including:

- ❖ Definitions of what C&M both are and are not.
- ❖ What provision is currently available for both, including development opportunities.
- ❖ Which intervention is most appropriate and why.
- ❖ What type of environment supports each, as well as providing enabling frameworks and structures that are congruent with our chosen approach to C&M.

There is often confusion about the difference between C&M. Below are our University-specific definitions of mentoring, coaching and coaching as a management tool, congruent with our culture and language.

One-to-one Mentoring

A mentor's role is to work with a less experienced person (the mentee) either formally or informally, supporting them to set developmental goals and devise action plans. A mentor has experience in a particular area of work and supports the mentee's development, often using coaching style questions. They act as a sounding board for the mentee, providing advice, helping them to develop their ideas and new working practices.

One-to-one Coaching

A coach's role is to support the coachee with specific work challenges. The coach supports the development of the coachee by asking the right questions and assisting them to uncover their own answers to their challenges. Coaches encourage coachees to deliver a stronger work performance. A coach believes that the coachee has all the tools and resources available within them to work towards their goals.

Coaching as a Management tool

Coaching as a management tool/style emphasises the consideration of staff members' existing expertise and experience. Working within the existing managerial relationships, the manager asks questions to encourage their staff member to identify strategies for success.

“Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) research suggests that the expectation that line managers can fulfil all the functions of a specialist coach is not realistic and probably not desirable. The manager as coach role is better described as a coaching style of management, which itself forms part of the wider development of a participative approach to managing staff.”
(CIPD (2008) Coaching at the Sharp End. CIPD: London. p.5).

NB: Our coaching development offering is not limited to people in managerial roles as we encourage the use of a coaching approach in all roles across the University.

The following table highlights the main differences between C&M relationships. Although both are separate and distinct from one another, many similarities exist.

Mentoring	Coaching
Ongoing relationship that can last for a long time.	Relationship generally has a short duration.
Can be more informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentee needs some guidance and or support.	Generally, more structured in nature and meetings scheduled on a regular basis.
More long term and takes a broader view of the person.	Short-term (sometimes time-bound) and focused on specific development areas/issues.
Mentor usually passes on experience and is normally more senior in the University.	Not generally performed on basis that coach needs direct experience of coachees role.
The focus is on career and personal development.	Focus generally on development/issues at work.
Agenda is set by the mentee with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles.	Agenda focused on achieving specific, immediate goals.
Revolves more around developing the mentee professionally.	Revolves more around specific development areas/issues.



External Executive Coaching pool for Senior Managers

Senior managers tend to prefer to be coached externally, given difficulties that may arise in the differences in status between the coachee and internal coach, and perceptions of confidentiality and neutrality which, at senior levels, seems to be more acutely felt. It is important we identify high-calibre external coaches and pay close attention to the quality of their practice. To do so, we will actively manage the provision of our external coaches, with clear framework agreements and a preferred supplier list. We need to ensure consistency across Schools and Services regarding the quality and professionalism of the external coaches we use. Our recruitment of external executive coaches will consider specific selection criteria, including the following:

- ❖ Coach biographies.
- ❖ Role description for a coach at our University.
- ❖ Application form, references and coachee testimonials.
- ❖ Informal interviews to ensure their approach to coaching is aligned to that of the University, and to ensure we have a wide range of external coaches available.

NB: A standard C&M contract for objective setting (involving Coach, Coachee and Line Manager) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) or the International Coaching Federation (ICF) code of ethics will be used for all formal C&M relationships at our University.

NB: Our C&M lead will support the matching of the external executive coaches to senior staff.

Creating a Pool of Internal Coaches

We already have a small number of practicing coaches who have formal C&M qualifications. Internal coaches, when effectively selected and trained, are particularly effective, as they understand our University's culture and values. To grow our coaching pool further, staff interested in becoming coaches will need to apply for a place on our Chartered Management Institute (CMI) level 5 accredited coaching programme. To manage the expectations of staff and their line managers, prior to attending the programme, they would need to commit to the following:

- ❖ Attendance on all the programme sessions.
- ❖ A commitment to engaging with peer support groups.
- ❖ One-to-one or group supervision as part of the programme.
- ❖ Completion of any assessments (as the coaching programme is accredited).
- ❖ To maintain high standards, have their coaching practice observed.

Once qualified, and to ensure that the quality and reputation of our internal coaching pool remains high, staff members would need to commit to the following:

- ❖ Go on an internal workplace coach register.
- ❖ Provide one-to-one coaching to staff based on a minimum number of 12 sessions per year.
- ❖ Attend regular coaching supervision.
- ❖ Access ongoing coaching CPD.
- ❖ Partake in peer observation.

We need to maximise our ability to match coaches with coachees, therefore a broad range of staff from across the University (and beyond) should form the basis of our coaching pool. This approach will help ensure matched coaches and coachees are from separate parts of the University, and therefore help maintain impartiality and increase the likelihood of a successful coaching relationship.



Coaching Competencies, Code of Ethics and Accreditation

Our qualified coaches will need to sign-up to the EMCC or ICF, as this helps them demonstrate a commitment to high professional standards in coaching practice and a strong code of ethics. This is important as it gives coaches a universal professional code to adhere to in relation to:

- ❖ Working with Clients
- ❖ Professional Conduct
- ❖ Excellent Practice

Working in Partnership - the Yorkshire Coaching Pool

We will collaborate with other Universities, businesses, and charities to create a shared pool of coaches. Our approach will enable our staff to access a much broader range of high-quality coaches, the sharing of best practice and provide low-cost CPD opportunities for our qualified coaches.

Engagement with Coaching and Mentoring

A key challenge will be how to generate confidence in our C&M services. We must ensure we generate sufficient interest and take-up, both to become a qualified coach or coachee, and mentor or mentee. Our approach to embedding our C&M provision is based on gaining acceptance and

momentum through personal experience, word of mouth, and working closely with our Schools and Services. We will build confidence in our C&M service through the following:

- ❖ The active promotion of the definitions and benefits of the C&M provision.
- ❖ Ensuring the application to become an internal coach is not restricted and is supported by the line manager.
- ❖ A robust selection process to become an internal coach.
- ❖ Referrals for either C&M being coordinated and evaluated through P&OD. We will work closely not only with colleagues across Human Resources, including Occupational Health, but also with all Schools and Services to channel C&M referrals.
- ❖ Ensuring mentors have a vast range of experience and expertise.
- ❖ Ensuring the design and delivery of high-quality programmes to become an internal coach, and development opportunities for both mentors and mentees.
- ❖ A clear set of common competencies and standards for both external and internal coaches.
- ❖ Ongoing support for both C&Ms, including regular networking and CPD, and events in partnership with wider regional C&M networks, and a bank of useful resources and coaching supervision.
- ❖ C&M will be promoted through our website and social media platforms.

Mentoring Scheme

Like coaching, it is vital that staff who agree to become mentors have the right skills, qualities, and time to make the relationship work. Our University has a well-established mentoring scheme. We have many informal mentor/mentee relationships throughout our Schools and Services. Mentors at our University are trained to use a coaching style, but also give their personal insight and experience to the mentee.

The referral process of matching mentors and mentees is also undertaken by our C&M lead, who assess if coaching or mentoring is the most appropriate development intervention. As with coaching, we will ensure mentors and mentees are from separate parts of the University. This will help maintain impartiality, and therefore increase the likelihood of a productive mentoring relationship.

Other Ongoing Developments

- ❖ We will continue to offer C&M skills sessions aimed at all staff.
- ❖ Create a session around developing C&M skills for PhD Supervisors to support the University Research targets.
- ❖ Support managers to use a coaching style during appraisals and 1:1 catch-ups with their staff.
- ❖ Develop frameworks, systems, and processes to help coordinate effective matching.
- ❖ Produce 'best-practice' C&M toolkits.
- ❖ Communicate the purpose and role of C&M, including University-specific definitions of mentoring, coaching as a (management) tool, and one-to-one coaching.
- ❖ Weave C&M into relevant Human Resources initiatives, such talent management and performance management.
- ❖ Gather confidential feedback from our C&Ms on the trends and issues faced by clients. We will ensure effective processes are in place to ensure all feedback remains confidential.
- ❖ Coaches and mentors should also meet to share learning and reflections.



How Coaching and Mentoring will be used across our University

- ❖ Most C&M referrals will be on a case-by-case basis.
- ❖ C&M will be offered to all new managers.

- ❖ C&M will be offered to those identified as high potential, aligned to School and Service talent management and succession plans.
- ❖ C&M will be offered to all participants on management and leadership programmes.
- ❖ C&M will be offered to staff directly affected by change.

Indications Coaching and Mentoring are Embedded

It is important to begin with the end in mind. How will we know when we have C&M entrenched into our University culture? Strong indicators that C&M are embedded include that:

- ❖ C&M is seen as contributing to a successful University culture in all Schools and Services.
- ❖ Our staff are demonstrating increased creativity and innovation.
- ❖ Managers are equipped with the skills to use a coaching style of management when appropriate.
- ❖ Our staff are empowered to make appropriate decisions for themselves.
- ❖ Our staff are working autonomously and adapt to change positively.
- ❖ Our staff are increasingly aware of their own values and how they align to our University values.
- ❖ Invaluable knowledge and expertise are shared, passed down and.
- ❖ C&M are weaved into career and talent management and succession planning.

How Effectiveness Will Be Assessed

We will evaluate and report on the impact of C&M at both an individual and institutional level. One of the reasons for a more structured approach to C&M is to demonstrate a return on investment.

We will measure in the impact of C&M in the following ways:

- ❖ A coaching contract (between coach and coachee, plus line manager where appropriate) is used to set the coachee's objectives from the coaching relationship. This coaching contract should be standardised for both our external and internal coaching and used throughout all our Schools and Services. The objectives set through the contract may include rating statements (pre- and post-coaching) associated with, for example, the coachee being more confident.
- ❖ Use of pre-and-post C&M interviews, focus groups and case studies.
- ❖ Tools such as the Emotional Quotient Inventory 360 questionnaires, via the test and re-test approach, pre- and post-coaching, or mentoring (where appropriate).
- ❖ Please see our Evaluation, Impact and ROI strategy for further details.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

This strategy will require ownership, accountability, and commitment from several areas and people. Please see our People and Organisational Development Strategy for further details

Related P&OD Documents

- ❖ People & Organisational Development Strategy.
- ❖ Developing Great Leaders Strategy.
- ❖ Evaluation, Impact and ROI Strategy.
- ❖ P&OD Guidelines and FAQs.

NB: Please see our [Coaching and Mentoring](#) webpage for further details.

Review

The current HE environment is fast paced, demanding and constantly evolving. With this in mind, we frequently review what we do, how we do it, and how we measure success. This strategy itself will be reviewed annually, with any changes being acted upon ready for the following academic year.

