

RCN mentorship resources

2. RCN mentoring relationship standards



RCN mentorship resources

RCN mentoring relationship standards is the second part of the RCN mentorship resources. The complete list of RCN mentorship resources available is below.

1. An overview of the RCN mentoring framework
- 2. RCN mentoring relationship standards**
3. The RCN mentorship development programme
4. Lifelong learning in practice – achieving practice standards
5. The mentorship contract and toolkit
6. Strengthening working partnerships
7. RCN representatives' practice standards
8. Mentor and mentee relationship standards

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Contents

Introduction	4
What are the RCN mentoring relationship standards?	4
Why do we need standards?	6
When do the RCN mentoring relationship standards apply?	6
Who are the RCN mentors?	6
RCN mentoring relationship standards	7

Introduction

The RCN offers continuing support and guidance to new and existing accredited representatives through a national mentoring framework that is delivered locally. All accredited representatives have access to a mentor throughout the *Learning and development pathway* and/or throughout their learning in practice. When they have completed Modules 1 and 2 of the pathway, representatives continue to work with a mentor as they develop their learning-in-practice. Representatives accredited prior to the introduction of the learning and development pathways will also be able to work with a mentor and update their learning and skills through the creation of a personal development plan (see 4: *Learning-in-practice: supporting the achievement of the RCN practice standards*).

What are the RCN mentoring relationship standards?

The mentoring framework provides a supportive context to enable representatives to carry out their duties efficiently – and to demonstrate how they are doing this. Each relationship between a mentor and a representative adheres to the RCN mentoring relationship standards (see Table 1) which are based on nationally recognised occupational standards set by ENTO¹.

The standards are about establishing and sustaining a relationship that is mutually understood, and based on partnership and respect. As mentoring is a relationship where both parties hold responsibilities, some standards are relevant to both mentor and mentee (the representative).

The standards address some core skills that mentors need to demonstrate (R11-R14). They also guide each stage of the mentoring process in the context of organisational work (see R15, R16), and these map onto the learning cycle as follows:

Becoming active: agreeing how to work together

- R1 Set up and maintain the mentoring relationship
- R2 Establish the working relationship with the mentee
- R3 Prepare for the mentorship process
- R4 Prepare for the mentoring session

Developing as an active mentee: exploring and agreeing goals

- R5 Explore goals and options with the mentee

Being active: receiving challenge and support, developing plans

- R6 Enable mentee to progress towards goals
- R7 Give mentoring support

Staying active: review, feedback, assess, evaluate

- R8 Review progress and achievements with mentee
- R9 Review and reflect on the mentoring process
- R10 Evaluate the mentoring process.

A further cluster of additional standards relate to:

Being an effective mentor

- R11 Reflect on and develop own mentoring competence
- R12 Manage personal commitment to mentees

¹ ENTO (formerly the Employment NTO) was formed by a merger in 1997 of Employer Occupational Standards Council and the Occupational Health and Safety Lead Board

- R13 Record and maintain notes of interactions with mentee
- R14 Interact with mentee using a range of media

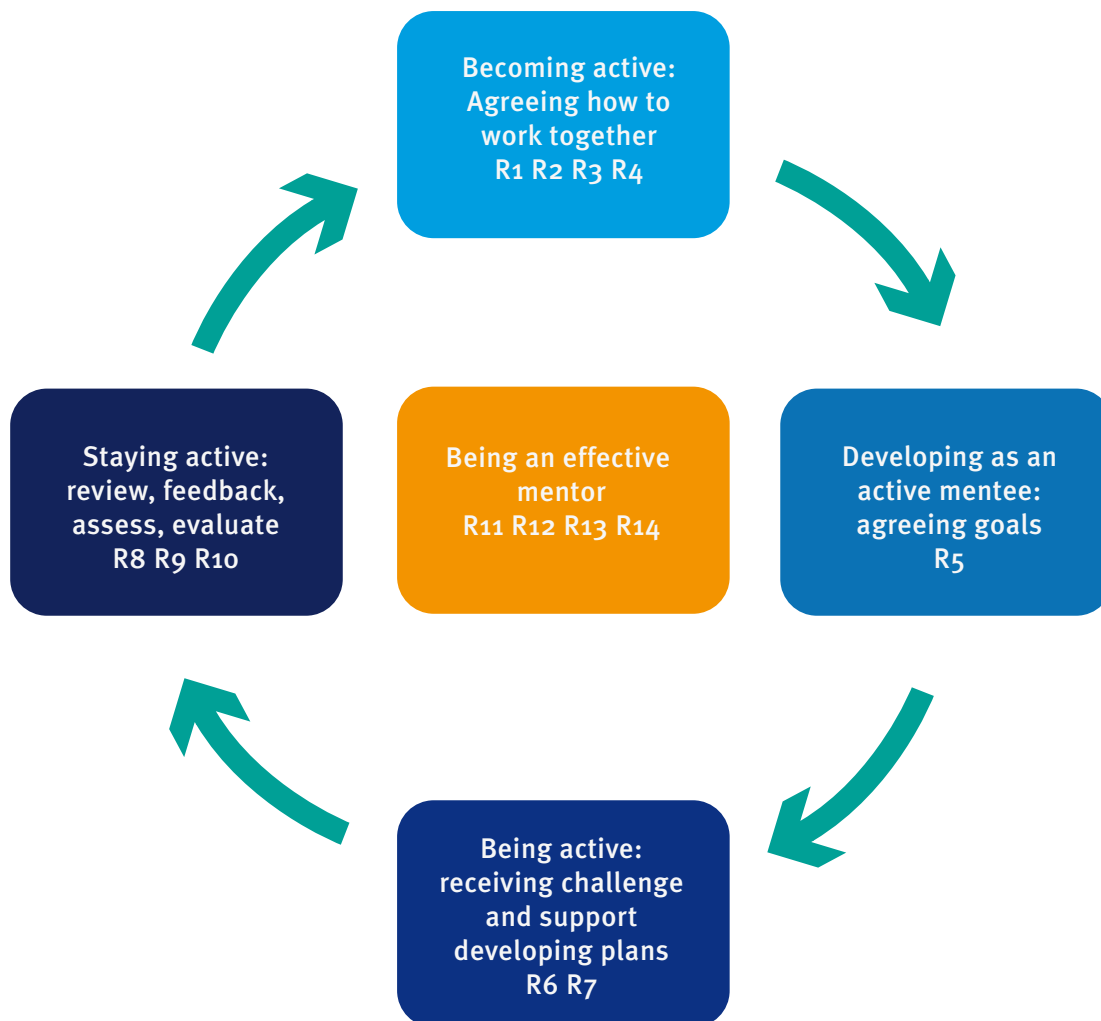
Organisational context

- R15 Work within organisational policies, procedures and ethical frameworks for mentoring
- R16 Mentor in the organisational setting.

The standards, and the way in which these guide the engagement between the mentor and the mentee, are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 How the RCN mentoring relationship standards fit within the lifelong learning of representatives

**Organisational context:
working within policies
and framework
R15 R16**



Why do we need standards?

- **Quality and equity:** the standards provide a benchmark of good mentoring practice that applies to all mentors working with RCN representatives throughout the UK.
- **Enables newly accredited RCN representatives to fulfil their role:** mentors provide additional support to representatives as they develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet their role descriptors through the *Learning and development pathway* (Modules 1 and 2). When representatives are learning-in-practice, mentors guide and enable them to work towards the *RCN practice standards* in the context of the mentoring relationship.
- **A framework for development:** the *RCN mentoring relationship standards* inform the development programme that prepares mentors for their work with RCN representatives, and make clear to both mentor and mentee the expectations of the mentoring relationship.
- **Makes best use of the mentoring relationship:** relationship standards act as a memory aid for mentors that guide both mentors and mentees through the setting up, maintenance, management and evaluation of the mentorship relationship.
- **Supporting existing representatives in their lifelong learning:** the relationship standards inform a two way partnership between the mentor and the mentee to a) recognise existing knowledge, skills and experience and b) identify future development needs.

When do the RCN mentoring relationship standards apply?

The standards apply at ‘day one’ of the *Learning and development pathway*, when newly accredited representatives first start to work with a mentor. On completion of Modules 1 and 2 of the *Learning and development pathway*, the standards will continue to guide the relationship between mentor and mentee as the representative progresses to learning-in-practice.

Any RCN representative accredited prior to the introduction of the *Learning and development pathway* will be given the opportunity to work with an RCN mentor to assess their ongoing learning needs. Where a development need is identified they will be supported and encouraged to produce a personal development plan that helps them to measure their skills against the practice standards. Each regional/country board in the UK has developed an implementation plan to roll out the programme to all their representatives and further information about how this will be done is available from your respective RCN office.

Who are the RCN mentors?

Mentors are RCN officers/professional officers, RCN assistant officers or regional facilitators/advisors. The mentor signs off a representative’s competence against the practice standards in partnership with RCN staff and colleagues in the representative’s workplace.

Mentors will use their expertise and experience to help the mentee identify an appropriate person – an experienced workplace representative for example – to provide support. However, it is the mentor who has final responsibility for signing off competence against the *RCN practice standards*.

RCN mentoring relationship standards

Standards to guide the setting up, maintenance, management and evaluation of the mentorship relationship

Standard no.	Standard title	Elements of competence	Lead responsibility
R1	Set up and maintain the mentoring relationship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree expectations, boundaries and levels of support 2. Maintain and review the mentorship relationship/RCN representatives' progression 	Mentor
R2	Establish the working relationship with the mentee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jointly create the mentoring agreement with mentee 	Mentor
R3	Prepare for the mentorship process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify roles and resources 2. Plan and prepare for the mentorship session 	Mentor
R4	Prepare for the mentoring session	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure own readiness for the mentorship session 2. Explore outcomes and expectations 3. Establish initial rapport with mentee 4. Agree the contract 	Mentor
R5	Explore goals and options with mentee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist mentee to clarify their goals 2. Explore a range of options with mentee for achieving their goals 	Mentor
R6	Enable mentee to progress towards goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable mentee to develop an action plan 2. Support mentee in implementing the action plan 	Mentor
R7	Give mentoring support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give advice and guidance to support mentee 2. Assist mentee take responsibility for their development 	Mentor
R8	Review progress and achievements with mentee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review progress and achievements of the action plan with mentee 	Mentor
R9	Review and reflect on the mentoring process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor and review the mentoring process 2. Reflect on the mentoring process 	Mentor and mentee
R10	Evaluate the mentoring process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jointly evaluate outcomes with RCN representatives 	Mentor and mentee

Standard no.	Standard title	Elements of competence	Lead responsibility
R11	Reflect on and develop own mentoring competence	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reflect on own competence2. Ensure continuing development as a mentor	Mentor
R12	Manage personal commitment to mentees	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review personal workload2. Establish priorities for dealing with personal workload	Mentor
R13	Record and maintain notes of interactions with mentee	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Record and maintain notes of interactions	Mentor and mentee
R14	Interact with mentee using a range of media	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish interactions using a range of media2. Sustain interactions using a range of media	Mentor
R15	Work within organisational policies, procedures and ethical frameworks for mentoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure own work reflects organisational policies, procedures and ethical frameworks	Mentor
R16	Mentor in the organisational setting	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the organisational setting and culture2. Provide mentoring in an organisational setting	Mentor



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