

EQUALITY, EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



# MENTORING GUIDE



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This mentoring booklet has been produced as a guide to provide a structured approach to the CWU's Mentoring Exchange Scheme.

## PURPOSE

The CWU Mentoring Exchange Scheme aims to encourage and facilitate CWU members and activists to progress and get more involved in trade union activities by advancing personal skills, knowledge and development.

The Mentoring Exchange Scheme is not just another component of CWU education. It allows mentor and mentee partnerships to decide jointly on where they want to focus their work and the scope of their work while receiving the appropriate support to carry it out.

## MENTORING EXCHANGE SCHEME BENEFITS

- Increases members involvement in the CWU
- Encourages and supports activists
- Provides training opportunities for both the mentors and mentees
- Supports members and activists to take the next steps and progress within the CWU's structure (as appropriate)
- Helps identify and address barriers towards reaching personal goals
- Allows mentor and mentee partnerships to learn from one another and transfer knowledge, skills and experience.
- Provides networking opportunities (internally and externally)

The CWU Mentoring Exchange Scheme also allows the CWU to:

- Better understand barriers to activism and engagement
- Monitor development and future success of the scheme
- Bring new people through our structures and into active roles of the union

## MENTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### CRITERIA FOR THE MENTOR

CWU mentors must be experienced activists with at least 5 years' experience of operating at a senior national, regional or branch level in the CWU. In addition CWU mentors must have:

- The ability to build rapport within the mentoring partnership
- Experience of training, developing or supporting new activists
- Good communication skills
- Ability to provide constructive feedback
- A willingness to commit the time and effort to be a mentor
- Practical problem solving skills and abilities to suggest options and alternatives and sensitivity to persons of different educational, economic, cultural or racial backgrounds.

### ROLE OF MENTOR

- Share knowledge and work experience
- Provide advice and voice opinions
- Encourage the mentee to discuss new ideas on how to contribute to the work of the union and increase their participation
- Identify strategies to achieve goals and other developmental programmes or projects
- Help identify goals that are achievable and realistic
- Identify skills/skills gaps, goals and learning opportunities for the mentee
- Discuss succession plans and potential obstacles
- Identify strengths of the mentee so that they can develop their skills
- Motivate the mentee to develop their potential
- Encourage the mentee to reach their own solutions and to analyse these solutions towards meaningful outcomes
- To provide opportunities for social, professional and trade union connections

- To share experiences gained through the mentors own personal development process and work experience
- To provide insights into what the mentor experiences in their job from day to day
- Be able to give constructive feedback and empower the mentee to try new initiatives to further develop their skills
- Each mentor will be responsible for tracking the progress of the mentee during the lifetime of the project. This will form the basis of the evaluation and any future activities

### BENEFITS OF BEING A MENTOR

- Great opportunity to share knowledge, trade union experience, lessons learned and achievements.
- Opportunity to learn from the mentee and explore new ideas
- Opportunity to participate in training (mentoring skills) with a view to improving communication and leadership skills
- Increased motivation by assisting the mentee to reaching targets and personal goals
- Additional opportunities to network with other experienced trade union activists

## MENTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### CRITERIA FOR THE MENTEE

- Mentees must be new or inexperienced trade union representatives who now wish to become more active in the CWU.
- Mentee must have a readiness to invest time and their own initiative to formulate the partnership to the mentor.
- Mentees must also be willing to contribute to union activities and commit to active participation in the CWU.

### BENEFITS FOR THE MENTEE

- Gain valuable insights into their role within the trade union movement
- Access to an experienced trade unionist for advice and information in a supportive and confidential environment
- Increases motivation and participation in the union
- Identifies personal strengths and developmental needs
- Affords a process to share ideas and get advice/ insights into relevant trade union issues
- Allows mentees to have an insight into the competencies required to develop within the trade union movement
- Affords networking opportunities.

## THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Mentoring relationships can occur at any level of the CWU. The key feature of a mentoring relationship is that more experienced CWU activists help less experienced representatives achieve their goals and develop as a person.

There are four key mentoring skills which make the mentoring relationship successful:

- Listening skills
- Building Trust
- Determining goals and objectives
- Encouragement

**Listening skills:** Listening actively is the most basic skill that mentors and mentees will use throughout the mentoring relationship. Actively listening to one another does not only improve rapport but also creates a positive environment that permits open communication.

**Building Trust:** Trust is built over time. Keeping conversations confidential, honouring scheduled meetings and calls and being honest with one another will improve trust in the mentoring relationship.

**Determining goals and objectives:** It is important that both the mentor and the mentee have personal goals and objectives. Mentors will have their own roles to fulfil and personal goals which they may choose to share with their mentee. Mentees may have preliminary goals and objectives they want to achieve or may wish to explore goals and objectives with their mentor.

**Encouragement:** Encouragement is the mentoring skill that is most valued by the mentoring partnership. It is important that mentors provide regular constructive feedback to mentees and be balanced by commenting favourably on accomplishments and by providing words of support, understanding, encouragement and praise.

## THE CWU MENTORING EXCHANGE SCHEME FRAMEWORK

The CWU Mentoring Exchange Scheme is a 12 month programme. The Equality, Education and Development department are committed to recruiting a sufficient pool of mentors and mentees across the CWU. Interested activists are invited to apply via the CWU formal application process.

Shortlisted mentor applicants are required to attend a 2 day mentoring training course facilitated by the Equality, Education and Development Department. The 2 day mentoring course covers the following criteria:

- Developing mentoring skills
- Understanding roles and responsibilities within the mentoring partnership
- Understanding and applying mentoring skills in line with ethical standards
- Understanding and applying the processes and policies of delivering mentoring according to the CWU exchange scheme.

## THE SELECTION PROCESS – NATIONAL STEERING GROUP

The National Mentoring Exchange Steering group are responsible for matching suitable mentors with mentees and play a key role in the success of the scheme. The steering group comprises:

- The Head of Equality, Education and Development Department
- The National President
- The National Vice President
- 4 NEC Members

## THE FIRST MEETING

Once mentors and mentees have been notified of their match, mentors must make contact with their mentees and arrange a first meeting. The purpose of the first meeting is to:

1. Introduce one another and explain roles and responsibilities.
2. Discuss both parties' backgrounds, interests and expectations, as well as the preferred mode and frequency of communication. Meetings between mentors and mentees are to take place every 6 weeks at a minimum.
3. Set out ground rules and sign the CWU mentoring agreement. Please refer to the appendix section for copies of the CWU mentoring agreement.

Copies of the mentoring agreement should be kept by both mentor and mentee. A signed third copy should be sent to the Equality, Education and Development Department at [courseadmin@cwu.org](mailto:courseadmin@cwu.org) for record purposes.

How the mentoring relationship is structured is up to the mentor and mentee, however the relationship should be geared to meet the individual needs and goals of the mentee as well as the capabilities and skills of the mentor.

If the mentoring relationship does not materialise, mentors must inform the Equality, Education and Development department at the earliest opportunity at [equality&education@cwu.org](mailto:equality&education@cwu.org).

If you are interested in becoming a CWU mentor or want to enrol onto the CWU mentoring scheme please contact the Equality, Education and Development department at [equality&education@cwu.org](mailto:equality&education@cwu.org) for further information





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