



OCCASIONAL MENTORING SCHEME: A GUIDE

What is occasional (“one-off”) mentoring?

At some time or other in our careers at the Bar, most of us feel the need to talk to somebody who can offer advice and the benefit of their experience. Often someone in Chambers or a former pupil supervisor can fulfil that role, but sometimes those people may not be appropriate. This is when a Mentor – an informed, objective and supportive barrister who practises in a similar field but is outside your immediate workplace – can provide a sympathetic ear and impartial guidance on how you might achieve your career goals.

Some specialist Bar Associations operate “role model” mentoring schemes, which aim to generate a relationship over time through regular contact between Mentor and Mentee. Since TECBAR is a relatively small association, what we offer instead is “one-off” or “occasional” mentoring. This is a scheme which enables a TECBAR member to consult with a Mentor on a one-off and informal basis and so receive support, advice or encouragement in dealing with a particular professional concern or crisis. The member seeking support is invited to speak “one-to-one” with a more experienced member – all on a scrupulously confidential and non-judgmental basis.

What does the Mentor do?

The Mentor helps the Mentee by

- acting as a sounding board
- discussing options
- passing on knowledge
- sharing experience
- signposting the right direction
- giving support
- preserving confidentiality

What are the Benefits to the Mentee?

- improved self-confidence and self-esteem
- renewed motivation
- clearer understanding of career opportunities
- support in managing professional relationships
- reduced feelings of isolation
- broadening of horizons and experience
- raised career achievements and expectations

What are the Benefits to the Mentor?

- the enjoyment of a rewarding challenge
- making a contribution, individually and professionally
- feeling valued as a role model
- refreshing and validating their own experiences
- gaining other perspectives

How do I become a Mentee?

If you would like to speak to a one-off Mentor, you need to complete the Mentee Form, a copy of which accompanies this Guide and which is also available on the TECBAR website. The form asks you to provide some information about your professional background, and you also have an opportunity to identify in broad terms any particular issues that you would like to discuss with a Mentor. The form is intended to assist with the 'matching process' (as to which see further below). The form should be sent to one of TECBAR's Equality and Diversity Officers (see contact details below).

If a Mentee wishes his or her form to be anonymised for the purposes of the matching process, or not disclosed to one or other of the Equality and Diversity Officers, this should be clearly stated in a covering note or email when returning the Mentee Form. No reasons need be given.

The matching process

Matching is a very important part of successful mentoring, though it is not essential. To assist in this process, those who have agreed to act as mentors are asked to complete a 'mirror' form which indicates the stage they have reached in their career and any topics on which they feel particularly qualified to assist.

The matching process is carried out by TECBAR's Equality and Diversity Officers (currently Fiona Sinclair QC and Siân Mirchandani, both of 4 New Square, Lincoln's Inn) as Matching Panel. As above, if you prefer only one of the Panel to see your form, please say so when sending it in.

When either member of the Matching Panel has identified a possible Mentor, she will contact the Mentee for permission to give out the Mentee's contact details to the prospective Mentor. If the Mentee agrees, the Panel will then provide both the Mentor and Mentee with contact details and they will be asked to make contact with each other. If the Mentee does not agree, the Panel will, if the Mentee wishes, identify a further Mentor.

Confidentiality

Emailed communications and the information on the Mentee Forms is kept confidential and is held by the Matching Panel until a Mentee is matched with a Mentor. At that point the completed Mentee form will be destroyed.

The completed Mentor Forms will be kept confidential and is held by the Matching Panel unless and until instructed by the Mentor that they wish to withdraw from the scheme.

Who do I contact for further information?

If you would like further information about how the Scheme works, please feel free to contact:

Fiona Sinclair QC at 4 New Square Tel: 0207 822 2060

Sian Mirchandani at 4 New Square Tel: 0207 822 2005

Email: TECBARMentoring@4newsquare.com