



The International Standards for Mentoring Programmes in Employment (ISMPE)

These standards have been generated to fill a gap in the evaluation of mentoring programmes, with particular emphasis on programmes in adult employment and development. Six Core Standards have been identified, as follows:

1. Clarity of purpose
2. Stakeholder training and briefing
3. Processes for selection and matching
4. Processes for measurement and review
5. Maintains high standards of ethics
6. Administration and support

See examples from each section on following pages

1. CLARITY OF PURPOSE

- The intended outcomes and benefits of the programme are clearly defined and understood by all the stakeholder audiences.
- The outcomes are translated into viable and well understood objectives for each mentoring relationship.

Performance Criteria	Example Questions
1.1. There is a published and readily available statement of programme purpose	<i>Is there a statement of purpose? Is it clearly understandable & easily accessible? Do participants know what the purpose of the programme is?</i>
1.3 Stakeholders are engaged in discussion about the meaning and implication of the programme purpose and values; and have an opportunity to influence these.	<i>Was there genuine dialogue? Were suggestions from stakeholders encouraged? Considered? Used?</i>
1.6 Both mentors and mentees have clear complementary expectations from the programme and from their relationship	<i>Have mentors and mentees explored expectations generally in training sessions? Have they discussed these issues within the relationship? How does the co-ordinator know that this has happened?</i>

2. STAKEHOLDER TRAINING AND BRIEFING

- Participants and stakeholders understand the concept of mentoring and their respective roles.
- Participants are aware of the skills and behaviours they need to apply in their roles as mentors and mentees; and have an opportunity to identify skills gaps.
- Learning support is available throughout the first 12 months of their involvement in the programme.

Performance Criteria	Example Questions
2.1. Participation in a process to learn the basics of mentoring is a non-negotiable condition of taking part in the mentoring programme, for both mentors and mentees	<p><i>Is there a policy to require all mentors and mentees to attend training?</i></p> <p><i>Is this policy rigorously enforced? (ie are there some matches made with participants who have not been trained?)</i></p>
2.7 The training deals in depth with issues of confidentiality and ethicality	<p><i>Are the topics covered at all?</i></p> <p><i>Is there any opportunity to discuss the implications?</i></p> <p><i>Are participants' concerns adequately brought into the open?</i></p>
2.8 The training deals in depth with issues of relationship management	<p><i>Do participants have an opportunity to discuss good practice in managing the mentoring relationship?</i></p> <p><i>Are there clear guidelines in the support materials?</i></p>

3. PROCESSES FOR SELECTION AND MATCHING

- Mentors are selected to meet the specific needs of mentees.
- Both mentors and mentees have an influence on whether they participate and who they agree to pair with.
- The experience gap permits significant learning by the mentee.
- There is a process for recognising and unwinding matches that do not work; and for reassigning the participants, if they wish

Performance Criteria	Example Questions
3.1. There are clear criteria for participation and/or selection of mentors and mentees	<p><i>Is there a clear definition of the experience and other characteristics expected of the mentors and mentees?</i></p> <p><i>Is it clear which characteristics are essential and which "nice to have"?</i></p>
3.2 Participation is voluntary, even where the programme is targeted at specific groups	<p><i>Is there a clear statement of the voluntary nature of the programme?</i></p> <p><i>Are participants required to give their consent in writing?</i></p> <p><i>Do participants perceive that they are genuinely volunteers?</i></p>
3.5 Mentors and mentees are aware of the "no-fault divorce" arrangements available to them	<p><i>Is there a clear "no fault divorce" process?</i></p> <p><i>Do participants receive guidance on what to do if the relationship does not appear to be working?</i></p> <p><i>Do they feel they are under no pressure to try to make an unsuitable relationship work?</i></p>

4. EFFECTIVE PROCESSES FOR MEASUREMENT AND REVIEW

The programme is measured sufficiently frequently and appropriately to:

- Identify problems with individual relationships
- Make timely adjustments to programme processes
- Provide a meaningful cost-benefit analysis and impact analysis

Performance Criteria	Example Questions
<p>4.1. Measurements are based upon the goals defined in the programme purpose and programme values; and upon the goals defined within the individual pairings</p>	<p><i>Have clear measures been established before matching begins?</i></p> <p><i>Are these measures clearly based upon programme goals?</i></p> <p><i>Has there been an input into those measures by the relevant stakeholders?</i></p>
<p>4.2. Mentors and mentees receive clear feedback from each other on their performance in the role</p>	<p><i>Do participants understand the importance of getting and giving each other feedback about how they perform their roles as mentor and mentee?</i></p> <p><i>Do they feel confident about broaching this subject?</i></p> <p><i>Have they done so?</i></p>
<p>4.6 Review meetings are held to discuss feedback from participants, including line managers</p>	<p><i>Is there at least one review meeting within the first 12 months?</i></p> <p><i>Is feedback from measurement aggregated and fed back to participants ahead of the review meeting?</i></p> <p><i>Is sufficient time given to discuss this feedback?</i></p>

5. MAINTAINS HIGH STANDARD OF ETHICS AND PASTORAL CARE

- The programme adheres to clear guidelines on the behaviour and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- There is a process for recognising and managing conflicts of interest between stakeholders (e.g. between mentees and the organisation).

Performance Criteria	Example Questions
<p>5.1. There is a Code of Conduct for all parties (mentors, mentees, line managers, programme support staff and the organisation in general)</p>	<p><i>Is there a Code of Conduct for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>mentors?</i> • <i>mentees?</i> • <i>line managers?</i> • <i>programme support staff?</i> • <i>the organisation?</i> <p><i>Is it clear what the responsibilities of each party are?</i></p> <p><i>Is it published/promoted to all parties?</i></p>
<p>5.3 Performance against the Code of Conduct is monitored</p>	<p><i>Do participants know whom to contact, if they feel the Code is being (or may be) breached?</i></p> <p><i>Are actual / potential breaches recorded??</i></p>
<p>5.4 There is a process for dealing with breaches of the Code of Conduct</p>	<p><i>Are there clear procedures for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>investigating any apparent breach of the Code?</i> • <i>counselling all parties involved?</i>

6. SUPPORTS PARTICIPANTS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS/ SYSTEMS OF PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATION

- Participants have adequate support throughout the formal programme and, where appropriate beyond.
- The programme is managed professionally.

Performance Criteria	Example Questions
6.1. The programme co-ordinator and other support staff have a clear, written, description of their roles and responsibilities and are assessed against them	<p><i>Are there clear, written job descriptions for each of the roles?</i></p> <p><i>Have they been agreed with the programme sponsors?</i></p> <p><i>Do the job descriptions clearly define the responsibilities of each role?</i></p>
6.2. A central database is maintained to track the overall progress and outcomes of relationships	<p><i>Is there a database?</i></p> <p><i>Is it up-to-date and well-maintained?</i></p> <p><i>Does it allow the co-ordinator to make judgements about the effectiveness of individual mentors, over the course of several relationships?</i></p> <p><i>Does it allow the mentor to extract data, useful for programme management?</i></p>
6.4 There is a budget and a financial administration process where appropriate	<p><i>Is there a budget?</i></p> <p><i>Is there a process to oversee how the budget is spent and record expenditure against budget?</i></p> <p><i>Is this budget used to measure return on investment from the mentoring programme?</i></p>



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