

# Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

A guide for mentors

Cambridge  
Professional  
Development



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# Introduction

Every learner in every Cambridge PDQ programme is required to have the continuing support of an experienced and trusted colleague, who acts as their **mentor**. This guide will help you to prepare for mentoring and to mentor your mentees successfully to meet everyone's needs and expectations.

## Terminology

### We use the following terms in the guide:

- **PDQ:** Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications
  - **Learner:** the teacher or leader participating in the PDQ programme
  - **Mentor:**\* the experienced teacher or leader assigned to provide mentoring support to the learner
  - **Mentee:** the learner engaged in the mentoring relationship with the mentor
  - **Candidate:** the learner as they engage with PDQ assessment
  - **Programme Leader:** the person accredited by Cambridge to design and lead the PDQ programme
- \* NB: We referred to mentors as '*experienced colleagues*' in the 2015 PDQ syllabuses. From 2016 syllabus onwards we are updating this to '**mentors**' to clarify the definition and importance of this role.



“ A mentor is someone who takes on the role of a trusted adviser, supporter, teacher and wise counsel to another person. A mentor adopts a primarily selfless role in supporting the learning, development and ultimate success of another person... mentoring is most effective when focused clearly on the needs, goals and challenges of the person you are mentoring...”

(Starr, 2014: 3)

# Section 1: What you need to know about the PDQs

## Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (Cambridge PDQs)

The Cambridge PDQs are in-service professional development programmes involving practice-based learning. The qualifications are awarded by Cambridge, and accredited by UCL Institute of Education. Candidates are assessed externally on the basis of their portfolios of evidence of practice, learning and reflection.

The PDQs are designed to help practising teachers and leaders to:

- engage critically with relevant concepts, principles, theories and international best practices
- apply new ideas and approaches in reflective practice in their own teaching and learning context
- learn with and from other practitioners
- evaluate experiences and outcomes to plan further development.
- improve the quality of their teaching and leadership to enhance the quality of their learners' learning.

PDQs are awarded at Certificate and Diploma level in the following different areas of focus, to meet the particular needs of teachers, leaders and schools:

- Teaching and Learning
- Educational Leadership
- Teaching with Digital Technologies
- Teaching Bilingual Learners.

All PDQ syllabuses share the same design principles and features, e.g. the Diploma consists of three assessed modules, and the first module can be taken on its own as the Certificate.

“ An effective mentor is able to stay flexible to the needs of the mentee in order to offer the appropriate types of assistance in a particular situation. ”

(Starr, 2014: xi)

## The Cambridge PDQ programme

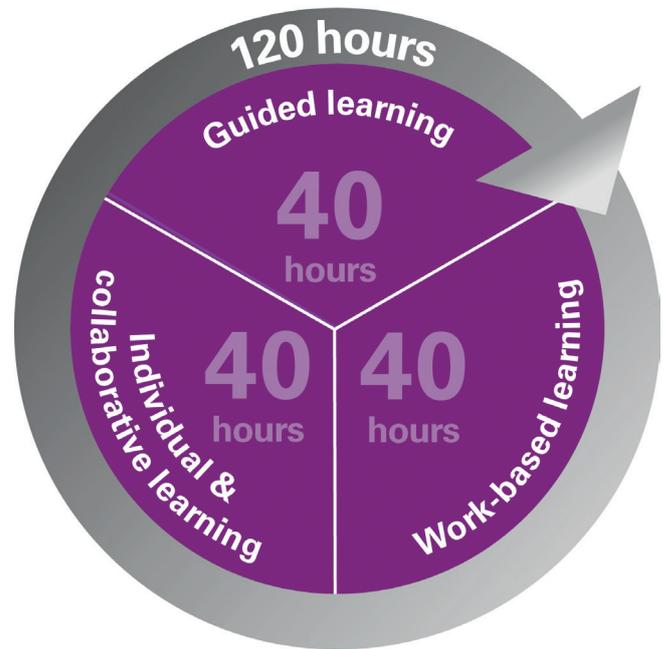
The Cambridge syllabus defines the purpose, aims, learning outcomes, key questions, assessment and grading criteria for each PDQ. You can download syllabus and other essential information from [www.cie.org.uk/pdq](http://www.cie.org.uk/pdq)

The PDQ **learning programme** is provided by an approved Cambridge Professional Development Centre. This may be a Cambridge school, a training organisation or a national authority. Every Centre must undergo systematic initial and ongoing quality assurance by Cambridge.

Key to the success of the PDQs is the **Programme Leader** at the Centre, who is trained and accredited by Cambridge. The Programme Leader designs the learning programme and leads the teaching and management of the programme.

The PDQ programme takes approximately four months for each module. Typically this fits around a school term or semester. The Programme Leader and their team design a programme for the module, aiming for the best balance and sequence of learning activities and experiences.

- **Guided learning** involves contact time with learners, in sessions designed and led by the programme team, so that they have specific guidance to achieve the learning outcomes, e.g. workshops, seminars and tutorials.
- **Individual learning** involves learning time spent by the individual outside of guided learning sessions, e.g. reading, research and reflective writing.
- **Collaborative learning** involves learning by groups of learners outside of guided learning, and without supervision of a member of the programme team, e.g. discussions, peer observation and study lessons.
- **Work-based learning** involves learning in school, focused on practice, e.g. mentoring, gaining feedback from colleagues, observing and interviewing colleagues, activities to help candidates complete their portfolio for assessment.



A Diploma programme comprises Modules 1, 2 and 3. So it involves 360 hours of learning and preparation.

Support from school leadership is essential for the success of the PDQ programme. For example, they will:

- allow time for guided learning sessions and mentoring
- nurture collaborative learning
- encourage the progress and achievement of their PDQ learners
- integrate PDQs into their schools' professional development culture.



“ ...talent expresses itself differently in every individual. We need to create environments where every person is inspired to grow creatively... ”

(Robinson and Aronica, 2009: xiii)

## Section 2: Why learning with and from a mentor is vital

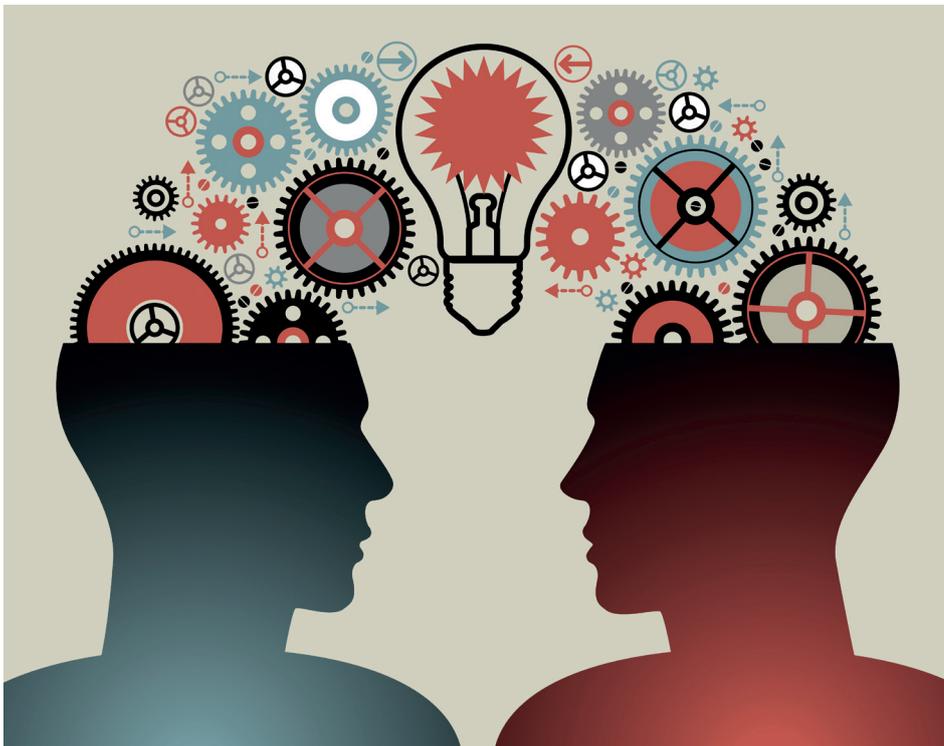
The spiral of professional learning in a PDQ programme depends particularly on three processes:

- observation
- reflection
- learning with and from mentors.

These processes work together. It is crucial that learners receive feedback from being observed to inform their continuous reflection on their learning experiences. Observation and reflection are much more effective with the support of a mentor.

The mentor develops a learning relationship with the mentee, supporting them during their work-based learning to make the most of the learning experience and to achieve the Cambridge qualification. The mentor understands the essential principles of the PDQ, and provides helpful advice to their mentee(s), sharing their own experiences and knowledge.

Your experience will enable you to question and challenge your mentee(s) and encourage them to reflect on their learning and experience and what it means for their future approach to teaching and leadership. You help to broaden and deepen the understanding of concepts and practice. You enable your mentee to take control of their own professional development: encouraging them to be confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged.



“ A Japanese proverb says that one day with a good mentor is worth one thousand days of diligent study. With a good mentor, teachers are supported, encouraged and inspired as they grow in their profession... ”

(Carol Bartell in Murray, 2014: 135)

## Sir Ken Robinson (2009: 179–185) highlights four ways in which a mentor supports a mentee:

- *Recognition*

*'Mentors recognise the spark of interest or delight and can help an individual drill down to the specific components of the discipline that match that individual's capacity and passion...'*

- *Encouragement*

*'Mentors lead us to believe that we can achieve something that seemed improbable or impossible to us before we met them. They don't allow us to succumb to self-doubt for too long, or the notion that our dreams are too large for us. They stand by to remind us of the skills we already possess and what we can achieve if we continue to work hard...'*

- *Facilitating*

*'Mentors can help lead us... by offering us advice and techniques, paving the way for us, and even allowing us to falter a bit while standing by to help us recover and learn from our mistakes...'*

- *Stretching*

*'Effective mentors push us past what we see as our limits. Much as they don't allow us to succumb to self-doubt, they also prevent us from doing less with our lives than we can. A true mentor reminds us that our goal should never be to be 'average' at our pursuits...'*

Mentoring typically involves an experienced professional supporting a less experienced colleague. However, this does not mean that the mentee is always a novice teacher or leader; in fact teachers and leaders taking part in PDQ programmes often have many years of experience. The PDQ programme is an opportunity to refresh and develop thinking and practice, to explore new ideas and approaches. Becoming a learner, perhaps for the first time in a long time, can be challenging – as a mentor, you can provide reassurance and wise counsel.

The teacher or leader who has asked you to be their mentor believes that you have sufficient depth of experience and expertise to be trusted to become a mentor. But successful mentoring is not only about experience and expertise; it's even more to do with personal qualities and inter-personal skills.

The most important of these is to be able to take an interest in and support your mentees' professional development and to give honest, objective and constructive feedback. As a mentor you help your

mentee to 'step outside the box' of their situation. You also act as a 'mirror' reflecting qualities or practices that have become too familiar for your mentee themselves to notice (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 1999).

In this way mentoring not only benefits the mentee but the mentor as well. Mentoring will help you to develop your own inter-personal skills, leadership qualities and empathy. It is an opportunity for you to explore your own learning and development. Supporting a colleague as their mentor requires you to question your assumptions, develop new perspectives, and gain new knowledge and insight about yourself and your professional field.

Mentoring is integral to effective school-based professional development as it connects the needs, aims and aspirations of the school, the learner and the mentor. The professional dialogue between the PDQ Programme Leader, the mentors and mentees is at the heart of continuous improvement in the school itself.

## Section 3: What we expect you to do as a mentor

As a PDQ mentor your main responsibilities are to:

- Be familiar with the PDQ syllabus to be able to give appropriate advice
- Discuss with your mentee what they aim to achieve from the PDQ programme – and help them with their personal action plan
- Identify and make the most of moments when your input and support is most needed by your mentee
- Meet regularly with your mentee to:
  - discuss and ask questions about aspects of your mentee’s learning
  - listen to and advise your mentee; there may be times when they feel overwhelmed or are under pressure and they need some emotional support as well as professional guidance
- share your experience and knowledge as well as your enthusiasm for teaching and learning
- help your mentee to keep to an agreed timeline
- review and discuss progress to ensure that they are making appropriate progress, especially with the portfolio activities.
- Observe your mentee and discuss outcomes, providing formative feedback to help further development and reflection
- Attend guided learning session(s) in the PDQ programme alongside your mentee – if invited to do so by the Programme Leader



“ ...mentoring is not about telling (mentees) what to do or how to do it. As you are not in a line (management) relationship with the mentee, you are concerned with helping them to make their own choices by suggesting options. Mentoring is a developing relationship covering a wide range of issues... ”

(Kay and Hinds, 2015:1)

## Reciprocal qualities of mentor and mentee

### The mentor should:

- have a genuine desire to be personally involved with the mentee to help their professional development
- have the ability to communicate with the mentee in an open, non-judgmental way
- empower the mentee by responding to their priorities and needs rather than imposing their own.

### The mentee should:

- recognise and respect the valuable time mentors are giving to the relationship
- be committed to the relationship and be enthusiastic about the opportunities it presents
- lead the agenda for mentoring meetings and be in charge of their learning and development.

## Mentoring moments

‘Mentoring moments’ are moments within your mentee’s learning journey when your input and support can make a significant difference. Some are formal, planned moments, but there will also be other informal moments which provide learning opportunities for you and your mentee. For example, moments to share your experience, provide feedback, listen attentively and be a source of encouragement for your mentee.

There will also be times when you sense that your mentee is grappling with something that is just beyond their understanding and competency at present. Try to be attuned to these moments – as these are times when your input or attention can help your mentee to deepen their understanding and develop their practice.

There are also moments with the formal learning programme when your mentee needs to have your direct support e.g. observation. Take time to go

through the syllabus with your mentee so that you both understand the purpose of the observation and plan ahead. The observation templates provided by Cambridge will help you to structure pre- and post-observation discussion as well as for the observation itself.

Another example of a formal mentoring moment is when your mentee is preparing their portfolio for assessment. Your mentee gathers their evidence of practice, learning and reflection (e.g. observation, lesson plans, reflection) throughout the programme; however when it comes to putting them together to create a portfolio for assessment your mentee may well need some guidance. Ask questions and encourage your mentee to talk about the prompts in the syllabus – this is a good way to extend their thinking. Your mentee may share their first draft of portfolio evidence with you, and your guidance will be valuable.

“ the mentor gives support... in a way that empowers the mentee. An effective mentor is able to stay flexible to the needs of the mentee in order to offer the appropriate types of assistance in a particular situation. ”

(Starr, 2014: xi)



In Module 1 of each qualification, as learners are gaining an orientation to key principles and approaches, we expect them to observe and/or interview an experienced practitioner. This person is different from the mentor. As mentor, you do have a role in supporting your mentee with the observation or interview but you must not be the practitioner observed or interviewed for Module 1.

- In Module 1 of the Teaching and Learning, Teaching Bilingual Learners and Teaching with Digital Technologies syllabuses, learners visit and observe a teacher teaching a lesson. You will use your knowledge of the school or partner school to help your mentee identify an experienced teacher from whose teaching your mentee will learn most. You will advise your mentee as they prepare to observe. By sharing in the observation you can afterwards use your experience to ask your mentee questions that help them reflect on the planning, conditions and teaching of the observed lesson.
- In Module 1 of Educational Leadership, you will use your knowledge to help your mentee identify which leader has the most relevant experience to share through interview. You will be able to guide your mentee in the sort of questions to prepare in advance of the interview so that the focus is on the leadership skills and school context, thus making the interview a learning process with depth and meaning. Your discussions and questions afterwards will deepen your mentee's understanding of leadership processes.

Mentoring is not a casual or informal relationship; it requires commitment from both mentor and mentee to sustain and make mentoring worthwhile. Please meet with your mentee regularly. Your meetings do not have to be long e.g. 30 minutes once a week or fortnight is typical. More time will need to be scheduled for observations.

Your own reflective practice will support you in your role as mentor. Your own learning from reflection will enable you to be a role model for your mentee, for example in the kind of questions you ask, such as

*'Thinking back to when I was taking responsibility for leading a subject team, I considered leadership from the point of view of the team members with whom I was going to work. What perspectives are you taking into account when you consider what sort of a leader you want to be?'*

As mentor you will have the experience to challenge your mentee when you feel that they have misunderstood information, feedback, advice or conversations. You will know when to advise your mentee to seek additional support from the Programme Leader and their team.

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice

### Why should I take on this role?

There are many potential benefits for you in becoming a mentor. These include:

- Having professional conversations with a colleague is empowering and can reignite your passions as an educator
- Being nominated as a good mentor is professionally rewarding in itself and shows that you and your experience are valued
- Becoming more involved in professional development can open up interesting professional pathways for you
- You can demonstrate the additional responsibilities you have volunteered to take on, the skills that you have demonstrated in supporting colleagues and your enhanced understanding of professional learning on your CV.

To help you think about whether you will enjoy the experience of being a mentor and find it fulfilling, let's start from the perspective of the learner – in this case a teacher or leader taking part in the PDQ programme. As they consider whom to approach to become their mentor, they will consider the following '4 Cs':

- Connection** Will I be comfortable sharing my thoughts, concerns and goals with this colleague?
- Credibility** Do I respect this colleague and their experience? Do I trust this colleague to be objective?
- Confidence** Will this colleague bring the self-awareness and confidence to challenge me appropriately?
- Confidentiality** Do I trust this colleague to remain confidential throughout the process?

Ask yourself similar questions before taking on the role. Here are some quick questions to think about to help you make a decision.

- Am I interested in helping less experienced colleagues to develop?
- Can I put my own agenda aside and focus on their needs?
- Am I interested in observing others and giving feedback?
- Do colleagues give me positive feedback on the advice I give them?
- Am I organised and can I help others to manage their learning?
- Am I good at open questioning and giving learners the time and space to think aloud?
- Can I push others to think more deeply?
- Am I willing to say when I think that something has been misunderstood?
- Do I know enough about the school to help to find the appropriate experienced teacher or leader to help support the candidate's learning for Unit 1?
- Can I make the commitment to keep some time free to manage mentoring meetings?
- Will I be able to judge when my mentee needs additional support from the Programme Leader?

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice *continued*

### What kind of a commitment am I making?

You make a commitment at the beginning of the relationship to support your mentee through to the end of the programme. Consistency of support through a relationship based on professional trust is an essential part of the PDQ. If anything arises which may make this no longer possible, you need to let the Programme Leader know.

### How do I prepare for the role?

The Programme Leader will brief you and your mentee about the programme and about the mentoring role and relationship. Often the Programme Leader will have designed specific sessions to explore collaborative learning within the PDQs – and the mentor and mentee will both be invited to these. If this is not possible, the Programme Leader will have designed alternative ways in which you and your mentees are well prepared for mentoring e.g. a webinar. It helps for both mentor and mentee to hear the questions raised by each other – as well as the responses. Don't be afraid to ask questions of the Programme Leader and your mentee, e.g. about the evidence requirements of portfolios,

so that you are clear about your role and other people's expectations.

### How can I get to know what my mentee needs?

Even if you know your mentee well you should have an initial meeting with them for you to identify what support they need from you. This initial meeting will set the tone for your relationship. Make sure you allow enough time, and find a physical space where you can be sure of privacy and uninterrupted conversation.

Questions for you to cover in your meeting include:

- What is my mentee's understanding of the PDQ learning process?
- What learning have they already undertaken?
- What professional aspects of their role are they keen to improve?
- Do they have an idea of a focus for their chosen area for development?
- How clear are they about their aims?
- Are their aims reasonable, given the scope of the qualification?



## How will our mentoring relationship develop?

The typical stages of a mentoring relationship are as follows:

Development stages of the mentoring relationship	
<b>Stage 1</b>  <i>The mentee is more dependent</i>	<p>The mentor assists the mentee to accomplish specific activities related to their goals and provides modelling of skills, sharing of strategies and observational feedback.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss mutual goals</li> <li>• build trust and confidence</li> <li>• model and assist</li> <li>• acknowledge and appraise</li> <li>• explain and share strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2</b>  <i>The mentee grows increasingly independent</i>	<p>The mentee is becoming more self-directed in the development of skills but also needs consistent and frequent feedback. Directing the mentee to self-reflective practice will assist them to evaluate their own progress.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observe</li> <li>• give and receive feedback</li> <li>• challenge and question</li> <li>• offer options</li> <li>• promote reflection.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b>  <i>The mentee and mentor are interdependent</i>	<p>The mentee is increasingly less reliant on the mentor and can provide possible solutions to issues encountered. The mentor provides a sounding board to discuss concerns and offer support.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take part in a two-way dialogue</li> <li>• plan collaboratively</li> <li>• decision making and problem solving</li> <li>• reflective practice, to promote thinking and consider alternatives.</li> </ul>

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice *continued*

### How can I build an effective mentoring relationship?

The dimensions of the mentoring relationship are many and varied. In order to create a successful mentoring relationship – one that helps your mentee to get the most from the learning in the PDQ programme – you can keep in mind these aspects of the mentoring relationship. The list is numbered for ease of reference; they are all equally important and integral aspects of the relationship.

#### 1. Structured professional dialogue

Structured, constructive and meaningful conversations are at the heart of the mentoring process. This professional dialogue should draw on evidence from your mentee's practice and enable them to share their current beliefs and practices.

To help them to reflect you can ask:

- *what is going well?*
- *how do you know?*
- *what could be improved?*
- *what will you do?*
- *what support will you need?*
- *what targets can we set?*

#### 2. Developing trust

Creating a trusting relationship and a secure environment is a key element to a successful mentoring relationship. Trust is essential for your mentee to feel able to talk to you freely and confidentially.

They will look to you to model a professional relationship, this includes:

- *being punctual*
- *being reliable*
- *building trust*
- *maintaining confidentiality*
- *showing respect*
- *being sensitive to the learner*
- *appreciating the emotions associated with challenge.*

#### 3. Collaboration

Mentor and mentee have shared responsibility for building effective collaboration between each other. Try to schedule regular catch-ups; these are more useful than longer, occasional meetings. Although you are their primary support and guide for the PDQs, remember that your mentee will also need to maintain effective relationships with other colleagues – you cannot be their sole support. You will both quickly recognise that through mentoring you will both be learning and improving your skills, knowledge and confidence.

Effective collaboration will help your mentee to:

- *keep the momentum going – especially important for Diploma programmes*
- *maintain a commitment to personal learning*
- *ground new learning in everyday practice*
- *extend their skill level and encourage interests*
- *model good practice.*

## 4. Encouraging self-direction

As a mentor you will be looking to build on the strengths and capabilities of your mentee; however, ultimately it is your mentee who is responsible for their learning.

Guide your mentee so that they increasingly take responsibility for their self-development – encourage them to:

- *improve and extend their skills*
- *develop new personal qualities*
- *increase their self-awareness.*

## 5. Setting goals within a context of self-evaluation

Helping your mentee to identify what they need to learn in order to improve is a key part of being a mentor. You can use the aims of the PDQ syllabus to start this conversation, as they are the learning goals of the programme itself.

Establishing personal and professional goals will:

- *build upon what your mentee already knows, in order to improve their existing skills*
- *be challenging, so your mentee needs support in order to achieve them*
- *be the responsibility of your mentee*
- *relate to the priorities of the school.*

## 6. Experimenting and observing

The best learning takes place when people are prepared to take a risk or face a challenge. It is important to encourage your mentee to innovate and take risks. You both should acknowledge and understand that sometimes there is no single correct answer or approach. Part of your role as mentor is to help your mentee to find approaches that work for them in their school and to find evidence in their practice and reflect on their new learning.

Your mentee's activities for their portfolio do not have to be 'an unqualified success' – in fact trying something new that does not go exactly to plan but that sparks good reflection is more effective professional development than doing something known and safe.

As a mentor you will want to create a learning environment that:

- *offers challenge*
- *supports risk taking*
- *permits failure as a learning experience*
- *encourages experimentation and trying out new things*
- *involves reflection before, in and on practice.*

## 7. Sharing resources to protect and shelter professional learning

Sharing your professional knowledge includes sharing and communicating about ideas, theories and practices that you have found useful and inspiring. Your mentee may also ask for help to find suitable resources and they will benefit from your guidance to ensure that resources are used effectively.

Resources include:

- *time: effective time management is vital*
- *learning resources: encouraging access to professional learning materials*
- *practice resources: templates, lesson plans and formats you have found effective*
- *access to 'experts': building a network of contacts to encourage a learning dialogue.*

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice *continued*

### How do I plan and prepare a mentoring programme?

Planning is an important part of developing a successful mentoring relationship. Right at the start of the relationship decide on a time once a week or fortnight for your mentoring meetings. Be consistent and reliable as this will show that you are genuinely interested in your mentee and want to support their professional development.

At the start of each PDQ module establish with your mentee the key mentoring moments in the programme when they will need more support, guidance and formative feedback from you. The formal mentoring moments include guided learning sessions when both mentor and mentee are invited, observations, interviews, planning a sequence of lessons, initiating new practice, collecting and preparing evidence for the portfolio, starting a new module and results release.

To decide on these mentoring moments and begin to develop a mentoring pathway you will find it useful to refer to:

- the PDQ syllabus
- Module guide and the PDQ programme plan, which the Programme Leader will give you
- your timetable and your mentees
- the school calendar.

By finding correspondence between the mentoring moments in the syllabus and the programme plan you can begin to develop an action plan with your mentee. For instance – in module 2 of the Diploma in Teaching and Learning candidates are asked to plan and teach a sequence of 10 lessons, and have two sequential lessons observed by their mentor. You will want to cross check your timetables before they start to teach these lessons so that you are going to be free to be able to do the observations – including the pre- and post-observation meetings. You might also want to observe your mentee and their learners before the two observations for the portfolio, so that the observation feels natural and relaxed for everyone involved.

It is important to know the deadline for submitting the portfolio to the Programme Leader. You can support your mentee by meeting with them to consider the assessment requirements and the evidence they need to submit.

You might also have resources and readings to share with your mentee to help them develop their understanding of key concepts and principles. Encourage your mentee to collect evidence for the portfolio, read and reflect on practice throughout the programme – however, starting to draft their portfolio for assessment is a key mentoring moment. You can be a sounding board for ideas, a teacher to help to clarify requirements and devil's advocate to help to stretch their thinking.

Remember that you should not be giving formative feedback on the portfolio as a whole – this is the role of the Programme Leader.

The mentoring agreement template is very useful; it will help you to capture your shared understanding of your mentoring relationship, with an action plan that records mentoring moments and deadlines. The mentoring agreement and action plan are for you and your mentee to share to support your relationship; they are not formal requirements by Cambridge and do not have to be shared with anyone else.

# Mentoring agreement

<b>Mentor</b>			
<b>Mentee</b>			
<b>Working towards</b>	[Name of Cambridge PDQ]	[module]	[unit]

Location of meetings	
Frequency of meetings	

<b>Areas of focus for the mentoring relationship</b>
<b>Observation</b>
<b>Resources</b>
<b>Reflection</b>
<b>Portfolio</b>
<b>Other</b>

## Signed by

<b>Mentor</b>		[date]
<b>Mentee</b>		[date]

# Action plan

<b>Mentee</b>			
<b>Working towards</b>	[Name of Cambridge PDQ]	[module]	[unit]
<b>Portfolio deadline</b>			

<b>Mentoring Moments (MM)</b>	<b>Dates</b>
MM 1	
MM 2	
MM 3	
MM 3	
MM 4	
MM 5	
MM 6	

<b>What difficulties might I meet along the way?</b>	<b>What help can my mentor offer?</b>
<b>How am I going to deal with them?</b>	

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice *continued*

### How do I support reading and research?

Teachers and leaders taking part in a PDQ programme need to do their own individual reading and investigate evidence of international research and practices. You will have resources and reading that you have found useful and will want to share these with your mentee.

The key questions in the syllabus are a very good starting point for discussion and exploration. You can prompt your mentee to read appropriately and widely by asking further questions that link the learning outcomes in the syllabus with their own particular aims and interests. For example, concerning research that your mentee has been reading, you can ask them:

- Was the context of the research findings appropriate for the context in which you are working?
- How long ago was the research undertaken?

- what was the situation in which it was carried out?
- do all research findings agree? If not, what are the points of difference?

Encourage your mentee to be coherent in their approach to their reading and research, so they relate this to their guided learning, discussions with colleagues and practice, and make sense of it all. A simple open-ended question such as

*how is your reading affecting your teaching and learning or leadership practice?*

can lead on to a deeper discussion with your mentee in which they articulate and reflect on their learning and development.

### Observing an experienced practitioner

The PDQs in Teaching and Learning, Teaching Bilingual Learners and Teaching with Digital Technologies all require in Module 1 Unit 1 observation of an *experienced practitioner*.

The experienced practitioner is a colleague who has professional attributes and expertise that your mentee wants to develop. You should help your mentee to choose an appropriate colleague for this observation, and discuss with them what they are going to be looking for during the observation.

Take time to meet your mentee and the experienced practitioner before the observation visit. Help your mentee to develop a clear focus on the most relevant parts of the lesson in terms of their own priorities for development (e.g. how to ask questions that promote learning, how to engage all learners). Discussion about the focus of the observation before it takes place will help your mentee to learn as much as possible from the observation visit.

In discussion *after* the lesson, and bearing in mind the appropriate assessment prompt from the syllabus, you can help your mentee by asking

- *what did you notice about...?*
- *how did the teacher...?*
- *what activities enabled the teacher to assess...?*

For example, you can prompt a teacher investigating how assessment and activity-based learning work together with questions such as these:

- *How did the teacher use activities to promote learning?*
- *Did the teacher make use of activities for assessing learning?*
- *How was questioning used? Do you feel questioning was effective in promoting learning? What did you see and hear that makes you feel this?*
- *Was there evidence of differentiation? What ways were used to differentiate/ support learners?*
- *Did learners understand what they had learned? What did you observe which leads you to think this?*
- *What did you record in your observation report? Does it need amending? Did you collect a copy of the lesson plan? Does it reflect what you saw?*

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice *continued*

### Observing your mentee

Observation is a core feature of the Cambridge PDQs. Being observed enables your mentee to develop greater awareness of their strengths and areas for development, and provides a stimulus for professional dialogue.

As an observer you provide a view of the teaching space that the teacher can never have concerning their own practice: that of a professional not actively involved in the learning process in that classroom.

The Cambridge observation feedback form has three parts:

- pre-observation discussion
- the observation
- post-observation discussion.

When you meet your mentee before the observation clarify with them the intended outcomes for observation (not the lesson). Agree a focus for the observation: This focus will partly be guided by the assessment requirements. Ask them for their lesson plan and any other relevant resources.

In the observation you should focus more on what the learners are doing and their learning rather than on the 'teaching'. For example if the timekeeping or voice projection is an issue you should state this, but these issues of delivery should not be the focus of the observation.

Remember to focus on the learning more than the teaching activities. Consider:

- what the learners are doing – are they engaged, attentive, thinking?
- how the teacher interacts with the learners – are they contributing, relaxed?
- what is going on and why – you can note 'this happened... because...'
- are the learners contributing and actively engaged with their learning?
- are all learners included, are they challenged and supported?

- were the resources appropriate?
- how did the teacher check understanding throughout the lesson (formative assessment)?
- did the teacher ask for learner feedback? If so, how and how are they using the feedback?

NB – to repeat: Observation for the PDQs is **formative**, for the benefit of your mentee's professional learning and development. You should not assess your mentee summatively, nor share the observation report for the purpose of a performance appraisal.

When Cambridge examines the portfolio, we do look for evidence of the effectiveness of the observation and feedback for the further development of the candidate.

Schedule your post-observation discussion soon after the observation. Give your comments in a way that assists your mentee to discuss and reflect on the lesson. Ask questions and be curious about how and why they approached aspects of the lesson. Encourage your mentee to be articulate and clear about their thinking. Approach the post-observation discussion as a chance for self-reflection and sharing of experience.

Your mentee will want your feedback on the lesson and you should aim to provide this in a way that will benefit and encourage their practice. Always start with the positives! Be specific and be prepared to enter into a conversation. Check that your mentee understands your comments– and whether they agree.

We encourage all PDQ centres, schools leaders, teacher and leaders to observe and be observed formatively as much as possible as a regular and customary part of effective school-based professional learning. So the observations included in the portfolio are a focused sample rather than the only, stand-alone or one-off events. You can observe your mentee more frequently – your mentoring relationship does not have to stay within the relatively narrow confines of the 'PDQ requirements'.



## How do I facilitate learning from interview?

In Module 1 Unit 2 in Educational Leadership candidates have to write a report in which they consider their academic research findings and reflect upon an interview with an experienced colleague. They should discuss what successful leadership looks like, using both to help them to identify the specific skills they need to develop to be a successful leader. This report should form a coherent whole.

Your questioning can guide your mentee to be careful to design a small number of questions for the interview that can lead to the most useful answers. The interview notes that your mentee needs to submit as part of the portfolio evidence should inform the skills specification and the skills development plan that are also submitted as evidence of learning. You will be able to challenge your mentee to keep focused on his or her aims, plans and skills.

## How can I encourage my mentee to complete the portfolio?

Help your mentee to focus on their portfolio by discussing with them how they plan to evidence the impact of the changes they are making. You can also ask about the evidence that they are seeking to include in their portfolio and reviewing with them how they plan to evaluate their new practices.

Confident learners build their portfolio of evidence as they progress through the programme, recording the outcomes from their enquiries, initiatives, and shaping their evidence of practice, learning and reflection in the light of their experience. Learners who do not do this and 'leave it to the last minute' are taking significant risks. For example they risk misunderstanding the portfolio requirements, forgetting many of their findings, losing coherence or not clearly remembering the relevance of some of their findings.

A successful portfolio has to be a coherent report on a period of reflective practice, demonstrating learning and the changing conceptual perspective of the candidate. Evidence has to support the claims made upon it.

As mentor, you can support your mentee by requesting they bring their reflection journal with them to each meeting. This can help to stimulate discussion. Your mentee may also bring draft portfolio evidence to refer to help explain their developing thinking. Please be careful not to rework or directly intervene in this portfolio evidence. It must be the candidate's own work. Treat what your mentee shows you as their words, and respond to it just as you would to their spoken reflections and explanations, i.e. through open questioning help them to refine and develop their thinking (not their evidence).

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice *continued*

### How can I develop our mentoring discussions?

The quality of the professional dialogue between you and your mentee is integral to developing a successful mentoring relationship. This dialogue is sometimes called a '*learning conversation*' as it is a continuing dialogue about learning through which both of you learn. Julie Starr talks about '*growing*' through the experience of being mentored, comparing this to growth in nature (Starr, 2014, 90).

The **GROW** model is a well-known and useful model for structuring mentoring discussions to make them effective and purposeful. This model is based on a four-stage cycle:

- a **Goal** is established;
- the **Reality** of the mentee's situation is examined;

- **Options** are explored;
- a **Way forward** is identified in order for the mentee to achieve their goal.

There is a clip on *Mentoring and coaching* on Teachers' TV that includes an example of the GROW model being used in practice.

<https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/teachers-tv-mentoring-and-coaching-6083754>

Although the GROW model appears to be a simple process with clear movement from stage 1 to stage 4, in reality your discussion can usefully move back and forth between each stage. When formulating goals you should make sure that the goals you agree with your mentee will challenge and stretch them.



Take a systematic approach to your learning conversation with your mentee. Have a framework for the conversation, allowing you to keep focus as well as some flexibility. You can develop specific prompts for different purposes, as listed below. This will help you to focus the conversation and help your mentee to identify relevant evidence from their practice.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Acceptance</b>
<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Generalisation</b>	<b>Clarification</b>
<b>Justification</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Defence</b>

It is also important that you develop your 'active listening' skills. In her book 'Time to Think' Nancy Kline says that

“...giving good attention to people makes them more intelligent. Poor attention makes them stumble over their words and seem stupid. Your attention, your listening is that important.” Kline (1999: 37)

The quality of your attention can transform the quality of the interaction with your mentee so make sure you find a quiet space for your mentoring discussions and turn off devices that interrupt the conversation. Ask questions with the intention to deepen understanding, assess consistency and to challenge motivation. Being an active listener will encourage your mentee to say more and think harder. A good listener enables the speaker to explore and develop creative ideas.

Aim for your learning conversations to be a professional discussion between equals. For the duration of the learning conversation put aside your different roles and statuses so that you and your mentee can share ideas,

discuss theories and your current understanding as two professionals. Share your experience about new and changing ideas and practices.

Open ended questions on the education topics can engage your mentee and help them to think through issues fundamental to teaching and leadership. The key questions in each syllabus address many of these topics. You can see that from module to module the questions become more challenging and demand more critical thinking.

You will also want to challenge your mentee to make decisions about what to try or what to change in their practice. Make sure that you follow up with them on these and discuss in your next mentoring meeting. It is crucial that new learning is tried out in practice, and that practice is influenced by new learning. For example you might ask: in the previous PDQ workshop session the Programme Leader looked at how group work can give learners the opportunity to offer suggestions without risking being wrong. How can you see if this is true for your learners? Then in your next conversation you can begin by exploring what your mentee found out when they tried this in practice. Making changes in thinking and practice can initially seem daunting and difficult – but with your support your mentee can develop new practices and reflect upon their outcomes for learners, colleagues and themselves.



## How can I give useful feedback?

Giving and receiving feedback should take the form of a conversation. You ask your mentee to reflect on what took place and how it could be made different next time.

For example:

*Tell me about the lesson that I observed, please?*

*What I noticed was...*

*What do you think went well and what went less well?*

*I enjoyed... when I saw...*

*Why parts were less satisfied with...?*

*What might help you to address this...?*

*How would you plan for...?*

*Where do you think you were most effective in assessing learning?*

*What might improve the assessment of learning still further?*

There are times when you will want to challenge your mentee, but feedback is not about being confrontational. A dialogue is usually the best way to explore issues and understand the motivation of your mentee as well as the outcome of the activities.

You should also ask your mentee for feedback and comments on how you are doing as a mentor supporting their development. Even if you have lots of experience as a mentor and practitioner – you have never been their mentor before – and you will want to know what is working for them, and where they'd like more support.

You may have to lead this at the start of your relationship, however over time, as your relationship develops, you can encourage your mentee to develop this aspect of their professional development.

Through observing other teachers or interviewing a leader and by reflecting on their learning in a journal, your mentee will develop and change as a practitioner. Your role is to engage with them and support their reflection. Your feedback can help them identify evidence of improvement through changing practice. Help and encourage your mentee to move from description to evaluation of their practice. This is an important aspect of professional learning, and one which Cambridge examiners will be looking for in the candidate portfolios (see the assessment criteria in the syllabus).

Questions you can ask:

- *what differences there were in how learners demonstrated their understanding when they tried new teaching methods* (Teaching and Learning)
- *how planning enabled bilingual learners to progress with both lesson content and language* (Teaching Bilingual Learners)
- *whether different subject departments were found to be using ICT resources differently, and with what effect* (Teaching with Digital Technologies)
- *whether the implementation of a change is bringing about the desired effects within the school or department, and how your mentee knows* (Educational Leadership).

## How can we keep a record of our discussions?

Many mentors and mentees find it very helpful to keep a brief record of their discussions for future reference. An example template is below. It is up to you and your mentee to decide whether to keep a written record and if so how. It is not required in the portfolio of evidence, and it is very much up to you to judge whether it helps to make your mentoring discussions more successful.

Key understandings/ideas	Adding value to my practice	Date of discussion
What key understanding or ideas did I develop during this discussion?	How could this discussion add value to my practice?	

## Section 4: How to develop your mentoring practice *continued*

### What should I do if/when...?

Mentors and mentees can experience challenges during mentoring. Lack of time, conflicting roles, a mismatch in professional expertise, personality differences and unrealistic expectations are some of the issues that can arise.

Here are some issues which can be experienced from time to time, and our advice.

#### What if I am leaving the school or centre?

You will have been in contact with the Programme Leader and so you know that you are not on your own. Let the Programme Leader and your mentee know as soon as you can so that there will be break in mentoring support for the mentee. Schedule in a final mentoring meeting with your mentee and wind up any issues (such as observation) so nothing is left undone or unsaid. Make sure that you pass on to the Programme Leader all your notes and details of the progress made by your mentee. The Programme Leader will be able to identify someone you can pass your role on to before you leave.

#### What if I feel that my mentee is not responding appropriately to the programme's requirements?

You are not responsible for the successful completion of the programme. If you feel that your mentee is not responding to your advice concerning requirements, discuss this with the Programme Leader and ask for their support and guidance to resolve the issue. It may be that your mentee has come to a sticking point or lacks confidence to attempt something new – try to find out what the problem is and how they can be helped to progress.

#### What can I do if I feel the mentoring relationship is not working out?

This can happen, even with the best of intentions and efforts. The situation can be resolved amicably. First see the Programme Leader and discuss your concerns. Be clear about what you feel is going wrong.

#### What if I need information to help me to support my mentee?

There should be a selection of texts and other resources to support the PDQ programme in school. You do not need to work or study for the mentoring role. Ask your mentee to explain what you want to know about. If you are not satisfied, go to the Programme Leader and ask for information.

#### What if resources and time for mentoring are not made available?

The Programme Leader and school leaders are aware of the significance of the mentoring role in PDQ programmes. Be clear when you become a mentor that it is a regular commitment, needing time set aside for discussions. Meeting times need to be respected. Make sure that there is space for the meetings to take place where you will not be disturbed. Continuing problems with resources and time should be referred to and discussed with the Programme Leader.

We expect Programme Leaders to guide and support mentors and mentees and help address any issues which may arise. So if you do encounter serious issues and feel you cannot resolve these with your mentees, you need to alert your Programme Leader.

## Conclusion

You have been asked to be a mentor. You will have a vital role in the professional learning of teachers and leaders taking part in PDQ programmes. We greatly appreciate your contribution and your commitment of time, energy and expertise on behalf of your mentees. We hope you find mentoring an enriching experience.



### Learn more!

Getting in touch with Cambridge is easy: Email: [info@cie.org.uk](mailto:info@cie.org.uk) Call: +44 (0)1223 553554 Visit: [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)

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## Suggested further reading

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