

## **Employability Mentoring FAQ**

*Q. What if my mentor/mentee fails to respond to my communications with them?*

### **Why is this important to address?**

Poor communication affects professional relationships every day at work and as such it is important to address this in Employability Mentoring and establish a culture of open, honest and regular communication in order to instil a way of working that continues for the future. Two-way communication can sometimes be an issue if the people involved have different values and standards. Equally when something arises in a person's life, normal priorities can often change without the other person knowing. If effective ground rules for communication are set out at the start then there is less likelihood of miscommunication.

### **What we say about it?**

Poor communication where it does not meet the other person's original expectations is likely to be one of the most significant contributors for relationship breakdown. We are committed to providing support and guidance for mentors and mentees to help foster a relationship that exceeds professional expectations.

We aim to provide you with clear guidance on professional communication and offer on hand assistance should an issue arise which you need our support with. If following a recorded communication to your mentor or mentee (email, text or voicemail) you have not stipulated a date to have a response by, make a reasonable judgement as to when you think a response should have been sent and then perhaps follow up with another recorded communication which will include a request for response by a set date.

If you are sure that they have not responded within a timeframe you would have preferred, follow up with a polite mail, professionally worded, perhaps asking if they got the mail and for a short response without the pressure of a full detailed response. This will then allow them a chance to offer brief feedback if they are busy with other priorities but not feeling they have to give a full response at this time. This should then help in opening up brief dialogue on extending a timeframe for communication or assessing if there needs to be a pause to proceedings. Note this development, should you need to refer to it should the issue arise again or indeed escalate. If there is still no response then inform them that you will be contacting the project.

### **Our actions and response**

Within the mentor and mentee resources available in our online resources area, we provide packs that include three way agreements and induction information to inform mentees and mentor of the importance of emphasising proactive two-way communication as vital to the project's success. This gives you grounds from which to raise an issue if you think something is not working the way it should. The relationship should be guided and led by the mentee. Should there be an issue with communication then the following procedure will commence upon notifying us:

- We will respond to your enquiry immediately.
- We will respect your concern and seek to learn as much as we can with regards to the context and issue in question where a person has ceased communication.
- Upon notification from you that there is an issue and we have your consent to try and contact your mentor/mentee, we will attempt to contact them via email thus having a data trail of contact.

- We will send a respectful mail to investigate if there is an issue from their perspective.
- We will send the email with a 'delivery report', a request for a 'read receipt' and mark it as 'high importance'.
- We will inform them in this mail that we will attempt to also contact them via phone call.
- Should the phone call be unanswered we will try once more and then write to the persons home/work address as a final resort.
- If we receive no contact from them following a further two weeks we will then separate the mentor and mentee on our database and place the non-communicant into a holding area where we will attempt further individual contact using the above methods for another four weeks.
- Should we not establish contact then we will write one more final letter of our actions to remove them from the employability mentoring project and archive their details.
- Should we hear from the non-communicant following the above actions we will establish as to whether the reasons for non-contact are sufficient in the eyes of the other person and consider if it is appropriate to continue.
- If it is, then a full review of project expectations will be revisited and a fresh commitment is taken to continue in the manner as originally intended.

During a time of investigation by the project, if you feel that you would like to continue mentoring, arrangements will be made to allocate you to another mentee or mentor where appropriate. Alternatively should you wish to take a break from mentoring then let the project know and they will make a note on the system and talk to you about your experiences so far before offering a period of time out from the project.

### **How you can help**

To help keep communication proactive and two-way, agree between you a maximum time frame between communications that you will work towards. Where this is breached make contact as soon as you can with the other person, professionally explaining for the lack of communication to keep the relationship open and honest. Be proactive in communications and keep a record of when you have attempted to make contact. Inform the project if you have any concerns. Regularly visit project documents with your mentor / mentee such as the three way agreement to refresh your expectations of each other and of the project.

### **Contact us**

Contact us on 07909 000127 or 0116 207 8979

[andy.morris@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:andy.morris@dmu.ac.uk)