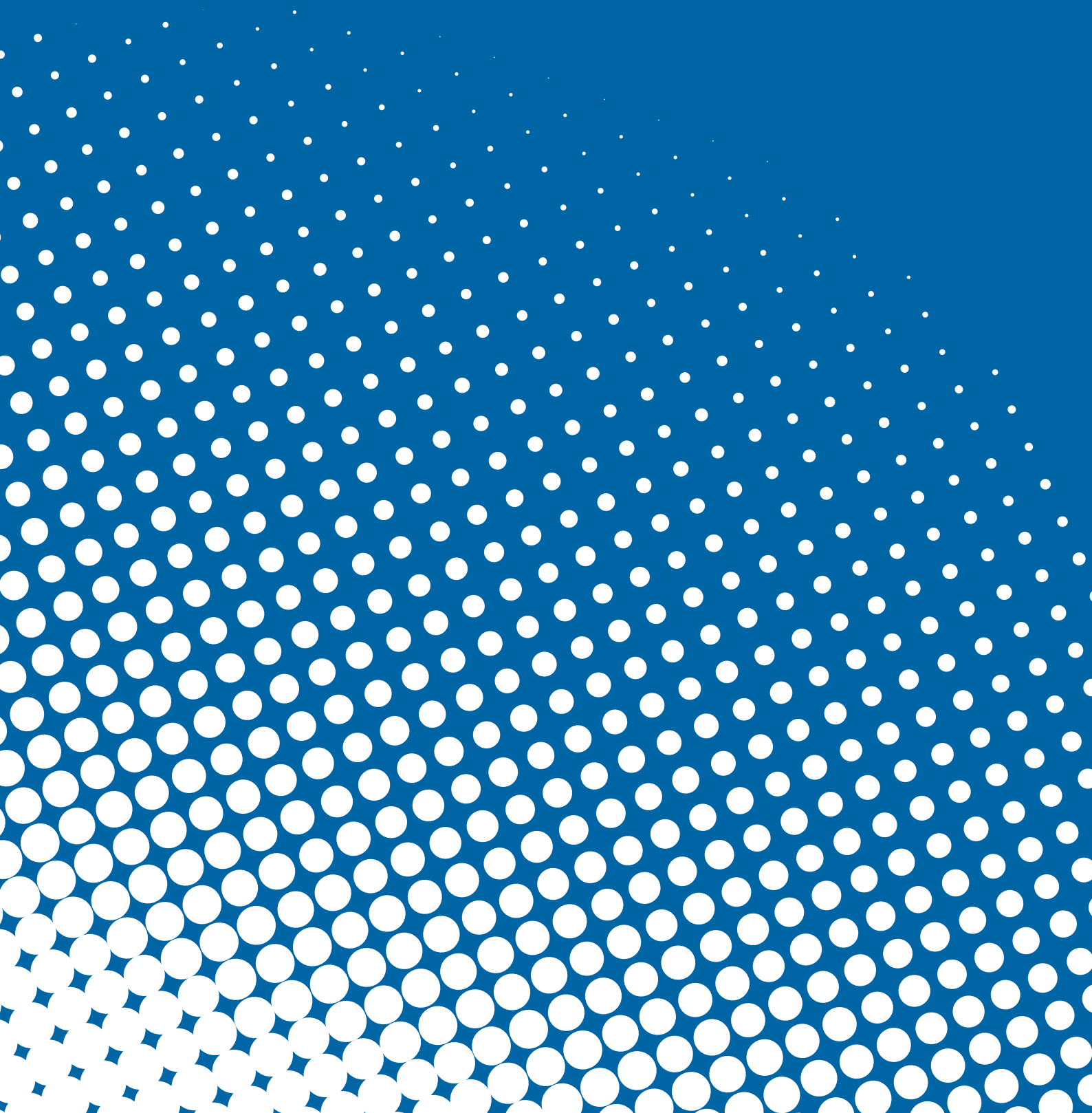





Mentoring Guidelines



Introduction

IPENZ is committed to providing mentoring support to graduates as a key element of graduate progression. Graduates should ensure they are mentored throughout the first few years of their initial career development, while they are developing their competence. For the purposes of this document, graduate professional engineers, graduate engineering technologists and graduate engineering technicians are all referred to as “graduates”. These guidelines have been developed to support IPENZ mentors and graduates in their roles.

The diagram below shows how graduates can assess the benefits of mentoring and find a mentor.

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- >** **Read this guide** so that you know what you require from a mentor.
 - >** **Compile your requirements.** Write a paragraph summarising your qualifications, experience, current position and what you require from a mentor.
 - >** **Ask your line manager or supervisor** if they can recommend someone in your company. A person in your company is the most useful mentor, because they have knowledge of specific company processes.
 - >** **Networking at IPENZ Branch and Technical Interest Group events** is recommended if there are no engineers available to mentor you within your company.
 - >** **Approach the Branch Committee or IPENZ National Office** if you are unable to identify a mentor from your own networks.

The Value of Mentoring

Mentoring is a key feature of graduate progression. Graduates should ensure they are mentored throughout the first few years of their initial career development while they are developing their competence.

The primary role of mentoring is to aid and support a graduate's progression by promoting a caring and genuine interest in developing their abilities and talents. Given this focus, mentors should regularly review and provide feedback on records of work history and examples of competence demonstration graduates have documented.

As the engineering profession is complex, newer members can benefit greatly from guidance and support, either from a more experienced engineering professional or in a structured peer-mentor relationship. The relationship provides graduates with insight and information outside the normal channels, which enhances their ability to translate theory into practice. Good mentoring transfers professional knowledge and sharpens the graduate's learning curve. Mentors can offer graduates experience, balance, perspective and wisdom in addition to helping develop career opportunities.

Mentoring enhances the development of a professional ethos, which is an underpinning characteristic of the engineering profession. It is an effective tool in developing and maintaining the standards of the profession as well as enhancing the career prospects of individual members. It is also a means of transferring the professional knowledge, technical expertise and organisational awareness of more experienced colleagues to those with less experience in an organisation.

The mentor system can empower and motivate graduates; this results in graduates being more productive and innovative. It creates a positive work culture within an organisation where innovation, creativity and talent are fostered for all employees.



Mentoring Models

The main thrust of mentoring should be around the traditional mentoring model, although other models such as peer mentoring or group mentoring may be useful in supporting the traditional model.

TRADITIONAL MENTORING

Traditional mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between an experienced senior engineer as a mentor and the graduate.

The mentor should be an experienced and highly skilled engineer. They should have been assessed at the equivalent of MIPENZ or CPEng for graduates aiming for these levels, or AIPENZ/TIPENZ for graduates on the engineering technologist or technician pathways. The mentor should be familiar with the competence assessment process, and ideally, should have undergone some form of mentoring training and/or be trained as professional practice interviewers.

Traditional mentoring is a private relationship between the graduate and the mentor based on a mutual desire for development towards organisational/career goals. The relationship is a non-reporting one and does not impinge on the established organisational structure in the graduate's workplace. It is additional to other forms of career support such as career planning and continuing professional development (CPD), not a replacement.

PEER MENTORING

Peer mentoring can be a useful way of imparting specific knowledge, and enhancing communication skills. Peer mentoring recognises that the mentor need not be a senior person with considerable status in the organisation. Rather, it matches graduates with other engineers who have a few years experience in the organisation. Mentors and graduates should be following similar career paths so their skills and experience correspond.

The primary goal of peer mentoring is to reflect on the way people learn and to work with another through an observational model to improve their performance. An example of this could involve making a presentation of research to other graduates or engineers, followed by an opportunity for feedback with a peer mentor.

GROUP MENTORING

Group mentoring involves a group of graduates with similar levels of engineering experience meeting regularly in a structured session. These groups are, in effect, learning centres. They should nominate or identify an experienced engineer as a contact person. Group mentoring helps foster valuable relationships and enhances communications skills.

Guidelines For Traditional and Peer mentors

The following points will help ensure mentoring runs smoothly and benefits both the mentor and graduate.

TRAINING

The mentor's and graduate's training needs should be considered before a mentoring relationship begins. All participants in a mentoring programme need to understand the mentoring goals, what issues they might meet and the procedure to follow if there is a problem.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Mentoring relationships work best on a time limited basis and should be reviewed annually to ensure they are meeting the graduate's needs. However, this does not mean these relationships can't end before this time or run for several years if working successfully.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

There should be a procedure to follow if a mentor or graduate encounter problem with their relationship.

LIMIT ON MENTORING NUMBERS

It is recommended mentors limit the number of people they are mentoring to three at any one time.

RECORDING MENTORING

It is important to record the outcomes of mentoring meetings and log issues and areas for discussion at future meetings. IPENZ supports mentoring relationships by having a mentoring log available in the Members' section of the IPENZ website. This should be used as it provides a clear record of the graduate's progress can be used to evaluate the relationship's success.

SCHEDULE MEETINGS

It is important that mentoring meetings are booked in advance and planned meetings honoured. The IPENZ mentoring log provides a booking and reminder system to help ensure that the process stays on track. A tutorial on the online mentoring log and its use is available in the Members' Area of the IPENZ website. For more information contact The Director, Learning and Assessment, at dir_la@ipenz.org.nz

RECORD KEEPING

Graduates preparing for competence assessment should record and reflect on work episodes and continuing professional development (CPD). Mentors should review these records at least annually, and provide feedback.

Establishing the Relationship

Each graduate has a different set of expectations according to their personal and professional circumstances. The mentor's role is to respond to the graduate's needs as appropriate, but there need to be limits or parameters within which the mentor operates. These are designed to ensure the safety and well being of all participants, and to maximise the programme's usefulness.

CLARIFY ROLES AND GOALS

Shared understanding of mentor and graduate roles should be developed at the start of the relationship. Both the mentor and graduate should be clear on their expectations and the objectives of their relationship. These relationships should be formalised by signing an agreement; a template agreement, which can be adapted as needed, is available in the Mentoring Services section of the Members area of the IPENZ website.

MENTORS SHOULD FOCUS ON SUPPORTING THE GRADUATE'S PROFESSIONAL PROGRESSION

The main purpose of mentoring is graduate progression. Graduates have a very clear definition of their needs, but are more likely to have a hazy notion of their professional goals and how to achieve them. A major part of the initial relationship may be defining their professional development goals and helping establish a plan to achieve them, perhaps over a 3–5 year timeframe.

It is important to establish the parameters for discussion early in the mentoring relationship. As the circumstances of individuals vary enormously it is not possible to give a simple definition of what is acceptable. However, it is probably wise to trust your instincts to a certain extent, and if you feel uncomfortable with any topic, make it clear that you consider it inappropriate to the mentoring relationship. Conversely, it is important to respect the graduate's feelings. They may be reticent and prefer not to discuss certain issues.

MENTORS SHOULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN COUNSELLING

The mentoring programme is not a counselling service, nor are mentors social workers. Mentors need to be aware of the appropriate steps to take if they think a graduate needs specific counselling. Recommending or informing the graduate of Employee Assistance Programmes (if available) may be appropriate in some circumstances.

MENTORS SHOULD NOT INTERFERE IN EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Mentors must not interfere in the relationship between the graduate and their supervisor. Of course participation in the programme may positively alter the graduate's performance in the workplace. However it is not the mentor's place to get involved in workplace politics. The majority of graduates will be capable and keen to progress, but if one has an axe to grind, or is in a very difficult employment situation the mentor must make it clear that it is not his or her role to solve that particular problem.

MENTORS SHOULD AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Mentors need to ensure they are not placed in a situation which could result in a conflict of interest. Although the mentoring relationship and everything that is discussed within it is completely confidential, mentors need to ensure they do not say anything which could impact adversely on their own or the graduate's professional responsibilities. Both parties should respect agreed boundaries, and understand some information is off limits.

DECIDE FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Mentoring meetings should be limited to a maximum of one hour per fortnight. They should be held, at a minimum, once every two months.

ALL RELATIONSHIPS MUST END ON OR BEFORE THE DUE DATE

The formal mentoring relationship should be limited to 12 months initially, and then reviewed to see if it is appropriate to continue. Not continuing the relationship should be an option for both parties at any time, and it must be understood that it is acceptable to do so without blame on either side.

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

The purpose of the mentoring relationship should be discussed and recorded at the first mentoring session. A mentoring agreement is useful to formalise the relationship's boundaries and ensure the mentor and graduate clarify their expectations and goals for the mentoring period. It should also record details such as how often mentoring sessions are to be held, the venue, etc. The IPENZ online mentoring log is recommended for this and is available in the Members area of the IPENZ website. This can be found at www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/members/mentoring/

A record of what the mentor and graduate need to do before the next meeting should also be kept and adhered to. Outcomes or actions stemming from each mentoring session need to be recorded by both the mentor and graduate; they should be the first thing discussed at the next mentoring session.

ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST AND CONFIDENTIALITY

In any mentoring relationship there is the possibility of a power imbalance, particularly if the graduate is much more junior than the mentor. Such an imbalance may inhibit graduates from discussing certain issues, or revealing their true thoughts or feelings about an issue. Mentors have to work at getting over this barrier, and one of the best ways of doing so is by demonstrating they are prepared to share their experiences with honesty, and showing they listen and take on board what graduates say.

Loyalty and commitment are essential. Both parties also need to be absolutely clear about the confidential nature of matters discussed. Everything that passes between the two parties is completely confidential, and should not be disclosed under any circumstances without the agreement of both parties. Mutual respect is also critical in establishing trust. Mentors will not necessarily agree with everything graduates say; their philosophy of life, their politics, their spirituality, cultural identity or sexual identity may be very different from the mentor's own, but both need to respect and acknowledge the right to be different.

BE A CATALYST RATHER THAN A LEADER

Given that mentors are experienced, highly skilled people, there is an almost overwhelming temptation simply to dispense good advice. Mentors should empower graduates to make their own decisions. They should use their intellectual resources and experience to help the graduate analyse and reflect on their situation or issue. Where necessary mentors may either supply information or direct them to appropriate resources, make them aware of the range of options available, and then encourage them to make their own decisions. Mentoring is about encouraging independence rather than dependency. A key benefit from mentoring programmes is a growth in graduates' personal confidence. This largely comes from the support the mentors give them to develop their own solutions once the mentor gives the graduate the tools to do so.

ESTABLISH COMFORTABLE PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Basically the mentoring relationship is a finite and professional workplace relationship, but it will not work well without a degree of empathy between the partners. Mentors should be friendly but not friends. It is important to make that distinction and maintain the relationship on that basis. Mentors need to take the lead in establishing the personal boundaries of the relationship. In a peer mentoring model, when both participants are of a similar age with only a little difference in experience it can be easy to fall into the habit of discussing things as if talking to a friend. Remember mentoring is a professional relationship, and both participants will only benefit fully if following an agreed structure. The mentoring agreement is particularly important in peer mentoring models.

AVOID NEGATIVE BEHAVIOURS

Avoid negative or destructive criticism, which can cause resentment and destroy the relationship. This is not to say that mentors should not challenge the graduate and give constructive feedback. There are times when the analysis will have to be rigorous if it is to be useful, but it is something that should be done together. Mentors must allow graduates to make their own mistakes, but help them to learn from the consequences of their actions.

BE PREPARED TO LET GO

The mentoring relationship is a finite one, and both parties must be prepared to let go when it ends.

Both parties should negotiate an end to the relationship that is based on mutual understanding.

It should be accepted without question that if one party wants to end the relationship early, that is fine.

ENJOY THE RELATIONSHIP AND LEARN FROM IT

It is important that the mentoring relationship should be one in which both parties learn. It should be an adult-adult relationship in which the mentor does not hold all the cards. If mentors are open to learning from their graduates they may find the experience particularly rewarding.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

The following skills are not unique to a mentoring relationship; they are interpersonal skills that are used on a day to day basis. However, they are often the criteria by which mentoring relationships succeed or fail.

LISTENING

- Listen for ideas, as main points may be implied rather than clearly stated.
- Distinguish between facts and opinions or assumptions.
- Identify the reality rather than the appearance of what is said. Avoid making interpretations from what is heard.
- Check the meaning of what is said. People say things differently and use words differently.
- Don't "switch off" by assuming you know the next point; you could get it wrong.
- Don't feel uncomfortable if there is a pause. It's an opportunity to think and reflect.
- Pay close attention to the learner. Concentrate and try to avoid distractions (mental and physical).
- Show you are listening.

QUESTIONING

- Questions can help move discussions forward. They also allow some areas to be explored more deeply or open up new areas. They are often the keys to effective guiding and steering of the discussion.
- Open questions (e.g., how? what? why?) help deepen or broaden the discussion by producing a reasoned response. They are useful for getting facts, opinions and feelings.
- Closed Questions (e.g. who? when? where?) help focus on a specific issue and produce precise responses. Another example is the "Is it.....?" question that is used when looking for agreement/disagreement (yes/no).
- Achieving the right mix between open and closed questions is important. Typically, where the discussion divides into a stage of generating solutions, select one and develop an action plan. The mix of questions will in the first stage be more towards open questions, and in the second stage more towards closed questions, i.e., who is going to do what, by when?

QUESTIONS TO AVOID

- Questions that change direction in mid-stream, thus becoming ambiguous or vague.
- Multiple questions, leaving no time to answer one question before asking another.
- Long and/or complicated questions: break them down into a series of short questions.
- Staccato questioning - rapid-fire questions that don't flow at a natural, measured pace and are often perceived as an interrogation.
- Presenting alternatives: "Is it this ... or that ...?" It may be neither, so unless you are sure of the possible options, ask a more open question to find out the full range of options.
- Leading questions, where the response sought is indicated in the question, eg "Do you have many doubts about the plans I have for your department?" Loaded questions, which imply very clearly what your views are, eg "I'm sure you agree, don't you, that several of your people are operating well below performance standards?"
- "Why" questions, can be useful, but should be used carefully as if improperly phrased they can lead to defensiveness – e.g. "Why didn't you do ... See below for some examples of useful "Why" questions.

USEFUL EXAMPLES

- “Why do you see ... as important?”
- “What options are there?”
- “Why do you feel the need to ...?”
- “Have you thought through the implications of ...?”
- “Would it be helpful to ...?”
- “How would you choose between ...?”
- “Are there any other possibilities?”
- “How do you think they would cope with the changes? Would it follow that ...?”

REPHRASING AND SUMMARISING

- If you are not sure what someone has been saying, repeat it in different words and ask if this is what was meant. As well as checking understanding, it may add greater clarity to the learner’s ideas.
- Don’t repeat back parrot-fashion. It only indicates that the words have been heard and it doesn’t move the discussion forward.
- The easiest thing to achieve in relationships is a misunderstanding, so don’t feel anxious about frequent rephrasing. Failure to rephrase from time to time can result in the mentor looking foolish when he offers a summary of what has been said that proves to be inaccurate.
- Summarise what has been said or agreed at appropriate stages and check for understanding and agreement.
- To summarise, you cannot cover all the detail. Pick out the main points or central ideas to get an overall picture.
- If you’re unsure of what to say next, summarise. It may prompt the learner to say more. It can also provide a springboard for re-launching the discussion.



GIVING FEEDBACK

- Be sure why you're giving feedback. It should not be given if the intent is unhelpful.
- Relate the feedback to an actual behaviour (what was done) that had a particular effect and also to a behaviour over which the learner has some control.
- Avoid saying what you think happened or what should have happened. Avoid being judgmental and negative, pointing out mistakes or weaknesses, blaming for what has happened.
- Give feedback a little at a time, so that it can be absorbed and reflected upon.
- Give feedback as immediately as possible in order to facilitate learning. Check out that feedback is understood.

EMPATHETIC MENTORING

- Empathy is being able to fully appreciate the learner's position and what it feels like to be them, i.e. "to be in their shoes". It is vital for mentors to be sensitive and to be able to empathise and display sincerity when empathising.
- Acknowledging understanding of where the learner is and what it feels like needs to be as simple as possible – for example, "That must have been difficult", "You must have felt very frustrated by that".
- Reflect back by repeating a phrase or sentence that has seemed significant. This way you acknowledge its importance e.g. "You think it was an unnecessarily complex task?"; "You're seriously concerned about the work of the section?"
- Listen and look for the "feelings behind the words". This indicates the importance or significance of what's being said. Listen for tone of voice and look for facial expression, since feelings may not be expressed openly in words.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

- This assumes that as a mentor you might on occasions be resistant to change. It is important to realise mentoring is a two-way street. The mentor should be willing to learn from the graduate and realise some changes are positive.
- Successful mentoring may require the mentor to change, improve or develop in some way e.g. a mentor may receive feedback that they need to develop better listening skills, or provide clearer constructive comments when asked for them.
- Avoid the temptation to reject an idea or proposal for change from the learner.
- Test the learner's idea in an encouraging way, for instance by questioning rather than raising objections.

Resources

WEBCASTS

A series of short webcasts on mentoring can be found in the Members' area of the [IPENZ website](#). These include:

- An introduction to Mentoring
- An introduction to the IPENZ competence standard
- A forum discussion with experienced Mentors
- A forum discussion with two young engineers

MENTORING LOG

The mentoring log can be found in the Members' area of the IPENZ website. It can be used to record the outcomes of discussion. There is tutorial available which steps you through using the log within the Members' area.

ONLINE RECORD KEEPING TOOLS

Work History and CPD online record keeping tools provide useful templates to base discussions on as the mentoring relationship develops. These are available from the Members' area of the [IPENZ website](#).

IPENZ MENTOR FOUNDATIONS WORKSHOP

Please follow the link below to register your expression of interest.

www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/nzecal/eventdetail.cfm?eventid=5170

IPENZ ASSESSOR TRAINING

Please contact IPENZ national office to register your interest in taking part in assessor training.

ENGINEERING EDGE

Engineering Edge is an IPENZ publication introducing the wider engineering profession and its credentialing framework. Its purpose is to help ensure that the right engineer is chosen for every job. It is aimed at regulators, purchasers of engineering services, employers of engineers and engineers.

www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/forms/pdfs/engineering_edge.pdf

COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT TUTORIAL

The link below leads to tutorial which is intended to help applicants prepare their portfolio of evidence for competence assessment for one or more of the IPENZ competence-based quality marks.

www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/Forms/pdfs/Making_an_Application_For_Competence_Assessment_tutorial.pdf

COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT REFERENCE GUIDE

The following reference guide is intended to help applicants prepare for one or more of the IPENZ competence-based quality marks.

www.ipenz.org.nz/ipenz/forms/pdfs/CARG_Competence_assessment_Reference_Guide.pdf

USEFUL WEBSITES

Additional information for mentors and graduates can be accessed via the following links.

www.mentoringgroup.com

www.businessmentors.org.nz



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