

Institute of Conservation
Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR)
The professional practice assessment for conservation professionals wishing to gain accredited status

Mentee Guide

A guide for Icon members with an Icon mentor for professional development

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Mentee Guide

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Introduction to Icon's Mentor Scheme

The Icon mentor scheme is designed to support any Icon member on the PACR Pathway working towards accreditation, on an internship, or seeking guidance in the preparation of continuing professional development plans in touch with a fellow professional. All Icon mentors have undergone the same mentor training and all are PACR accredited .

As an 'Associate' member of Icon you can request a mentor for professional guidance at any time. If you are working towards an accreditation application you should let Icon know so that you can be put on the PACR Pathway and you will be sent information about the mentor scheme automatically.

The most successful mentoring relationships tend to be those that have developed over a long period of time. Therefore you will find it beneficial to apply for a mentor as soon as you join the PACR Pathway, embark on an internship or decide you would like guidance on your continuing professional development.

Finding a mentor

In order to be put in touch with an Icon mentor you are asked to complete a mentee form and select three mentors from the Icon mentor list. Your chosen mentors are contacted one-by-one by email and asked whether they would be available to be your mentor.

It can take several weeks to set up a mentee with their chosen mentor. For this reason there must be at least three months between the request for a mentor and the deadline a mentee is working towards. Unfortunately it will not be possible to process requests made less than twelve weeks before a deadline.

Key to starting a mentor relationship on a good footing is to provide as much relevant information about you on the mentee form. Your completed mentee form is sent to the selected mentor to help them decide whether they are able to provide the kind of support you are looking for. It is therefore important that you think carefully about how you answer the questions about your long-term career goals, the areas you are seeking to develop and what you hope to gain from the relationship. It is also important to consider how long you see the relationship continuing as it is possible to change mentors. For example, you do not need to stay with the same mentor for the duration of your development towards accreditation

When choosing a mentor consider these points:

- Is it important for you to meet face-to-face with your mentor. Whilst certain support can be provided through email, on-line or telephone for long-term mentoring it is beneficial to meet each other in person. If you intend to meet your mentor you will need to consider the logistics and costs of travelling to an appropriate location or implications for the mentor if you want them to travel to you.
- Do you need professional support that is specific to your specialist area of conservation? Whilst you may find informal guidance from accredited work colleagues helpful it is best practice if your formal mentor is not known to you i.e not your line manager / work colleague / friend.
- A mentor working in a different specialism can provide you with a different perspective and helps retain objectivity..

Please remember that Icon mentors are unpaid volunteers and most have other professional commitments. You may, therefore, be asked to cover travel costs. Both

mentors and mentees should approach what is a collaborative relationship with respect and commitment.

The following aims to provide some guidance as to how to manage the relationship and help you as the mentee get as much as possible out of the experience.

Being a mentee

Mentoring is a confidential relationship, which depends on mutual respect and agreement. It can be dynamic and collaborative. As the mentee you can influence how it will run. To do this you need to take responsibility for your part in the relationship.

It is beholden on **both** parties to behave with mutual respect and civility.

Icon mentors guide and advise on professional career development within conservation. Don't expect too much from them, they are not qualified to deal with other personal issues that may arise during the course of the relationship.

Whether you have engaged a mentor to help you with an imminent PACR application, to guide you through a longer-term journey to accreditation as a Pathway member, for career guidance or as an Icon intern the way in which you will approach the mentoring relationship will be the same.

Preparation

To get the most out of being a mentee you will need to do some thinking about who you are and what you want to gain from the mentoring relationship. One way of doing this is to consider a personal SWOT analysis. 'SWOT' stands for 'strengths and weaknesses; opportunities and threats'. When completing your mentee form and preparing to liaise with a mentor some things you might like to consider are:

Self analysis:

- What are your values and motivations in the context of your professional development?
- How do you learn? Eg by listening? By reading? By doing? Do you prefer direct guidance or gentle supervision?
- What do you need to work on in the context of your professional development (your strengths and weaknesses)? Eg clarify your needs/identify the gaps and explore what they are.
- Are you anticipating any changes that could offer you a chance for a new experience or expanding your learning (opportunities)?
- How has your learning (wider experiences) informed and/or tied into your work?
- Are there any external or personal factors that are likely to get in the way of your accreditation application, career progression etc (threats)?
- Are there any expected or planned breaks from the process?
- How long do you see the relationship with your mentor continuing?

Answers to these questions will help provide a clear vision of your short-term and long-term goals.

This will help your mentor understand your needs and provide an indication to you both of the level of commitment you will both need to give.

Identifying any gaps between your current skills, abilities and experience, will aid you to think about what you need to do to fill these gaps to be able to achieve your goals.

You will need to think carefully about the most effective form(s) of learning to meet these gaps. Are there job-based opportunities that you can take advantage of, or will you need to set something up outside work? Is your employer likely to support this? What courses might be available to you and can you afford them? Are there other people you can talk to or learn from, for example through a secondment or shadowing exercise?

A successful relationship is one where both parties enter it with a positive attitude. It is worth thinking about:

- How you will share your feelings and thoughts about the relationship.
- How you will handle comments from your mentor, especially any that might be perceived as being negative.
- How you make time for the relationship.
- How you will accept and meet any challenges.

One of the most important aspects for both you and your mentor is the setting of clear roles and expectations.

First contact

Once a mentor has agreed to work with you, you will have been sent their email address and asked to contact them as soon as possible. They will have had your mentee form and will be expecting you to be in touch. It is your responsibility to make the first contact and the manner in which you do will set the tone for the relationship.

Politeness and respect are always powerful tools when communicating and your mentor will appreciate their use during your relationship.

This contact will allow both you and your mentor to agree what methods of communication best suit your requirements and to find out a bit about each other. You also can discuss what you are both prepared to do in order to take the relationship forward based on the level of input you require from your mentor.

At the end of the first contact make sure you have set the next date that you will be in touch with each other, whether that is to meet face-to-face or to communicate by telephone.

Meeting/speaking for the first time

Having made contact by email the next step, is to speak to each other whether by telephone, internet or in person. Whatever method this interaction takes **have a plan prepared** based on your self-analysis and needs to help your mentor understand clearly what you want.

It is also worth thinking about what you wish to share with your mentor about your background and personal circumstances keeping in mind professional boundaries. It's always helpful for the mentor to tell them that they have been helpful and what kind of feedback has been of particular use.

If you plan to meet consider what you will want from the first and any subsequent meetings. Discuss this with your mentor and agree details: where the meeting will take place (remember mentors are not paid and receive no expenses), at what time, how long it will go on for and what you will discuss. It might be useful to set an

agenda. If you have agreed to prepare work for the meeting, for example a draft of your accreditation application form, make sure that you do it and that you take it with you.

Early in the relationship you and your mentor should sign an agreement. Appendix 1 provides an example of a mentoring agreement. The example is not prescriptive and can be adapted to suit your relationship with your mentor. It is an informal contract setting out your aims and expectations and providing you both with an opportunity to set parameters and agree practicalities such as how often you will meet, what methods of communication are preferable, what time of day to contact is best for each of you, whether to telephone at work or home etc.

Please remember that you will be responsible for covering your own costs related to the mentoring relationship. Icon mentors are volunteers and receive no financial remuneration and you should agree with you mentor what costs if any they are prepared to pay.

The agreement is also flexible and can change as required by your or your mentor's circumstances. Regular review (for example once a year) of the mentoring agreement itself could be included in the criteria.

Be mindful to set mutual expectations and goals. It may be helpful to agree a timetable. If relevant put in some measures of progress and success.

Although you have only just met discuss how long you think you will need your mentor and agree a timescale of review for the relationship (for example, once a year).

Mutual confidentiality is very important. Both you and your mentor should respect all the information discussed particularly any that is sensitive. Confidentiality should only be broken if either you or your mentor believe there is a risk to you; your mentor; or another person.

As the relationship progresses

Remember you are ultimately responsible for your own development and accreditation application. Your mentor will not tell you how to do something but working with you will help you find your own way to address obstacles or difficulties.

A good mentor/mentee relationship does take effort and as the mentee you can ensure that it remains effective. Make the relationship a priority. Set time aside for it. If you intend to meet more than once make sure you both know what each meeting will be about. Please be mindful that your mentor has other commitments and they will find it helpful if you keep them informed of any changes in your plans or the need for changes in your mentoring agreement.

Throughout the relationship don't be afraid to ask if you do not understand something or if you disagree with something.

Whether you decide to follow the guidance offered by your mentor is up to you, you have no obligation to do so. However, even if you decide not to follow their advice it will have offered you a different perspective.

Time to separate

It is likely that there will be a natural point at which you no longer require your mentor. Ideally you will have planned, discussed and agreed when this is likely to

occur. At whatever point you decide to separate and whether you have followed their guidance or not, it is important that you:

- inform them politely that the time has come to part,
- acknowledge their support,
- thank them for their time and effort.

It is also courteous to:

- inform your mentor or mentors, if you have had several along the Pathway, of the outcome of your journey be it a new job or gaining accredited status.

Problems

You can withdraw from the relationship at any point. If the relationship is unsatisfactory you can ask to be put in touch with another mentor.

If you have any concerns or decide that you no longer wish to work with your mentor please email the Accreditation Officer pacr@icon.org.uk

Summary Icon mentor scheme

You can request an Icon mentor if you are:

- An 'Associate' member of Icon
- On the PACR Pathway
- An Icon intern
- An accredited member of Icon looking for guidance for continuing professional development (cpd)

Please remember:

- It takes time to set up a mentoring partnership
- Allow enough time
- The sooner you request a mentor the greater the benefit
- The minimum time you can request a mentor before a deadline is three months
- Requests submitted fewer than twelve weeks before a deadline will not be processed

When choosing a mentor consider:

- Is it important for you to meet face-to-face with your mentor?
- For long-term mentoring it is beneficial to meet each other in person
- The logistics and costs of travelling for you and your mentor
- Does your mentor need to be in your specialist area?
- It is best practice if your formal mentor is not a work colleague or friend
- A mentor from a different specialism can provide a different perspective and help retain objectivity

To request an Icon mentor:

- Email Icon pacr@icon.org.uk
- Complete a mentee form
- Select three names from the mentor list
- Return completed mentee form and your mentor choices to pacr@icon.org.uk

The next step, you will:

- Receive an email with a contact email address of one of your chosen mentors
- Be asked to contact the mentor direct and as soon as possible
- Be asked to keep in regular contact with your mentor
- Be asked to keep your mentor informed of your intentions regarding your application/internship/cpd
- Be reminded that you can change mentors if/when required

Summary

Mentee / mentor relationship

The mentoring relationship is:

- Collaborative
- Confidential
- Dynamic

It should be approached with mutual:

- Respect
- Civility
- Commitment

As a mentee it is your responsibility to:

- Make first contact with your mentor
- Be clear in what you want to achieve
- Prepare for meetings
- Address agreed actions

Consider:

- A personal SWOT analysis:
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - Opportunities
 - Threats

Set your

- Goals
- Expectations

Remember

- You are responsible for your own development
- Ask for a mentoring agreement and follow it
- Maintain regular contact with your mentor
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you do not understand or agree with something
- You are under no obligation to follow the guidance offered by your mentor

When it's time to separate please:

- Let your mentor know
- Tell your mentor of any outcomes
- Acknowledge your mentor's contribution
- Thank your mentor

Appendix 1

Icon mentor scheme: example of a mentoring agreement

This is an **example** of a Mentoring Agreement for you to use as a guide to the kind of things you may want to agree with your mentor.

Mentoring Agreement

As part of the Icon Mentor Scheme [Name of Mentor] and [Name of Mentee] agree to meet to support [Name of Mentee] towards preparing a [xxxxxx] for the [date and year] deadline.

Confidentiality

The mentoring agreement will last for 12 months. Both mentor and mentee will respect confidentiality and will not pass on any information disclosed during meetings or at any other time without the other person’s prior consent.

Location

Meetings will take place at (studio/workshop, café, gallery/museum).
Agree who will cover any costs, such as travel expenses.

Frequency

We agree to meet [number] times over the next [number] months

Expectations

Each meeting will have an agreed agenda and at each meeting we define realistic and fruitful tasks to achieve this overall objective
We agree to complete all agreed work between or in advance of the meetings as required. Neither the mentor nor mentee will make demands on the time of the other, other than those that have been mutually agreed.

Means of contact

We agree to contact each other by telephone (home, work or both) or email at least once in the period between meetings.

Evaluation

[Name of Mentee] will record objectives and development based around [Mentee’s] individual learning plan. [Name of Mentor] will record evaluation of the same. Each record will be shared at the successive meeting.
If something goes wrong—either mentor or mentee can contact the Accreditation Officer (pacr@icon.org.uk)

Any special requirements by either person

.....
.....

Signed:

Mentee name
Date

Signed:

Mentor name
Date