

Mentor Guidance Notes

For

CIGRÉ (UK) NGN - CIGRÉ's Next Generation

CIGRÉ is a permanent international, non government, non-profit-making association, founded in France in 1921.

Its aim is to develop and distribute technical knowledge in the field of the generation and transmission of high voltage electricity.

1 What is expected of a Mentor?

The aim of Mentoring program is to ease young engineers' first experience of participation in a technical working group as well as other Cigré activities when necessary. This could take the form of giving advice or being shadowed in the working group.

You may feel unsure about what your mentee expects from you. We would be asking all mentees to develop a list of specific objectives and topics for discussion. It is expected that they would be the main driver of their expected experience from this program.

At your first meeting, your mentee should provide a set of aims and questions. You may find that given the timeframe, the objectives to be unrealistic, you can choose to focus on selected aims that you agree with your mentee. You may find that you cannot help them on every aspect, in which case, perhaps you know someone who can - one of the key roles of a mentor is to help your mentee develop by introducing them to new contacts and opportunities.

Some mentees may simply need reassurance and guidance as this could be their first experience among world experts. More often than not, it could be just little things like having an impartial sounding board and feeling they are being supported that are needed by the mentee.

2 I am not in a position to arrange actual shadowing experience for my mentee in one of the working group meetings. Is that a problem?

You are under no obligation to provide your mentee with a shadowing experience in person and this is made clear to all participants at the induction. The mentoring process is about helping your mentee to experience the proceedings in a working group and for them to gain an insight into the technical field.

If your mentee asks your advice on how to get other experiences; such as CEng requirements or other working groups, you could give them contact names to get in touch with so they can arrange some experience for themselves.

However, if you are able to arrange just a shadow day, the mentee would benefit from that enormously.

3. I have not heard from my mentee for a while and I am concerned that the relationship is not progressing. What should I do?

The mentee should be the driver behind the program and we ask them to take the lead in arranging meetings. However, if they are very busy, it may be that you need to take more initiative in arranging mutually convenient times. It is a good idea at your first meeting to synchronize your schedules. The mentee calendar can also be very busy. Some mentees may need more support than others and may be nervous about getting in touch. If you are experiencing any problems, please get in touch with the NGN via email (mentoring@cigre-ngn-uk.org) immediately.

You will also periodically receive a mid-term monitoring form to check that both parties are happy with the mentoring progress. This will be an opportunity to express any difficulties you are experiencing.

4. My mentee is no longer interested in the working group. Should I stop mentoring my mentee?

This mentoring scheme aims to give young engineers an insight into what a technical working group would consist of (and other CIGRE activities). It may be that during the course of the working group, your mentee has changed career directions or that the technical area might not be relevant to his or her current job status. If your mentee has changed focus, they might still elect to work with the current working group and you can still provide your mentee with general advice.

However, if they have changed their focus completely and has no interest in the working group, this could be a positive change in the long run as the mentee could be more suited for other areas and could in fact make a bigger impact. Being a young engineer, it is sometimes important to explore and develop their interests in a broad ranging spectrum of technical areas. If they do indeed have interests in other working group or technical areas, you may have other contacts who they can speak to, to find out more about their area of interest.

5. Where should the meetings take place?

We ask mentors to try to arrange at least one meeting in person. This will help the mentee get to know a familiar face, especially in a working group meeting. Other meetings should take place at mutually convenient places and time. It is suggested that mentors and mentees to have a meeting every 2-3 months in order to establish a good working relationship and technical understanding of the topics in the working group.

As the location of many working group meetings could be overseas and this could pose a problem for shadowing and meeting in person, advice can be given over the phone or internet at mutually agreed timings. The WG meetings are often connected to some big conference or technical events and it is very likely that they will have the chance to attend at least one of the meetings; the rest of the cooperation can be done by email, etc.

6. What if my mentee and I are from competing companies? What can I do about the conflict of interests?

Being a very international and wide ranging organisation, it is very possible that our members might be from directly competing companies. We have cases where this has happened but have still managed to have an extremely productive mentor and mentee relationship. What we would suggest is that you and the mentee both come up with a mutually agreed scope of mentoring; the scope would probably include the extent of any communications and the explicit exclusions of any commercially sensitive information. Both you and your mentee should approach your line manager and HR departments to obtain consent and approval of the mentoring relationship.

As mentioned, we have had experience regarding such issues and believe that it is likely that the companies would give their consent with the agreed scope of mentoring specifically restricting the relationship to Cigre related activities only. However, if you are unable to obtain consent, please contact us immediately via email.