

Edge Hill University Principles of Mentoring

Executive Summary - The following document sets out the cross-phase principles of mentoring that underpin initial teacher education provision at Edge Hill University.

Mentors play a pivotal role within the Partnership and are responsible for overseeing the day-to-day training, development and pastoral care of students during professional practice. The final report National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentors (DFE 2016) defines a mentor as "... a suitably-experienced teacher who has formal responsibility to work collaboratively within the ITT partnership to help ensure the trainee receives the highest-quality training". At Edge Hill University we have extended this definition to encompass all practitioners with appropriate professional status who are supporting our trainee teachers.

Mentoring should be framed as a conversation in which experiences are seamlessly coherent between the university-based curriculum and professional practice curriculum and this is used to inform critical reflection.

Mentoring should support trainees to analyse and evaluate their developing professional practice within an effective relationship. Mentors should be willing to hear and address the concerns of the trainee regarding the trainee's own progress and their impact on learners. Mentors should also guide and model evidence-informed reflection through purposeful dialogue, and together the mentor and trainee should set clear subject specific and pedagogical targets using the Edge Hill University ITE curriculum and identify setting-based expert observation and deconstruction opportunities to support next step development.

Mentoring should be underpinned by a mutually respectful relationship that requires mentors and trainees to treat each other fairly and recognise the trainee as a novice.

Both mentor and trainee should strive to follow the guidelines and requirements developed as part of the partnership agreement. High standards of professional behaviour, including effective communication, should be a cornerstone of the relationship between mentor and trainee.

Mentoring should support the trainee in developing the highest standards of professional and personal conduct and provide opportunities to observe best practice.

Edge Hill University Principles of Mentoring

As outlined in the National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentors (2016) it is expected that a mentor will model professional behaviour and support the trainee in developing the same. The guidance states “The mentor should: encourage the trainee to participate in the life of the school and understand its role within the wider community; support the trainee in developing the highest standards of professional and personal conduct; support the trainee in promoting equality and diversity; ensure the trainee understands and complies with relevant legislation, including that related to the safeguarding of children and themselves; and support the trainee to develop skills to manage time effectively.”

Mentoring should provide opportunities to set challenging and personalised professional targets that are phase and subject specific and agreed within a supportive and enabling environment.

For an effective placement, the mentor and trainee need to establish timetables and consider workload and activities that are appropriate to their phase of development. Feedback from the mentor regarding the trainee’s practice during these activities should be timely and constructive and related to the ITE curriculum components.

Mentoring should be a mutually beneficial opportunity for professional learning for both the mentor and the trainee.

The professional programme being studied by the trainee gives them access to an evidence base and wider reading which can enhance the mentor’s own continuing professional development. The trainee may also bring new pedagogies into the setting from their other experiences. An open and professional relationship developed between mentor and trainee, focused on evaluating professional practice, allows both to engage with educational research. Mentoring provides the mentor with an opportunity to review and reflect on their own practice, as much as it enhances the practice of the trainee.

Mentoring should encompass a range of roles including pastoral, social, educational, interpersonal, as well as formative assessment.

Some of these roles may be explicitly delegated to other members in the education setting (e.g. SENCOs, Safeguarding Leads, Subject Co-ordinators etc.) and includes building a wide ranging network of support around the trainee from the entire setting.

Mentoring should appreciate the bespoke nature of each education setting and the subject experience.

Edge Hill University Principles of Mentoring

It is important that the mentor recognises that some trainees may require additional support. Mentors should utilise the range of additional support opportunities provided by the university link tutor or wider university support services.

Mentoring should provide opportunities for trainees to observe experts and deconstruct key pedagogical and subject concepts.

Mentoring should be conducted using the 'Edge Hill University approach to Mentoring'

Mentoring should include expert feedback aligned to the components of the curriculum.

Edge Hill University Principles of Mentoring

Mentoring should include evidence-based subject or phase specific approaches to trainees that are allocated appropriately to their subject or phase needs.

Mentoring should be inclusive.

Mentoring should be mindful and take account of mental health and well-being.