

Many thanks to everybody who completed the RDM Mentoring Survey: this was our first dedicated survey since the launch of our mentoring scheme in 2014, and it encompassed many fields to evaluate our mentors and mentees experience and satisfaction rates. We are greatly encouraged that the majority of responses have been very positive, but we will also be looking at the areas where improvements were suggested. Your feedback is essential to make the RDM Mentoring Scheme impactful and relevant to your personal needs. The results highlight the key values mentees and mentors developed through the mentoring scheme (outlined below), as well as the positive reception to our MentorNet platform introduced in 2018 (100% satisfaction rate).

From the onset, the Mentoring Scheme was designed with all RDM staff and students in mind, offering a wide range of support skills and areas for mentees to choose from. Over the last 6 years, our mentoring community has continued to grow and support each other. 87% of respondents would recommend the Scheme to colleagues and friends.

Through the mentoring process, both mentees and mentors described having gained strategic skills.

For mentors, the key identified areas were:

- Understanding issues facing others (80%)
- Active listening (75%)
- Empathy, building relationships, giving constructive feedback and open-mindedness (all at 71%)

Mentees reported the following as the most improved skills:

- Learning about themselves and self-confidence (68%)
- Using initiative (63%)
- Open-mindedness (53%)

Mentees reported their mentors helped them with career advice, handling difficult conversations, their confidence levels, career progression requirements and practical skills. They most valued their mentors' impartial support, the personal help and guidance, being able to talk through ideas, being encouraged and meeting new people outside of their current groups and network.

Mentors described the most satisfying facets of their role as being able to support others and give back, helping solving problems, feeling useful, widening others' perspectives, seeing their mentees develop and change and helping colleagues achieve their goals.

What our members value most about the Mentoring Scheme are the bespoke nature of the programme, the ability to connect to others and grow your support network, the knowledge that the support is here if and when you need it, and provision of career advice.

One mentor wrote about mentoring: *"exactly the support I felt I needed early in my career, glad to offer it to others"*. A student stated this was a *"chance to discuss things informally with someone who has been through a DPhil very recently"*. Another member said: *"The scheme makes me feel heard and valued as a member of the University. Having a mentor has helped me with career progression, I hope to do the same for a future mentee"*.

Mentoring is often described as an impactful initiative to change culture in the workplace. The following quote from a mentee illustrates this rather well: *"It quickly became a 2-way relationship, where we supported each other. Although we ended the mentoring relationship, we have remained friends and are still in touch"*.

Further analysis of the survey will be conducted to finalise the evaluation of the Mentoring Scheme. A report will be published on the website in January 2021, including informed and updated objectives from the RDM Mentoring Committee, to reflect the registered needs and requirements of our members.

We welcome your views, and if you have any comments, please get in touch with us at mentoring@rdm.ox.ac.uk.