

The Construction Sector Code

The Right Ingredients for a Mentorship Programme



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Since the Amended Construction Sector Code came into effect on 1st December 2017, it has raised many challenges across the sector. One such challenge is that of Mentorship which is contained in point 2.1.4 of this Sector Code namely the; "Implementation of an Approved and Verified Mentorship Programme (as per Annex CSC300 C)."

To some the criteria are clear, yet to others, it is confusing or vague. The Amended Construction Sector Code requires:

- > Provision 10.17 of training or mentoring by suitably qualified entities or individuals to Qualifying Beneficiary Entities which will assist such Entities to increase their operational or financial capacity; and
- > Provision 10.18 of training or mentoring to Qualifying Beneficiary Entities by the measured Entity itself."

It is, however, essential to note that Mentorship training may not be included in the Skills Development spend. Put another way, no double dipping. The objective of Mentorship, in terms of this Sector Code, is to transfer knowledge, skills and possibly CapEx requirements to a business owner and their employees, a sub-contractor and their employees or a Joint Venture Partner through mentoring, coaching and training.

What is Mentorship?

Mentorship is a relationship whereby a person that is more experienced or knowledgeable guides a less experienced person to improve their ability to perform. It is irrelevant whether the Mentor is older or younger than the Mentee; however, the Mentor must have a particular area of expertise. Mentorship is a learning and development partnership between two people, one willing to share their vast experience and the other having the will to learn from the experience of the other.



What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is the process whereby informal knowledge, social capital and the psycho-social support is shared by a Mentor that is relevant to a Mentee's relevant job function, career path or professional development. It is a formal interaction that usually takes place on a one-on-one basis, for a sustained period. The direct relationship is between the Mentor – the person with the greater knowledge, wisdom or experience, and the Mentee – the person seeking to grow their knowledge, wisdom and expertise in a specific area.

The Construction Sector Code refers to a 'Mentor Champion'. Generally, in a small organisation, this person is the Mentor. However, in larger organisations, it may be a third-party, responsible for overseeing an entire mentorship strategy that incorporates the objectives and desired outcomes of an organisation's approved Mentorship Programme. Although there is no definition contained in the Sector Code of the criteria of a Mentor or 'Mentor Champion', it is reasonable to surmise that this person would hold a senior management or executive position in an organisation.

What is the crux of a successful Mentorship Programme?

A successful Mentorship Programme is, more often than not, one where the desired outcome is the basis for its development. Typically the driving strategy must be aligned with an organisation's mission, vision, goals and values.

The process must be committed to by all stakeholders. To ensure that a Mentorship Programme does not stagnate over time, the process must be continuously evaluated so that all parties remain engaged for the duration.

Core to the success of a programme is taking the human element into account. Mentorship cannot be rolled out as a one-size-fits-all strategy, but with consideration to the unique aspect of each Mentor-Mentee relationship. Critical to the longevity and success of a Mentorship programme is taking into account each person's personality traits, both good and bad, as well as the individual needs and time constraints of all parties. Foremost, the core of a Mentorship Programme, it must address the strategic requirements of the organisation.

When entering into a Mentorship Programme, the defined desired outcome needs to be top of mind. Ascertain what the overall goal is whether it is; staff retention, a more diverse employee base, or the need for a more knowledgeable and experienced workforce? In many instances, the desired outcome would be all three of the said elements.

What are the critical ingredients needed to drive a Mentorship Programme?

Effective communication is the foundation of a successful Mentor-Mentee relationship. Therefore, it is vital that the human element is taken into account as it is imperative that the personalities of the Mentor and Mentee mesh. The Mentor, apart from experience, must have the time, resources and desire to invest in the Mentee. The Mentee, apart from being mandated to participate in the programme, must see the overall value of the programme to empower them to participate fully.

What is the role of a 'Mentor Champion'?

Organisations which choose a 'Mentor Champion' to drive their programme must ensure that the person is fully vested in the process. Without a 'Mentor Champion' taking the lead and taking an active role in assessing the Mentorship process, there is a risk that it will stagnate. The path through evaluation would be to realign goals where necessary or create action plans based on progress.

A 'Mentor Champion' would support the programme in the following manner:

- > Create a platform whereby the Mentor and Mentee are appropriately matched based on the personality traits of both parties, the skills set and experience of the Mentor, as well as the needs of the Mentee.
- > Expectations from both parties must be outlined from the onset of the programme.
- > The expected roles and responsibilities of both parties must be pre-determined.
- > Regular communication and interaction with both the Mentor and Mentee. Such intervention may be based on milestones achieved or a calendar timeline throughout the programme.
- > Continuous reinforcement of the desired outcome of the programme must be communicated to all parties.
- > Consistent and effective evaluation of the programme against the overall desired outcome. Where necessary, consistently implement interventions to address challenges to secure a successful desired outcome.

"Mentorship cannot be rolled out as a one-size-fits-all strategy."



What impact does a Mentorship Programme have on the Skills Development Scorecard?

The Skills Development Scorecard has 3 points allocated for Contractors and BEP's on a Large Enterprise Scorecard - see page 34. To claim these points, an approved and verified Mentorship Programme must have been implemented. There are no proportionate points allowed; therefore full compliance with the requirements is necessary.

These points are awarded based on a 'Yes'/'No' criteria. The 'Yes' outcome demonstrates that the Mentorship Programme was implemented and complied with the requirements. A 'No' outcome reflects that a Mentorship Programme was not implemented, or implemented in a manner that does not comply with the requirements. There are no points awarded for the latter.

The total Mentor-Mentee Programmes are calculated against the headcount of an organisation.	Total number of employees	Minimum number 'Black' Mentees required
	≤100	1
	>100 ≤300	3
	>300 ≤ 700	7
	>700	10

The compliance requirements for a Mentorship Programme are:

- > There must be a 'Mentor Champion' appointed with documented proof of such an appointment;
- > The Mentorship Programme must be presented in a formal document. It is necessary to have final sign-off by the 'Mentor Champion' or the relevant committee responsible for Mentoring. The programme plan must include the following information:
 - o Both the objectives, desired outcome and structure of the programme.
 - o Methods applied in the selection and matching process of Mentors and Mentees.
 - o The timelines and milestones that apply to the programme.

Mentee Portfolio of Evidence

All aspects of the Mentee's progress during the Mentorship Programme must be documented and presented as evidence.

Hereunder is a non-exhaustive list of requirements:

- > Regular reporting to the 'Mentor Champion'.
- > Signed minutes of meetings held between a Mentor and Mentee must include any other formal communication that took place.
- > The objective is to demonstrate that topics relevant to the programme were addressed and that the Mentor gave the necessary guidance.
- > Documented training provided to the Mentee as part of the programme.
- > A Development Plan tailor-made to the needs of each Mentor-Mentee partnership, outlining all interventions.
- > A documented annual progress review, which highlights the Mentee's Development Plan and progress. Both the Mentor and, where applicable, the 'Mentor Champion' must provide evidence of milestones achieved including timelines.
- > All interventions and subsequent activities undertaken by the Mentee must be documented. These should include what departments the Mentee worked in, details of job assignments and the various portfolio of activities undertaken.

Where a Mentorship Programme is undertaken as part of a formal professional requirement, such a portfolio of evidence will take preference. However, this must have taken place during the organisation's measurement period.

What evidence is necessary for verification purposes?

An organisation's Mentorship Programme must align with the formal requirements contained in the Amended Construction Sector Code, substantive compliance of which will ensure the allocation of points.

- > The Mentee portfolio of evidence will be evaluated as a sample.
- > The Mentees will be interviewed as a sample.

Verification agencies must sign-off on the aspects of the Mentorship programme that are compliant or non-compliant. As the acceptance or rejection of a Mentorship Programme is at the discretion of an organisation's verification agency, it is advisable that a list of evidence stating their requirements is obtained for cross-reference purposes.