

Notes for mentors

Thank you for agreeing to act as a mentor to a participant in the scheme. Your role is to support the participant and to help him/her to benefit from participation. If you have not already done so, you should read the document 'The award scheme and you', which explains the objectives of the scheme, how it is organised and what it expects of the participants. If there is anything that you don't understand, please ask.

We hope you will take an active interest in what the person you are mentoring is doing, and be able to answer his/her questions or give guidance. In many cases, you will be the participant's tower captain, or some other experienced local ringer already known to the participant. If you are not either of the above, then you might need to meet the participant, eg at a local practice, to find out more about what he/she has already done, areas of interest, and so on.

In any case, all mentors should seek an early opportunity to discuss with the participant what he/she hopes to get out of the scheme. The aim is not to force any particular direction, but to help the participant think about objectives for the year.

Participants should be aware of their strengths and weaknesses when deciding on the activities they wish to pursue, but there is no single 'right' way to respond. Some may choose to play to their strengths, while others may see the year as an opportunity to overcome weaknesses. Others may choose to consolidate the way they are already developing. For many, this may be the first time they have thought explicitly about the broad range of ringing-related activities and achievements that are open to them, rather than just 'going with the flow' as opportunities arise. Again, there is no 'right' approach. Some may choose to increase their 'breadth' by engaging in a broad range of activities, whilst others may choose to increase 'depth' by focusing on, one or two activities and excelling in them. Others may seek a balance between the two approaches.

Whatever approach the participant chooses, we hope that you will be able to give objective advice on the realism of the aspirations, and constructive suggestions for how they might be achieved. This is particularly relevant for activities that rely on support from other people or external resources, which might need some organising. If you are the participant's tower captain, you may be able to facilitate the creation of some opportunities, for example to call touches, do some maintenance, organise an outing or to run practices. Where you cannot organise something yourself, you may be able to suggest who could do so.

During the year you may need to do no more than respond when asked for advice or information, but it would help to ask periodically how things are progressing. As well as showing an interest, that will keep you in the picture, and it might also provide a spur for the participant to realise that time is passing, and that he/she should review progress and decide where most emphasis is needed.

You can also help by encouraging the participant to keep a log book up to date, and accumulate appropriate evidence of activities and achievements as the year progresses. That should enable him/her to put together an adequate submission without it being an undue chore, which it may become if everything is left until the end of the year.

The evidence the participant submits is what will be assessed, so it needs to give the assessors a full picture of what the participant has been doing, and has achieved. You can help by putting yourself in the assessors' shoes and looking at the evidence that is being accumulated. Would it enable you to make a fair assessment if you didn't know the participant? Towards the end of the year you could offer to review and comment on, a draft version of the submission.

Specific things that you can check include:

Early

- Discuss what the participant would like to do or achieve during the year.
- Discuss whether this will need any external arrangement, support or permission?
- Has the participant completed an initial skills sheet (control skills & method skills)?

Periodically

- How are things going? Is progress as expected? Does the participant need any advice or assistance?

Towards the end

- Has the participant completed a final skills sheet (control skills & method skills)?
- Has the participant completed a record of activity during the year?
- Can the participant put together a submission that does him/her justice in time for the closing date?

If you think there are any special contextual factors that the assessors should know when looking at the submission, you may add an extra note stating relevant information (facts, not your opinion of the participant).