



# Distance mentoring

**How to mentor effectively in a long-distance mentor-mentee match.**

Long-distance mentoring can work, and is a good option if the mentor and mentee are particularly well-matched and there are no geographically-closer options. With extra groundwork at the beginning to create a solid framework for the mentoring, positive outcomes are much more likely.

## Managing long-distance mentoring arrangements:

If at all possible, arrange a face-to-face meeting early on in the mentoring relationship to help build rapport

- Share a story
- Read or discuss a book or resource
- Find shared interests

At the outset of the mentoring arrangement, establish a framework for communication:

- What media will you use – Phone? Email? Skype? Instant messaging? Or a combination?
- When will you use it, and for what aspects of the mentoring?
- Monthly email updates from the mentee to the mentor can help supplement other communication channels, and help keep the mentee accountable

Local support for the mentee can be helpful if available

### Method Choices

Method	Pros	Cons
<b>All methods</b>	Make long-distance mentoring possible	Lack of face-to-face contact: it takes longer to build rapport and establish an effective mentoring relationship  Distractions from the mentee or mentor's direct environment can mean sessions are cut short  Poor communication and lack of face-to-face contact create difficulties with long-distance arrangements
<b>Email (e-mentoring)</b>	Good for different time zones Good for short exchanges and practical information Good for reflection, as some time can be spent thinking over responses	Lack of verbal clues and body language  Harder to build rapport and trust (especially if used from the outset)  Confidentiality issues from email content  Technical difficulties e.g. Email can be rerouted into a spam folder
<b>Telephone mentoring</b>	Verbal clues can be picked up (these do require concentration, and it's advisable to confirm them)  It's possible to infer emotions	Lack of body language and facial expression  Confidentiality: who can hear the call?
<b>Skype or FaceTime</b>	Best option for remote mentoring due to similarities with a face-to-face meeting  Free and easy to use	Technical problems can 'cut off' conversations

(Ambrose, 2004; Gabbe et al., 2008; Mbuagbw & Thabane, 2013 )