

## Learning Mentor

A learning mentor has a wide-ranging role, mainly focused on providing guidance to students at school or college who face barriers to learning. These barriers might range from a lack of study skills or personal organisation, to complex social and welfare issues. The work may include, for example:



- devising an attendance agreement with a regular truant
- providing support with study skills, revision and examination techniques
- liaising with families
- developing anti-bullying strategies.

Most of the work is with individual students, but some may be with small groups. Learning mentors mainly work in schools and colleges, but may meet students at their homes or other locations. They often work in areas of social deprivation or low educational achievement.

They usually work a standard school week of 30 to 35 hours. Occasionally, they may be asked to work after hours or during weekends.

Salaries range from around £13,000 to £24,000 a year.

Successful learning mentors need to:

- have a genuine concern for the welfare of young people
- have excellent communication skills and a knowledge of the education system
- be non-judgemental and able to see issues through the eyes of young people
- be interested in the education system and working with young people.

There are no formal academic requirements to become a learning mentor. However, entry requirements vary from area to area. Most authorities ask for qualifications such as GCSEs/S grades (A-C/1-3) in English and maths. Many ask for qualifications above this level, including related vocational qualifications or those at Level 4/degree level. Successful candidates have to undergo Criminal Records Bureau checks.

Some schools have volunteer mentoring schemes, which provide excellent experience for people wishing to enter the work. Learning mentors have usually worked in other related fields, such as social work, counselling, teaching or youth welfare.

Once in post, learning mentors take part in a five-day national training programme provided by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), leading to a certificate in mentoring.

Opportunities for promotion may vary. A learning mentor may have the chance to take on additional responsibilities, working as a senior mentor or moving into a broader support role, such as a student manager, key stage head or an inclusion officer. Some learning mentors take further qualifications to become teachers.