

TPP Mentoring Guide

The Transport Planning Professional (TPP) qualification has been developed by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) together with the Transport Planning Society (TPS). It is intended to provide professional recognition for transport planners at a level that equates to that of Chartered Engineer. The TPP is managed by CIHT and TPS and administered by CIHT. Candidates who successfully achieve TPP are eligible to be a Chartered Transport Planning Professional (CTPP).

The purpose of this guide is to provide information and best practice guidance to Transport Planners who have volunteered to act as mentors for those planning to apply for the TPP qualification.

We have developed this guide to:

- Raise the profile of the role of a mentor and its importance in successfully supporting more people to achieve the TPP qualification
- Give support to the mentor on providing guidance to the applicant
- Maximise the chance of success for applicants
- Improve the quality of submissions
- Promote greater transparency and clarity around expectations
- Better understand what the requirements are (e.g., proficiency)

This guidance is aimed at both new and existing mentors, and is split into two sections:

- Part 1: An overview of mentoring, providing general guidance on what's involved for those considering taking on a mentoring role (this may also offer a useful recap for existing mentors)
- Part 2: Guidance on how to be an effective mentor to someone working towards TPP

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Part 1: Mentoring Overview

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a semi-structured process by which experienced individuals share their knowledge, skills, and experience to help others to achieve their professional and/or personal development goals. Mentoring for TPP requires an independent review of a mentees' progress as they demonstrate their competence against the TPP units. Mentoring should be a dynamic and reciprocal experience, in which the mentor and mentee both have opportunities to grow and learn from each other.

What is the role of a mentor?

A mentor is a 'critical friend' who draws on their own knowledge of the industry, professional qualification standards and the professional review process to guide, support and encourage their mentee in their personal and professional development. To enable the mentee to meet the relevant competence requirements of the professional qualification they are aiming to achieve, a good mentor will support their mentee to identify the gaps in their knowledge and experience and help them identify ways to address the gaps. A mentor can draw on their network if required to support the mentee.

What are the benefits of becoming a mentor?

Mentoring can be an incredibly rewarding experience and mentors can derive a great deal of satisfaction from contributing to the success of others. Mentors get to give something back to the transport planning sector and accelerate their own learning and development while building collaborative relationships. Mentoring can count as a CPD activity, is an opportunity to use and develop leadership skills and to demonstrate a commitment to developing other transport planners.

Who can be a mentor?

Anyone with the knowledge, skills and experience of the TPP requirements, standards, and the Professional Review process can be a mentor but, ideally, a mentor should not be the mentee's line manager; this has been found to make it easier to address any personal (rather than organisational) needs. Mentors also need to make sure they have enough time to commit to the role. Mentoring is different to coaching, which tends to link an individual's development to organisational goals rather than to professional standards.

Do mentors need qualifications?

Ideally mentors for TPP will be a Chartered Transport Planning Professional, but it is not essential. However, they should have a good understanding of the TPP assessment requirements.

What are the characteristics of an effective TPP mentor?

- A sincere desire to make a positive difference to another transport planner's career
- Able to encourage and inspire candidates to progress their application and submit
- Experienced transport planner with a wide range of experience
- Possess most of the professional skills and experience set out in the TPP competency requirements
- Knowledge of the TPP assessment process / routes (and can advise on which route to take and what is required for the submission)
- Able to build relationships, listen, be willing to share knowledge and inspire confidence

- Able to provide constructive feedback and help to set goals with respectful and objective encouragement
- Able to support candidates to identify gaps in their experience and support them to plug the gaps
- Proactive, accessible, approachable, and organised
- Effectively challenge yet encourage critical thinking to potential problems
- Be objective, respectful, and discrete.

What is the mentor/mentee relationship?

A mentor should take a personal interest in their mentee's success and be accessible, approachable and organised enough to inspire them and build their confidence. Mentees should be respectful of the mentor's time and support and make the effort to continue their development in line with the agreed actions set at the meetings.

What is the time commitment?

Mentoring can be a rewarding experience, but it does require the mentor to make time for regular meetings with the mentee to support their development. Although it varies for each mentoring partnership, on average a mentor should expect to spend up to a couple of hours every 6-8 weeks on mentoring duties. The level of input may also depend on what stage the mentee is at on their journey towards TPP. Whilst ideally, progress is consistent and regular, it is natural for peaks and troughs to occur in the level of activity. For example, the level of support a mentee requires may be more initially whilst they are getting started, to meet an agreed milestone (such as completing a first draft of their portfolio), or in preparation for professional review. Before committing to mentoring, please consider any current commitments. The form in **Annex 1** is a useful resource to determine whether you are ready to be a mentor.

Where do mentors look for mentees?

There may be mentees looking for mentors in their own company. If not, then CIHT or TPS may be able to match mentors with external candidates.

Signing up as a mentor

- If you are a CIHT Member: On the professional development section of the CIHT website, there is a tab for assessors and mentors. Click on the '*Become a Mentor*' tab and the online registration form, which takes less than 5 minutes to complete. Once we have received a completed application form, we will update our mentor database and with permission, we will pass on our mentors contact details to any suitable mentees looking for support. Register as a [CIHT mentor](#) or contact one of the [CIHT regions](#) who may be able to match mentors with mentees.
- If you are a TPS Member: Please email skills@tps.org.uk

On-going support

For further information and advice, please contact professionaldevelopment@ciht.org.uk or skills@tps.org.uk.

Part 2: How to be an effective TPP mentor

Confirm the route to TPP

The starting point for the mentor and the mentee is to confirm the most appropriate route to TPP. Full guidance is available on the CTPP website, but a summary of the key routes to TPP are outlined below.

Standard Route

To be eligible to achieve the TPP, candidates must demonstrate their professional competence, which is assessed through a Portfolio of Evidence and a Professional Review (interview). However, before submitting their Portfolio of Evidence, they must first demonstrate that they have the learning outcomes or *knowledge* that underpin the qualification. They can do this through one of four routes:

- 1) They have an [approved transport Masters degree](#) (a list is available on the TPP website)
- 2) They have completed an approved structured training scheme for transport planners e.g., the Professional Development Scheme (PDS) run by the Transport Planning Society
- 3) They have a UK Honours Degree (or equivalent) in any discipline and have submitted a satisfactory Portfolio of Technical Knowledge (PTK), through which they have demonstrated that their technical knowledge required for the qualification
- 4) They do not have a UK Honours degree (or its equivalent) but have substantial transport planning and management experience and have submitted a satisfactory Technical Report through which they have demonstrated that they have the required level of underpinning learning.

Senior Route

Candidates who have extensive experience as a senior project manager/director across a range of transport planning skills and have made a substantial contribution to the transport planning profession may be eligible for the senior route.

Completion requirements – what the mentor needs to know

Professional registration timeline guide

Candidates are likely to need at least five years' experience in transport planning and to have been engaged on a variety of transport planning projects to demonstrate the breadth and depth of competence required to gain the TPP. To demonstrate this experience, candidates must prepare a **Portfolio of Evidence** showing how the required level of competence has been acquired and present this at a Professional Review. At the Professional Review interview, the candidates will also be required to give a short presentation on the project synopsis submitted as part of the Portfolio of Evidence and answer questions related to this and their Portfolio of Evidence.

TPP units

The competence of an individual is not linked to how much time they have worked as a transport planner, but the experience that they have across the 13 TPP units (10 Technical Units and 3 Professional Units). A comprehensive discussion with a mentee is essential to help them identify which units they can demonstrate to which level of competence.

The TPP has 4 levels of competence:

- **Awareness** – a general understanding of the area, including its role within transport planning practice
- **Knowledge** – a deeper understanding of the techniques and technologies involved and their application
- **Experience** – an ability to carry out work under supervision, with the underpinning knowledge
- **Proficiency** – an ability to carry out work without supervision and to supervise others based on both experience and the underpinning knowledge

Candidates for standard route need to demonstrate proficiency in all of the professional units, the data unit and three other technical units. They also need to demonstrate a minimum level of experience in the other core technical units and in one additional technical units. Candidates for the senior route need to demonstrate proficiency in an additional 2 technical units. Details of the competence requirements for all routes can be found in the guidance on the TPP website: <https://www.ciht.org.uk/transport-planning-professional/>

Communication between mentor and mentee

Communication between the mentor and the mentee should be based on regular meetings, supplemented by efficient communications. The meeting should be conveniently located where a confidential discussion can be held. This could be a blended approach of face-to-face meetings and using online platforms. The responsibility for communicating and structuring the mentor / mentee relationship is shared by mentors and mentees.

The first mentor / mentee meeting

The first mentor / mentee meeting should be used to build a personal rapport and talk about expectations and hopes for the mentor/mentee relationship. Good discussion points include what both the mentee and the mentor expect from the relationship; what learning expectations mentees have and each other's roles and responsibilities (i.e., meeting organisation, etc.).

At this initial meeting, mentors should do a brief screening / check the following with their mentee:

- Is a member of CIHT, TPS or CILT;
- Is clear which route they are eligible for;
- Is keeping a CPD record and is actively undertaking appropriate activities;
- Has informed his/her employer and line manager;
- Has the opportunity to practice presentational skills;
- How often they want to meet to review progress.

The initial meeting is an opportunity to determine whether there is a good mentor / mentee match. Mentors might want to consider using some of these questions to help establish whether there is a good mentor / mentee fit:

- Tell me about your strengths. How do you leverage them in your current job?
- Tell me about your career so far – what’s gone well and what has not gone so well?
- What are your development needs?
- When do you hope to achieve TPP? / What is your target submission date? (They might not know at this initial meeting and may need advice on when might be appropriate, which can be determined as the relationship progresses) Have you started to map your experience against the TPP units to ascertain the level of competence you have for each?
- Tell me about how you have grown and developed as a transport planner over the last year?
- What experiences have you had with mentoring in the past?
- Describe your vision of an effective mentoring partnership

For all meetings, the mentee and mentor should identify and agree actions that need to be completed before the next meeting (and confirm the date and time of the next meeting). It is fundamental to ensuring that progress is made and maximise the value of the time spent together.

Preparing for follow-up mentoring sessions

Use notes from previous meetings to reflect on a mentee’s progress and manage any issues that mentees want or need to discuss. Consider if there are any issue(s) remaining from the last meeting? Have all actions been completed that were committed to? Have you been sent a draft of the mentees submission to review? **Annex 2** is a plan and identify worksheet which you can send to your mentee before their next meeting to help to keep track of progress and identify any issues.

Mentors’ responsibility during mentor / mentee meetings

Mentors need to maintain the mentees confidentiality, and trust, ensuring they listen attentively and check for feelings as well as facts. It can be very helpful to ask open questions and encourage the mentee to have realistic expectations of their progress. Mentors are encouraged to take notes during their meeting with mentees and these should be stored securely. Once the mentor / mentee relationship is concluded, mentors should securely delete or destroy any notes they have taken.

Suggested things to cover during a mentoring meeting are:

- Briefly review notes and actions agreed from the previous meeting;
- The transport planning experience of the candidate and if it is at the right competency level to apply for TPP;
- Review progress against the TPP units, and agree on estimated target dates for the mentee’s Professional Review;
- Advise on how gaps in knowledge and/or experience could be addressed;
- Advise on the content and subject matter of the Candidate’s TPP submission;
- Comment on drafts of the Portfolio of Technical Knowledge, Technical Report or Portfolio of Evidence and challenge assumptions/conclusions;
- Help the mentee develop their professional development plan;
- Help the mentee to prepare through mock interview questions;

- Summarise and take notes of any actions agreed to during the meeting;
- Agree the date and time of the next meeting.

The mentor's key responsibilities are to advise, guide and encourage candidates in preparing for, and achieving the TPP qualification through the process of Professional Review. However, mentors must not contribute to the content of the report or be involved in the assessment process.

Mentors' responsibility between meetings

Mentors should complete tasks or actions promptly and encourage their mentee to do likewise. Keep in touch with the mentee between meetings to highlight events or topics that might be relevant and useful to them. Anything said during mentoring meetings is confidential and should not be repeated without the consent of those involved. Mentors and mentees may consider signing a confidentiality agreement.

When and how to end a mentoring relationship

Occasionally, a mentoring relationship might not be effective. This could be due to differences in working and communication styles or due to a change in personal circumstances in the mentor or mentee. Both sides should feel that they can end a mentoring relationship when the match is not working for either party and it would be preferable that an alternative mentor is better placed to support the mentee. In this case, the pair should have an honest, open and respectful conversation. ***Annex 3 of this document is a form to help end a mentor / mentee relationship.**

If the mentee requires support in identifying a new mentor, there is information at the end of Part 1 of this document that will help.

Preparing a Portfolio of Evidence and for Professional Review

Helping a mentee prepare their portfolio of evidence submission

When working with a mentee, mentors should ensure that:

- The mentee has sufficient experience for the level of competency they are declaring
- Gaps in their experience and knowledge are addressed
- They get into the habit of presenting clearly referenced information to create a professional first impression
- The portfolio is professionally presented e.g., correct spelling and clearly referenced.
- The focus of the portfolio is on the mentee's contribution to projects e.g. 'I led...' or 'I managed.'
- The evidence of competence is clearly explained in the competence record forms (CRFs) so that reviewers don't need to hunt for evidence in appendices, CVs etc
- They are writing concisely – using bullet points or removing unnecessary padding, as parts of the portfolio of evidence have word limits
- The CPD record is appropriate and varied and that the minimum of 25 hours a year, for two years is met;
- Ensure SWOT and Personal Development Plan (PDP) are complete and ideally cross-referenced / aligned.
- Enough time is given for the mentee's sponsor to sign off their application in advance of the submission deadline

- They select the best examples for their competence record forms (CRF)

Advising when a mentee is ready to apply for professional review

This is a particularly important step and it's important that mentors do not give false expectations or guarantees – the result of the application comes down to the candidate's performance during the Professional Review on the day of assessment. Part of the mentor's role is to support the applicant in preparing for the Professional Review, such as providing constructive challenge and arranging mock interviews so the applicant can practice their presentation and response to questioning.

Helping a mentee prepare for their professional review interview

Interviews for Professional Review last approximately 90 minutes and start with a 10-minute presentation by the mentee on one or more projects from their project synopsis. As the mentor, seek to ensure that the mentee has rehearsed the timings of their presentation and is fully confident speaking about all aspects of their portfolio of evidence submission.

Mentors should offer their mentees the opportunity to have a mock interview to practice their presentation and answer questions about their experience. This could be with the mentor, but to maximise the value of the experience, arranging for an independent transport planner to conduct the interview would be advantageous. If mentees are unable to demonstrate a solid understanding of part of their portfolio, they should consider removing this or spend more time recalling detail to support any line of questioning on that topic. Mentors should remind mentees that there is not always a right or wrong answer to every question; sometimes the professional reviewers will expect them to form their own view on an issue.

Mentors should encourage mentees to highlight their role in the projects rather than talking about the work of the team. To prepare for review mentors should:

- 1) Encourage mentees to practice their interview and presentation skills for content and timing, this will lead to an increase in their confidence
- 2) Emphasise the importance of clear visual aids for their presentation
- 3) Provide advice on sticking to answering the question and avoid 'waffling'
- 4) Encourage the mentee to have a professional opinion on important topics of the day – the reviewers will expect them to have a view
- 5) Encourage the mentee to clearly talk about their own competence (I led, I managed, I drafted etc.) – this will be the focus at the professional review
- 6) Help them to identify projects that would make a good topic for the presentation (ideally something complex/challenging/interesting and something they were heavily involved in)

Following the Professional Review

This section of the guidance covers what mentors need to know after a candidate has attended their Professional Review interview.

After a mentee's successful review

If a mentee passes their Professional Review, please make time to reflect and celebrate the success with your mentee! This is also a good opportunity to have a de-brief; there might be some useful tips for you to pick up on for your next mentee as well advice you can share for their next steps as a professional. Can they now support others on their journey to TPP?

After a mentee's unsuccessful review

If a mentee is not successful, CIHT recommends that mentors discuss the reviewers' feedback with their mentee to agree what actions should be taken to address any areas highlighted by the reviewers. Being unsuccessful can in some cases be put down to the mentee just having a bad day, it doesn't mean that they are not good at their job or can meet the requirements in future, so encourage them to keep going!

Ending a mentee / mentor relationship

The end of the mentoring partnership is a natural part of the process and one from which mentors can learn a great deal. The transition does not mean the mentee and mentor will have no further contact; it just means that the objectives of the relationship have been achieved and the mentor no longer needs to maintain the structure of a mentoring partnership. Remember to end on a positive note, maximise any learning experiences available, and celebrate joint accomplishments. The end of the relationship is an excellent opportunity to discuss shared experiences.

At the end of a mentor / mentee relationship, consider the following:

- Adding the mentee to an email distribution list to share ideas and articles of interest
- Encourage mentees to get involved e.g., as a trainee reviewer, STEM ambassador or mentor themselves
- Ask the mentee to a professional lunch or coffee to maintain contact or to tell them about events that are happening that they may be interested in
- Offer to participate in one another's problem-solving sessions
- Participate together in community projects (for example, those sponsored by the firm).

***Annex 3 of this document is a form to help end a mentor / mentee relationship**

Annex 1 - Am I ready to be a mentor for professional review?

Complete the questions below to help you determine whether you are ready for mentoring

	Yes	No
Am I familiar with the TPP requirements?		
Am I willing to invest time and energy in a mentoring partnership?		
Do I feel mentoring is a valuable form of development?		
Am I open to learning <i>from</i> a mentee?		
Am I open to sharing my expertise and experiences with a mentee?		
Am I willing to help a mentee develop and achieve learning objectives?		
Am I open to a mentee taking responsibility for scheduling meetings, suggesting topics to discuss, and ask me for help in specific areas?		
Am I willing to discuss mistakes and failures as well as successes?		
Am I a good listener?		
Am I willing to give candid feedback – positive and negative?		
Do I encourage new skills and behaviours?		

If I answered ‘**Yes**’ to the questions above, I am ready to assume the responsibility of a mentoring partnership.

If I answered ‘**No**’ to any of the questions above, I should think about what I need to do to address them. It may be that mentoring is more appropriate for me when my schedule is more flexible, or I have had an opportunity to explore the approach to mentoring in more detail.

Annex 2 - Plan and identify worksheet

The mentee can complete the below meeting planner as a reminder to discuss the progress has been made and send it to the mentor prior to the meeting.

Date of the meeting:	
Time of the meeting:	

Recap of last meeting:

Use notes from previous meetings to reflect on progress and manage any issues to be discussed

Mentoring objectives met since last meeting:

Consider if there are any issue(s) remaining from the last meeting? Have all actions been completed that were committed to?

Focus for this meeting:

What is the focus for this meeting, has a meeting agenda or a new development plan been created?

First meeting?

Have roles and responsibilities been determined (i.e., who will organise the meetings, timings, etc.)? An open discussion is the best way to determine whether mentors and mentees are a good match for each other.

Annex 3 - Ending a mentoring relationship

Think about the answers to the following questions, then complete the evaluation below and bring it to the final mentoring meeting for discussion with your mentoring partner.

Evaluation of mentoring experience

What went well?

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What could have been better?

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What will I 'take away' from this experience - The headlines?

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How can I apply what I have learned to support the development of future talent?

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What best practice can I share with my future colleagues?

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