

# Welcome

Information and activities to help you  
make the most of your coaching sessions




# About this document

This is an interactive pdf – you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader.

If you don't have Adobe Acrobat Reader software you can download it for **free** at:

<https://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/>



Some sections include activities (or space for you to write a response). All activities are marked with the following symbol: 

Please take time to read through the information and complete all the activities. Before your first appointment, please save a copy of this document to your computer and return the completed document to your coach.





**Please supply the following information:**

Your name:

Your email address :

Your contact telephone number:

## Contents

Welcome to coaching	3
What is coaching?	4
Coaching themes 	5
Coaching expectations	6
The coaching process	7
Making the most of coaching	8
Coaching practicalities	9
Coaching preparation 	10



# Welcome to coaching

A warm welcome to coaching. This welcome pack will provide you with the information you need in preparation for your coaching sessions, along with some reflective activities to help you identify your priorities for our discussions.

If you have any questions at any point in the coaching process, please do not hesitate to contact your coach.

## About us

At Research Coach we create supportive and confidential coaching spaces for researchers, academics and higher education professionals to:

- find solutions to professional challenges,
- identify and achieve meaningful career/development goals,
- explore new ideas and perspectives.

Our coaches hold accredited qualifications in coaching and mentoring, are full members of the Association for Coaching and undertake regular supervision and coaching related CPD.

For client testimonials visit:

<https://www.researchcoach.co.uk>



## Our coaches

### Dr Natalie James

Research Coach Director,  
Coach and Consultant

[Natalie.James@researchcoach.co.uk](mailto:Natalie.James@researchcoach.co.uk)



Supporting others to develop in their professional lives is what motivates and inspires me.

Since founding Research Coach, I have supported hundreds of academic researchers, PhD to Professor, to navigate their professional challenges and achieve their goals. I have nearly two decades' previous experience in research-related roles including doctoral research, UK Research Councils,

researcher development and HE consultancy. Consequently, I have a deep understanding of the complexities of the higher education environments in which my clients are building their careers. I split my worktime between one-to-one coaching, and delivering training and consultancy projects for universities. In my spare time, I enjoy exercising, visiting the beach with my son, good books, great films, and tending to our ever-growing menagerie of pets.

### Dr Jo Collins

Coaching Programmes Lead  
and Consultant Researcher

[Jo.Collins@researchcoach.co.uk](mailto:Jo.Collins@researchcoach.co.uk)



As a life-long learner and educator, I thrive on supporting my coachees to develop their potential in their own learning and development journeys.

I have been teaching, publishing and researching in the higher education sector

for the last two decades. Alongside my coaching work I am a Researcher Developer at a UK university, and I also conduct research into doctoral wellbeing, and support for international postgraduates.



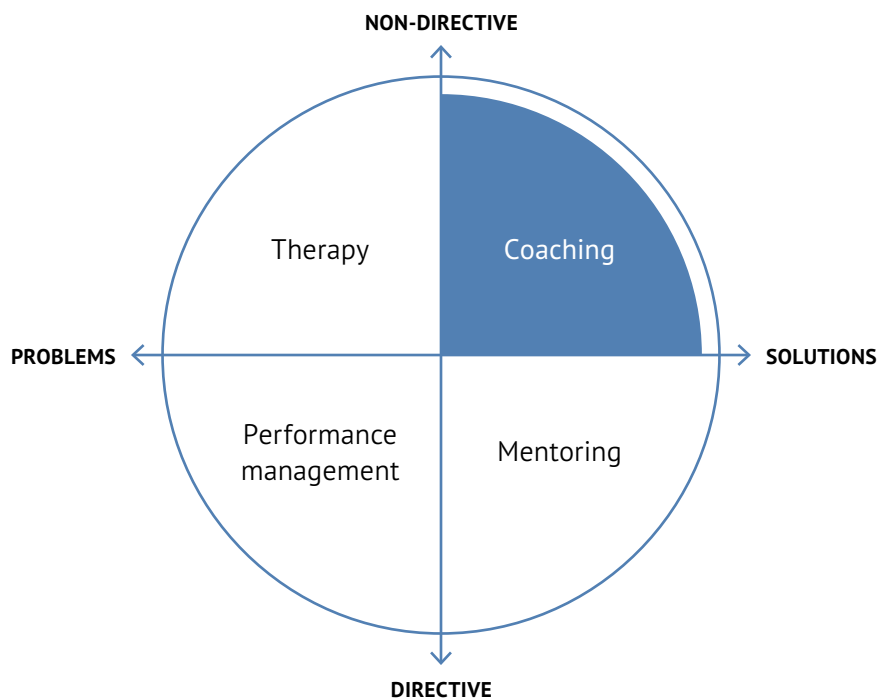
# What is coaching?

Coaching is a developmental activity, where a person – **a coach** – supports someone else – **a coachee** – to create learning and self-development in a way that benefits them. A skilled coach uses a combination of observation, questioning, listening and feedback to create a conversation rich in insight and learning. The coachee will experience a focus and attention that enables them to develop a greater awareness and clarity with respect to their own circumstances. In addition, they'll also generate new ideas, find solutions to resolve issues, and identify and achieve their aspirations more easily.

Coaches share many of the same skills as therapists, mentors and managers, but coaching is distinct from these other types of interventions. Coaches aim to create a supportive, non-directive and non-judgemental environment for their clients to explore topics that will help them to develop professionally and/or personally. Usually, coaching is concerned with the present and the future and focuses on identifying and implementing solutions rather than analysing past events and problems.

## Operating principles and beliefs of coaches

- The Coach is committed to supporting the Coachee.
- The Coach operates with unconditional positive regard for the Coachee.
- Coaching is a positive developmental process.
- Coaching relationships are built upon truth, openness and trust.
- The Coachee is the expert in their own situation.
- The Coachee is responsible for their own results.
- The Coachee will generate the best solutions and results for themselves.



# Coaching themes

Below is a *non-exhaustive* list of topics and themes that academic researchers and HE professionals explore in their coaching sessions. Consider this list and select  any that stand out to you as important for your coaching sessions and/or identify your own themes to bring to your coaching discussions. **Remember, the agenda is yours.**



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research strategies</li> <li>Promotion and progression</li> <li>Time management and productivity</li> <li>Motivation</li> <li>Imposter feelings</li> <li>Balance and wellbeing</li> <li>Career change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing competing priorities</li> <li>Returning to work following a break</li> <li>Taking on new responsibilities</li> <li>Leadership and management</li> <li>Working relationships and collaborations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing others</li> <li>Equality and diversity</li> <li>Navigating university/sector cultures and expectations</li> <li>Overcoming blocks</li> <li>Interview preparations</li> <li>Networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication strategies</li> <li>Developing consulting/business opportunities</li> <li>Being a role model</li> <li>Developing research proposals</li> <li>Making applications</li> <li>Establishing healthy boundaries</li> </ul>
---	---	--	---

In the following table, ( **A** ) identify up to five themes (your own and/or from the list above) that will be important to discuss with your coach; and ( **B** ) start to identify any specific questions/goals/challenges/changes you would like to explore in relation to each theme.



<b>A</b> Theme	<b>B</b> In relation to this theme, what questions/goals/challenges/changes would you like to address through coaching?

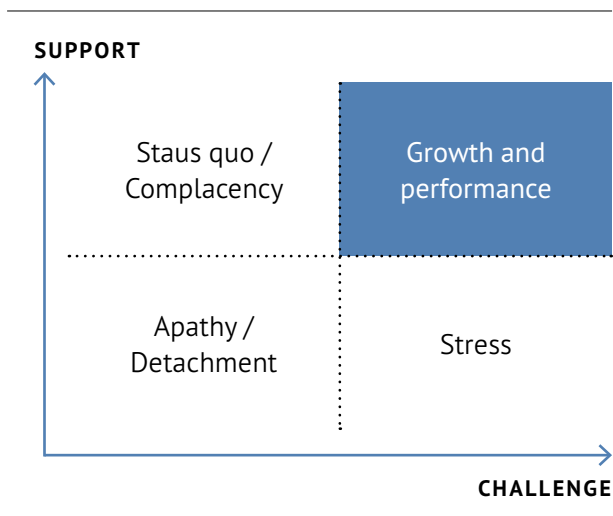


# Coaching expectations

## What you can expect from me as your coach

As your coach, I will encourage you to take responsibility and control for your own learning. I will:

- keep the content of our discussions strictly confidential (with the only exceptions being: illegal activity, danger to self, danger to others).
- facilitate a supportive and non-judgemental space in which you can explore topics and issues of importance to your development.
- aim to provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to maximise your opportunities to learn and develop (see figure below).



- actively listen and help you explore your ideas without imposing my own.
- ask questions to get you to explore issues more deeply.
- help you explore options and the advantages/disadvantages of different courses of action.

- encourage you to set some objectives and identify actions for progress.
- help you identify, prioritise and plan how to meet your development needs.
- help you to work things out for yourself and avoid giving instructions on how to act.
- help you establish what additional information or support you want/need and how you might access it.
- encourage you to reflect on specific experiences in order to learn from them.
- provide constructive feedback as and when appropriate.

---

**For a full overview of the ethical standards you can expect from me please see the [Global Code of Ethics for Coaches and Mentors](#).**

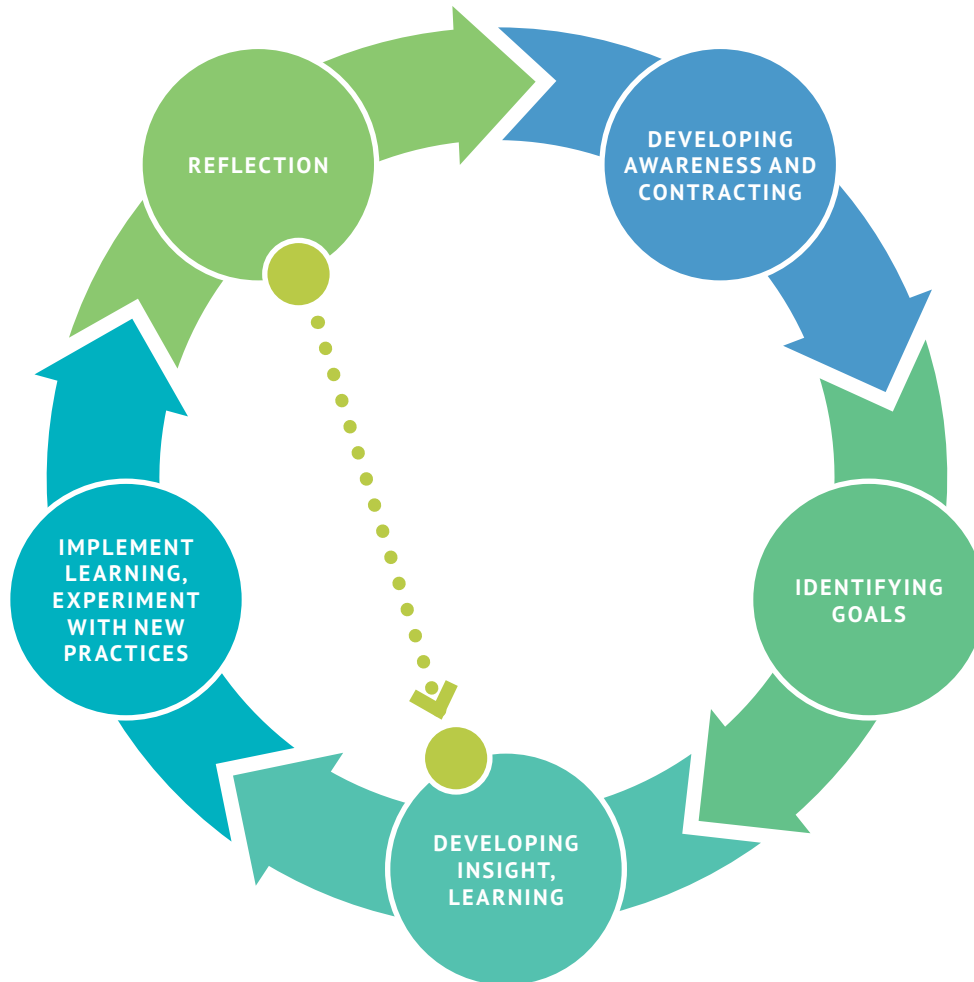
---

## What I expect from you as a coachee

As a coachee, you will gain most from your coaching experience if you:

- make time for your coaching sessions and for action/reflection between sessions.
- demonstrate commitment and responsibility for your own development.
- are open to new ideas and perspectives and willing to experiment with new practices and ways of working.
- are honest and open in our conversations.
- are open to receiving and providing constructive feedback.

# The coaching process



When you first start your coaching sessions you may find that the discussions can be surprisingly tiring, this is normal. In day-to-day interactions we do not usually talk about ourselves in the same depth and with as much self-reflection as in coaching discussions, so it can take a bit of getting used to.

You might also find that your coaching discussions spark some strong emotions. This is also entirely normal and a positive sign that the topics you are talking about are important to you. Emotions are a natural part of any coaching process, and allowing them to come to the surface is very helpful in

making progress, however, they can sometimes catch you by surprise! Your coach is very used to this and will give you the time/space you need in your sessions to help you to move forward with your discussions.

It is advisable to schedule some time straight after your coaching session to allow for reflection, capturing any key thoughts or actions and/or to have a few moments of relaxation before continuing with the busyness of day-to-day tasks and activities.

# Making the most of coaching

---

## Effective coaching relies on the coachee being:

- **ready and willing to commit to their professional development.**
  - **open to exploring new ideas, perspectives and approaches.**
  - **able to make time to follow through on actions and regularly reflect on progress.**
- 

## Tips for maximising the benefit of your coaching experience

### Before you begin your coaching sessions:

- Think carefully about what you want from your coaching sessions (see pages 5 and 10).
- Consider what outcomes you are hoping for from your coaching programme and discuss these with your coach.
- When you have a sense of your coaching goals and requirements, think carefully about when to begin your sessions. Consider:
  - > Is there anything that needs to happen before you start coaching?
  - > When will you have sufficient time to dedicate to developing towards your goals?
  - > Is there anything else planned that would interfere with coaching and how might you work around it?
- Identify if there's any particular support or feedback you need from your coach or any specific arrangements that would make it easier for you to engage with your coaching sessions and make these known to your coach.

### During the coaching programme:

- In advance of each session, identify the key topics you'd like to focus on in your meeting and send a brief agenda to your coach.
- At the end of each meeting capture your key learning and action points, and highlight anything you'd like to pick up on next time.
- After each session allow time to reflect on: what was significant? What are you learning? How will you act upon this in order to make progress?
- Follow through on any actions you identify and use your sessions and individual time to consider their success and how you might develop/refine them in future.
- Set aside some regular time in between sessions for progressing your action points, development activities and/or reflection to help you consolidate and build upon your insights from sessions.
- Provide feedback to your coach if there are things about sessions you'd like to change or do more/less of.

### After the coaching programme:

- Take time to celebrate successes and progress.
- Identify what (if any) support you need to continue your development beyond your coaching sessions.
- Continue to set aside regular time for your professional development.
- Identify some development objectives for the future.
- Provide some feedback on your coaching experience (your coach will ask you to complete a short questionnaire following your final session).



# Coaching practicalities



## Your coaching sessions

As standard, coaching sessions are 1¼ hours duration and will be conducted online via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. A meeting link will be emailed to you once you have booked your session. You will need a good internet connection, webcam and audio input to join the session. If you would prefer to meet by phone please notify your coach.

Usually, coaching sessions are spaced around four weeks apart. This allows time for you to act on the ideas/topics that arise during your coaching discussions. If you would like to meet more/less frequently, please discuss this in your first session with your coach.



## Booking your coaching sessions

You should book your coaching sessions for times that suit you at the link below. If your coaching programme includes multiple sessions, please book all sessions up front to secure your preferred dates and time slots (usually sessions will be spaced around four weeks apart).

### Coaching session booking link:



If you experience any issues with the booking system or cannot find appointments to suit your schedule/requirements please email your coach.



## Cancellation policy

To maintain momentum with your development, please try your best to keep to your scheduled coaching appointments. If you are considering rearranging your session, remember your commitment to your professional development and consider carefully whether postponement of your coaching session is necessary.

**If you need to rearrange your coaching appointment please email your coach at least 48 hours in advance to avoid a cancellation charge.** Please note – you cannot change your appointment via the booking system, this is only possible via an email to your coach.

Cancellations within 48 hours are charged at 25% of the session rate, cancellations within 24 hours are charged at 50% of the session rate.



## Questions/concerns

**If you have any questions or concerns about the coaching arrangement at any point please email:**  
[Natalie.James@researchcoach.co.uk](mailto:Natalie.James@researchcoach.co.uk)

Alternatively, you can contact the scheme coordinator if you are receiving coaching as part of an institutional coaching service/programme. Further information and guidance about coaching standards and expectations are available in the [Global Code of Ethics for Coaches and Mentors](#).

# Coaching preparation

Please consider the following questions to assist in your preparations for your coaching sessions. **This needs to be done prior to your first coaching session.** (All responses will be kept strictly confidential.)



Don't forget to save a copy of this document to your computer and return the completed document to your coach. Our contact details are on page 3.

---

**1 What are you hoping/expecting to gain from your coaching discussions?**

---

**2 What is the most important change for you to make in order to start achieving results that matter to you?**

---

**3 List up to three goals that you would like to accomplish.**

---

**4 How will you know that you are getting what you need from coaching?**

---

**5 Is there anything in work/home life that might make it challenging to focus on your professional development?**

---

