

Join the Data Science mentoring movement

Jane Crowe, National Programme Manager, Data Science Campus in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) explores how becoming a mentor can help to boost your own learning, as well as that of your mentor:

“While we teach, we learn” is a quote attributed to the Roman philosopher Seneca and this age-old truth is echoed by colleagues who mentor on government data science mentoring programmes.

Data science mentors provide advice and guidance to help colleagues develop technical skills while working on an analytical project. From a knotty technical question or new insight from their mentees’ data to a different approach to project management or simply a new way of using GitHub, mentors report that they gain new skills and knowledge through mentoring others. It could also provide opportunities your current role may not, such as demonstrating and developing skills like coaching, communication and leadership. Mike Hudgell of the UK Hydrographic Office says “Simple questions can also sometimes test the depth of your own knowledge and understanding, there is always something new to learn!”

Data science mentors also value the sense of reward that comes with helping someone grow, develop and achieve their goals. And let’s not forget the bigger picture, that they’ve contributed to increasing the skills available to ensure government and the public sector can make better decisions and deliver better services for citizens.

And why else do people choose to mentor? Well, simply because they enjoy it! They make new friends, become part of a community of esteemed experts, gain fresh perspectives and grow their professional network. Mentor Sonia Williams of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said: “I enjoy getting to know someone from another organisation and learning more about their work. The variety it adds to my job – you can end up mentoring a project completely different to your day job.”

If you would like to share your data science skills and knowledge, learning while helping others grow, there is a range of mentoring opportunities available at various skill levels. This includes the [Data Science Accelerator](#), incorporating the new data visualisation category*, the ONS Data Science Campus international mentoring programmes and the Scottish Government Data Science Accelerator. Feeling unsure? We understand that and that’s why we’re setting up a programme of support and coaching for data science mentors.

If you would like to find out more about the programmes available and how to get involved, why not attend one of the data science mentoring clinics. This will also be an opportunity to put your questions to a panel of experienced data science mentors. The clinics will be held on 1 and 14 July.

So, whether you're thinking 'Sign me up please, I want to join the Movement!' or 'I think I'm interested but I'd like to find out more', email the team at data.science.accelerator@ons.gov.uk.

*The Data Science Accelerator is delivered by the Office for National Statistics Data Science Campus in partnership with the Analysis Function, on behalf of the Government Data Science Partnership.