

Belong



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Jobbsteget Framåt

Mentor Guide

Belong promotes integration and inclusion in the labor market by running the project Jobbsteget Framåt, which is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

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1 Introduction and overview

First of all, we want to say thank you! Thank you very much for the fantastic effort you have chosen to make by being a mentor.

The decision you have made to participate in the mentorship program can change another person's life, and perhaps yours too for that matter. So remember that you are making an invaluable contribution to integration in Sweden. Enjoy it and have fun together along the way!

At the same time, we understand that you may have questions, not know how to approach the role of a mentor or what you and your mentee should do. That's why we've produced this guide to help you get started and to support you along the way.

We have also collected exercises that you can use in the mentor pair. You choose how much you want to use them, but it's good to remember that the exercises are there to help you along.

Please read through the whole guide when the program starts, then you and your mentee can use the exercises that you find useful for you.

Contact us

Of course, we're here for you throughout the mentorship program and would love to hear from you! If there's anything you'd like to discuss, we're always just an email away. The best way to reach us is through our [Contact Us](#) page, where you'll find all the necessary information to get in touch.



Our best tips

- Try to meet more frequently at the beginning of the program – so that you get to know each other and can get started with the mentorship.
- Support your mentee – life as a foreign-born in Sweden can be challenging and it happens that mentees lose motivation, then it's great if you can support and cheer on your mentee.
- A mentor doesn't fix a job – but as a mentor you can share your experience and tools that the mentee can use, which can lead to the mentee finding a job.
- Remember to have fun together – you don't just have to do things that focus on finding a job. Take your mentee to an activity you think is fun or go with them to something they usually do.
- Let us know when you need help or support – better once too many times than once too few.
- Please send us pictures of your meetings – so that we can spread the word and inspire others.
- Talk about your expectations early on – then you can create goals together for the mentorship program.
- Always book your next meeting when you meet – set a time and place immediately.
- Meet regularly – make sure there are no more than 5 weeks between your meetings to keep the commitment alive.
- Keep notes and follow up on your meetings – it's easier to keep your mentorship on track and prioritize what you think is important.
- Listen and ask open questions – let your mentee's will and goals guide you.
- Do what you have agreed on – prioritize your meetings and do the activities you have agreed between meetings.



1.1

Background

The primary aim of the mentorship program is to help foreign-born in Sweden to enter the labour market and find a job or education. In addition, we hope and believe that the mentors and mentees will develop personal relationships with a broader and mutual exchange of experiences. Coming to Sweden can present a lot of challenges, many times it is difficult to know which steps to take and in which order to enter society and the labour market.

Mentorship programs in particular have proven to be an effective way to help foreign-born people enter the labour market. This is further supported by the results of our previous professional mentorship programs: in our latest evaluation we found that

- 29% of the participants found a job.
- 74% of the participants expanded their network.
- 84% of the participants gained a better understanding of the labor market.

Mentoring in Belong is entirely voluntary, it should be a person-to-person meeting where both mentor and mentee are there of their own free will to learn from and grow with each other. No compensation is paid to any of the participants. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that for the mentorship for the successful, it requires a high level of commitment from both mentor and mentee.

1.2

Design of the program

The mentorship program is 7 months long, during which time the program will go through different phases and activities.

1. Interview and matching

All participants who wish to participate in the mentorship program are interviewed. Through the interview, we learn more about the participants' backgrounds and what the mentees want to do in the future. Based on the interviews, we then carry out the matching process. The most important aspect of the matching process is the needs of the mentee and the skills of the mentor, but personality and specific preferences also come into play. We do our best to make the matches as good as possible, but if you don't feel comfortable, let us know and we can look on the opportunity to re-match you with another person.

2. Kick-off

The mentorship program starts with a kick-off meeting for all participants in the program. The main attraction of the kick-off meeting is that you get to meet your mentee for the first time! You will get to know each other and schedule future meetings. We also explain the mentorship program and give tips based on previous experience.

3. The mentorship is started

At the beginning of the program you can attend mentorship training. And during the program we organize networking meetings, where you will have the opportunity to network with other participants in the program. The majority of the mentorship program consists of individual meetings with your mentee. You will meet at least once a month and choose when and where it is convenient for you to meet. What you want to do at your meetings is also up to you, so please let your mentee's needs guide the content.

4. Mentorship program ends

Once seven months have passed, the mentorship program ends. Then we all get together and celebrate completing the mentorship program together, and talk about what comes after the mentorship program.



1.3

Structure of the mentorship

1. Get to know each other and your expectations

At the beginning of the mentorship program, it is a good idea to take time to get to know each other and talk about your expectations so that together you can set the framework for your mentorship relationship. It may also be a good idea to do something social together just to get to know each other. Perhaps you can take your mentee to something you usually like to do? Or does the mentee want to share something they are interested in? Just do something that you think would be nice and fun to do together, like trying a new sport or visit a museum.

2. Set the direction for the mentorship

Quite early in the mentorship process, it is also a good idea to decide together what you want to do and focus on as a mentor pair. Use the exercises under the heading **Focus of the mentorship program.**

3. Working with different areas

Based on the plan and objectives you set, you decide how to proceed. In the role of a mentor, it is often useful to suggest different exercises to help the mentee move forward. Popular activities include: CV writing, Interview training, Listing relevant employers or Creating a career plan. Look through the **Exercices and Conversation Guide** headings to see which elements might be useful for you.

4. Follow-up

During the mentorship process, remember to continuously monitor what you have done, what remains to be done and adjust if conditions change.

5. The mentorship program is coming to an end

As the program ends, talk about what happens next. You may continue to stay in touch or decide to end the relationship. Try to create a concrete plan for your mentee's next job hunt.

Structure of a meeting

It is up to you as a mentor pair to explore a structure that suits your meetings. There is no golden formula, but the following structure captures key elements:

1. Status and follow-up from last meeting

Simply start by talking to each other and socialize a bit. Tell them what's going on in your lives right now, maybe there have been big changes since you last met. Follow up your notes from the last meeting, maybe there was something you wanted to work on or something that needed to be done for this time.

2. Focus of the day

Based on what you talked about last time and what is important to the mentee right now, decide what you want to focus on during today's meeting.

3. Exercise / conversation

Feel free to use the exercises presented in this guide when they are useful to you. It is a good idea to do the exercises at the beginning of the program under the heading Focus of the mentorship program and talk about what is most important to the mentee and what constitutes your focus together. Then you can also set goals together, and then follow up and see how you have been doing.

4. Summarize and take notes

Summarize what you have talked about during today's meeting as it is coming to an end. What have you come up with today? Is there anything to be done until the next meeting? Write down some simple points together so that you can easily follow up at the next meeting.

5. Book next meeting

Don't forget to book your next meeting when you meet. Decide where and when you will meet. You may also have thoughts about what would be good to do next time, make sure you include them in your notes.

2. The role of the mentor

What a mentor is can be described in many different words: guide, counselor, tutor, role model, inspirer.

You have experience of the Swedish labour market that the mentee does not have. This knowledge is easy to take for granted, but it can be extremely useful to a mentee. So be sure to share, even things that may seem obvious to you. It can lead to the mentee taking steps closer to the labour market or even finding a job. Below are some key elements of the role of a mentor. But also remember to draw on your personality and experience!

What is a mentor?

A mentor is...

- Willing to make time for the mentee
- Willing to share their experience
- Motivating
- Communicative and honest
- Respectful with an open mind

A mentor is not...

- Someone who can fix a job
- Solely responsible for the mentee's development
- Available at all times
- A person who knows everything
- A guarantee for success

2.1

Active listening

Active listening is essential in mentoring. It means giving full attention without jumping to your own experiences, analysing too quickly, or offering solutions right away. This builds trust and helps you understand the mentee's situation and challenges.

Show you are listening through eye contact, verbal acknowledgment and open body language. Stay focused on what the mentee is saying before considering advice or sharing your own experiences. Active listening can be difficult. Distractions, assumptions and quick solutions often get in the way. But with practice, and through the mentorship, you can strengthen your ability to truly listen.

Asking open questions

Asking open questions helps you better understand the mentee's needs, make challenges visible and find ways forward. Open questions often begin with what, how, when or who and invite longer, more informative answers.

Closed questions can still be useful when you need to confirm or clarify something, but open questions give the mentee more space and allow them to set the agenda rather than being steered by your assumptions.

Below are examples of open and closed questions:

Open questions (what, how, when, who) help you better understand the mentee's needs.

Examples:

- What do you want to talk about today?
- How do you think I can best help you?
- Where would you like to work?

Closed questions

Examples:

- Do you want to continue talking about the branch today?
- Shall I help you with your CV?
- Do you want to work in the same industry here?

2.2

Guide and motivate without deciding

Being a mentor to a foreign-born person in Sweden means sharing your experience, knowledge, personality and skills.

It is also good to remember that many mentees find it difficult to ask for help and language difficulties can make it even more difficult. It is therefore important that you are prepared to push forward at times, like making suggestions about what can be done and ensuring that meetings take place.

There will most likely be situations during the mentorship program where the mentee will need to make choices. You and the mentee's idea of what is the right choice may differ. It is therefore a good idea to take a curious approach and try to accept the mentee's choices without being judgmental; it is the mentee who makes the final choice about what is best for them.



3. Exercises & conversation guide

3.1

Getting to know each other

You will receive suggestions for exercises to do during the mentorship program. Begin the mentorship by getting to know each other. Use the first meeting to ask questions, discuss expectations and set the framework for your collaboration. Take turns and give each other equal space in the conversation.

Questions you can use:

- Tell me about who you are and where you come from.
- Why did you join the mentor program?
- Is there anything we shouldn't talk about?
- What are your expectations of the program?
- Tell me about your professional background — what do you do now or what have you done before?
- Tell me about your free time.
- When, where and how often do you want to meet?





3.2

Focus of the program

By doing this exercise, the mentee will be supported in choosing which areas to prioritise. It is especially useful if the mentee feels unsure about what they need to work on. You can then set goals together.

Opportunities for the mentee

Questions to explore:

- Describe a job you could do today and a job you would like to do in the future.
- What professional roles might be relevant now or in the future?
- What qualities and experiences are important?
- How can necessary experience be gained?
- Are there internships, trainee programmes, courses or vocational education that could help?

Focus overview

By doing this exercise, the mentee will be supported in choosing which areas to work on and prioritize. It is particularly useful if the mentee feels unsure about what they need to work on or how you should prioritize what needs to be done. This is why the exercise is good to do early in the mentorship relationship. You can find the exercise [here](#). Feel free to set goals that you want to achieve during the mentorship program based on what you come up with in this exercise, you can use the next exercise for this!

Set goals for the mentorship

Once you've identified your focus areas, set clear goals together. Shared goals help you track progress, stay motivated and use your time effectively. Knowing what you're aiming for makes it easier to channel your energy and celebrate achievements. Using the SMART model is a helpful way to ensure goals are clear and relevant. Use our [template](#) to set goals and create a career plan.

3.3

Labour market & industry

Jobs in the same industry can look different in different countries. It is therefore important to explore what the Swedish labour market looks like in the mentee's field. We also have some tips on companies where you can look for jobs - [check out our list of companies in different sectors](#).

Suggested questions for the mentee:

- What industries or sectors is the mentee's market located in?
- What occupations or titles could their next job have?
- How are jobs mediated (ads, websites, contacts, internships)?
- What job sites are important to follow?
- How do you get your foot in the door?
- What is the state of the industry? Growing or shrinking?
- Who are key employers? Make a list of 10.
- What employment agencies focus on the sector?
- What opportunities for self-employment exist?
- How can language skills or international experience be used at work?

It is also interesting to compare how the mentee's industry works in their home country.





3.4

Visit a workplace

Doing a workplace visit is a great way for the mentee to get one step closer to the world of employment. A workplace visit can be made to your workplace or maybe to someone in your network.

A visit can be set up in a number of ways, below are some suggestions:

Participate on an ordinary day

The mentee follows a normal workday to understand culture and tasks.

Tour and lunch

A simple tour plus lunch with colleagues to meet more people.

Visit a specific function or department

If the mentee has a particular interest, arrange a meeting there.

Afterwards, talk about:

- Differences and similarities to previous workplaces
- What the mentee may need to work on
- How Swedish workplace culture differs from their home country



Networks and contacts

Many jobs in Sweden are found through contacts. Therefore it is effective to introduce the mentee to Swedish networks. A good start is to review your own network, on LinkedIn, Facebook, or by asking colleagues or friends.

Questions to discuss:

- What contacts could benefit the mentee?
- Are there unexpected contacts that might help?
- Are there contacts the mentee can offer you?
- Which of your contacts might be relevant?
- Can you arrange a lunch together with someone in your network?
- Are there relevant conferences or seminars?

How to contact someone in your network

Here is a suggested message your mentee could send, or you as a mentor could send on their behalf:

“Hi! I am a mentor in a mentorship program for foreign-born people looking for jobs in Sweden. My mentee X is a very nice person who would like to work in industry/organisation Y. I know you have experience in Y and I wonder if...”

Then ask:

- Could you check their CV?
- Could they visit your workplace?
- Could you have lunch with us?
- Could you answer some questions about the industry?





3.6

Education

Having the right education is an important part of finding the right job when you are new in Sweden. This can involve training in something you have not worked in before or supplementing your previous education. We've put together tips for different types of **training** and how those who already have a qualification can use it in Sweden.

3.7

Apply for a job

A clear, well-structured CV and cover letter are important when applying for jobs. Help the mentee with language, structure and highlighting strengths based on the job requirements. If only small adjustments are needed, there's no need to start from scratch.

Experiences from abroad often need extra explanation, since Swedish employers may not recognise companies, schools or courses that “speak for themselves” in the mentee's home country. You can also discuss how the mentee should use their CV and cover letter when applying for jobs – see the questions in the Labour market and industry section.

CV

Start by looking at templates and tips for writing a CV to get inspiration. Feel free to use our CV template which you can find [here](#).

Then go through the mentee's CV:

- What can be improved or clarified?
- Should the CV be rewritten from scratch?
- Are experiences from abroad explained well enough?

Experience from abroad often needs more explanation for Swedish employers who may not recognise schools, companies or job titles.

Cover letter

Many people find writing a cover letter difficult. You can create a reusable template together. You can also use our template [here](#).

Steps:

1. Read the job advertisement carefully.
2. Create a mind map of the qualities and experience the employer seeks.
3. For each requirement, discuss what experience the mentee has that matches.
4. Write the cover letter together based on these points.

A cover letter should clearly explain why the applicant is a good fit for the role, highlight their relevant experience, and express their motivation for the job.



3.8

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an important platform for networking and finding jobs, especially in industries and professions such as consulting, sales, IT and HR.

Some suggestions for working with LinkedIn together are:

- Create a profile together for the mentee - preferably based on LinkedIn's "**Blå kuvert**".
- Join the mentor program's LinkedIn group **Career Mentors**.
- Connect with each other
- Join relevant groups
- Create job alerts
- Look at employers' LinkedIn pages to see if you have contacts there
- Add certificates from online courses

3.9

Internship

An internship is often a good way to gain experience and enter the Swedish labour market.

Ways to find internships:



- Check employers' websites
- Contact companies directly
- Ask people in your network
- Look at organisations that support job seekers





3.10

Before an interview

Many mentees have little or no experience with Swedish job interviews, which may be more informal than in their home country. Practising helps build confidence.

Elevator pitch

A short 60-second self-presentation.

The mentee presents themselves as if meeting someone in an elevator.
Key elements:

- Who are you? (create curiosity)
- What do you want? (communicate your goal)
- What makes you unique? (stand out and be remembered)

Do the exercise several times so the mentee finds a natural way to express themselves.

Interview training

Conduct a practice interview using common questions you can find [here](#).

Afterwards, discuss:

- Which questions were difficult?
- What could be good answers?
- How to respond when an employer calls to book an interview?

3.11

Being a reference

Many people new to the labour market lack references. Your mentee may ask you to be a reference, the decision is yours. A mentor usually cannot vouch for work performance, but can speak for for example character, motivation, reliability and progress during the mentorship. You can also recommend the mentee to someone in your network instead of being a reference yourself.





3.12

Social codes in working life

Workplace culture and social codes vary across countries and industries. It's often fun and interesting for you as a mentor to hear more about what it's like in the mentee's home country.

Regarding the social codes on the Swedish labour market you can discuss topics such as:

- How to behave in job interviews
- How to address people
- When to talk about salary
- How to dress at work
- Working hours and expectations
- Breaks (coffee, smoking)
- Greeting colleagues (handshake or hug)
- Topics to talk about, or avoid, during lunch or fika

If the mentee gets a job or internship during the mentorship, you can support them in adjusting to Swedish workplace culture.

4. Concluding tips

We really hope that this guide will be useful to you during the mentorship program. Of course, the tips and exercises you find in this guide do not replace contact with us.

We would like to hear from you if you find something difficult, if you get stuck and don't know how to proceed or if you think something is working really well and you want to share it.

Lastly, we want to give you our top tips:

- Meet more frequently at the start to build your relationship and get going.
- Follow through on what you've agreed and prioritise your meetings.
- Discuss expectations early so you can set shared goals.
- Always book the next meeting before you leave.
- Meet regularly — ideally not more than 5 weeks apart.
- Keep notes and follow up to stay on track.
- Listen actively and ask open questions so the participant's goals guide you.
- Support your participant, especially when motivation drops.
- Remember: a mentor doesn't fix the job — you share experience and tools that help.
- Have fun together — everything doesn't need to be job-related.
- Reach out when you need help — better too often than too little.
- Feel free to send us photos from your meetings to inspire others (mahir.tatarevic@belong.se).

