



WARWICK

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

Advancing your Strengths Mentoring Programme Guidebook

Student Opportunity – The University of Warwick

Mentees Guidebook

What is the Advancing your Strengths Mentoring Programme?

The Advancing your Strengths Mentoring Programme is careers-focused mentoring designed to provide students from a widening participation background care leavers and ethnic minorities with support and encouragement in their career journey through connecting students to a mentor with an established career.

The aims of programme are to:

- Inspire and grow your confidence
- Guide the development of your professional and personal skills
- Provide an insight into professional life
- Grow your professional network

What is career mentoring?

A career mentor is someone who shares their knowledge and expertise with you to provide you with support, guidance and advice around careers related and personal development topics to help you advance your strengths and employability skills.

Career mentoring is:

- Empowering
- Motivating
- Inspiring
- Confidential (within the appropriate boundaries)
- Honest
- Supportive
- A professional relationship

But do remember that whilst mentors may help you identify goals you are responsible for own learning and carrying out any actions.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for this programme you must be a widening participation student, a care leaver or ethnic minority at Warwick University.

To take part you must be keen to advance your professional and personal development and able to commit to the training and mentoring sessions (see the 'what is expected of a mentee' section below). You will also need to have access to your university emails and Microsoft Teams for video or voice calls.

Benefits for the mentee

By taking part in this programme there will be several benefits for you such as the following.

- Receive 1-1 support from an experienced professional who can share their experiences and advice
- Learn about professional life with the possibility of gaining insights into a particular industry
- Increase your confidence to reach your goals
- Develop key professional and personal skills to help you succeed in your career
- Connect with successful professionals growing your own network
- Reflect on your plans and work towards a clearer career direction

What you can expect from the programme

Your mentor will be here to help you think about and develop in a range of different areas by sharing their own experiences and knowledge. They will not set your goals for you, but will be there to help you reflect, think about your goals and stay motivated.

Your mentor will be able to support you with providing some of the following.

- Help to reflect on your career ideas and plan
- Advice on how to develop your employability skills such as networking and utilising LinkedIn
- Advice on recruitment processes such as overcoming interview nerves
- Advice on a particular application for an internship or graduate role
- Help to prepare for your transition into the workplace
- Support with your personal development and developing transferable skills
- Real world insights into professional life and information on how the world of work works
- Giving you an insight into their job role and the industry they work in

What you should not expect

There are some areas that your mentor will not be able to help you with, however, there are a few other support services throughout the University that may be able support you with these instead. You should not expect your mentor to provide you with

- Counselling or wellbeing support – the University’s Wellbeing Team can provide this type of support to current students
- An offer of work experience – whilst you may get offered work experience from your mentor this is not guaranteed or expected. You can get support with finding work experience opportunities from the Student Opportunity Helpdesk
- Academic support – should you need support with your academic studies please speak with your Personal Tutor
- Careers guidance or specific or in-depth labour market information – you can access this support either through your Careers Coach as part of the Strengthening your Career Potential programme or your Careers Consultant
- In-depth support with applications - you can access this support from the Student Opportunity Helpdesk
- A friendship – for the duration of the mentoring relationship the focus is on personal development and therefore we ask you do not make social media connections except for LinkedIn.

What is expected of a mentee?

- Attend the virtual mentee training provided by Student Opportunity, you will need to complete this before you are eligible to be matched with a mentor
- Commit to one mentoring session per month of approximately one hour
- Be available from when you join the programme until March 2022
- Make the initial contact with your mentor, they will be expecting you to get in touch
- Respond to your mentor promptly and advise your mentor as soon as possible if you are not able to attend any arranged meetings
- Be receptive to the information, advice or suggestions from your mentor
- Set your goals and be responsible for following up any actions
- Respect your mentors time, confidentiality and the professional boundaries of the mentoring relationship
- Provide feedback to the programme organisers when requested
- Contact the programme manager, Marion Jennette should any concerns arise

What makes a good mentee?

Approaching your mentoring relationship with the following characteristics will help you get the most out of the programme:

- Proactively engaging and communicating
- Willing to develop and learn
- Open to new suggestions and ideas
- Well organised with good time management (if you are currently developing this area tell your mentor)
- Able to receive constructive feedback
- Honestly communicating your expectations and goals

Who are the mentors?

You will be matched to a mentor who has an established career and gained experience in the world of work. Our mentors are keen to engage with students to help you to progress.

All our mentors have a wealth of experience and will be able to provide support around professional skills as well as more general personal development advice.

Matching process

When you apply to be part of the programme you will be asked to provide information on your career interests and any other characteristics that you might like or find useful in a mentor. These can include things like being matched to someone who is the same gender/race or has a similar background to you or someone who has similar career interests or values to you such as being in a particular industry or remaining located in one place/moving locations.

Please be aware that while we will try our best match you with the most suitable mentor available, there is no guarantee that they will be from the sector or role you are interested in or meet any or all additional matching criteria you specified.

All our mentors will be able to support your career and personal development and will have expertise to share with you regardless of their background.

I've been accepted onto the programme what happens next?

Once you have been accepted onto the programme you will be asked to take part in a short online training session. This is to ensure that you know what to expect from your mentor, you understand what your responsibilities are as a mentee and how you are expected to engage with your mentor and the University during the programme.

After you have completed your training, we will look for a suitable match from our pool of mentors. When we have matched you to a mentor you will be sent their details via email. Your mentor will also be sent your details via email; however, it is now up to you to contact your mentor to start the relationship.

What should I say in my first email?

Introduce yourself by telling your mentor about what you study, what year you are in and why you decided to take part in the mentoring programme. Remember to use a professional tone and check your spam folder when waiting for a reply. Your first email does not have to be long, just a brief introduction is all that is needed.

If you have difficulty connecting with your mentor, please contact the programme organisers.

How will mentors and mentees work together?

Mentoring sessions will be up to one hour in duration and take place once a month. You will be responsible for arranging convenient dates and times with your mentor.

The programme will commence from September 2021 and run until the end of March 2022.

You will communicate using Microsoft Teams/Skype for mentoring sessions and use email to arrange sessions or ask questions in between scheduled meetings. No face-to-face meetings is anticipated to take place during the COVID-19 pandemic but may be permitted in the future if safe to do so and convenient.

The programme organisers will ask you for feedback in relation to the programme and your mentoring relationship.

What should I do if something goes wrong?

Whilst we hope that your relationship with your mentor runs smoothly, we appreciate there may be times where it does not work out as planned. For example, if you do not hear back from your mentor or you do not feel you are able to get on well with your mentor. Please make sure you communicate any issues or concerns you have with the programme organisers whose contact details are listed in this guidebook and we will do our best to resolve any issues.

Contact Details

Should you have any questions you can contact the programme organiser below:

Marion Jennette

Marion.jennette@warwick.ac.uk
Careers Programme Mentoring Officer