



WARWICK

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

Advancing your Strengths Mentoring Programme Guidebook

Student Opportunity – The University of Warwick

Mentors 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 & ethnic minority background 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 the student's confidence
- Guide the development of the students professional and personal skills
- Provide an insight into professional life
- Grow the student's professional network

What is career mentoring?

A career mentor is someone who shares their knowledge and expertise with you to provide their mentee with support, guidance and advice around careers related and personal development topics to help them advance their 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 their mentees identify goals the mentee is responsible for their own learning and carrying out any actions.

Eligibility criteria to take part

As a career mentor you will be a professional who has already established and gained experience in your professional career.

You will be keen to support the development of students from widening participation and ethnic minority backgrounds who are from under-represented groups in Higher Education.

We ask that you can commit your time to take part in the mentoring sessions and our mentor training. You will also need access to the relevant technology to enable remote mentoring sessions and communication (access to Microsoft Teams and emails).

Benefits for the mentor

- Give back to students starting out in their career journey through sharing your experience and wisdom
- Provide invaluable support to your mentee to enable them to grow in confidence and develop both their professional and personal skills
- Access to programme related training to support you in your role as a mentor
- Become part of a network of mentors working with the University of Warwick

Mentoring can be a very rewarding experience, through sharing your experience with mentees you can be positively impacting the future of another person who may not have been able to access this support or advice elsewhere.

What is expected of me as a mentor?

- Attend the virtual mentor training provided by Student Opportunity, you will need to complete this before you are eligible to be matched with a mentee
- Commit to one mentoring session per month of up to one hour
- Be available from when you join the programme until March 2022
- Be willing to share your knowledge, experience and expertise with your mentee
- Advise your mentee if you are not able to attend any arranged meetings offering to reschedule
- Treat your conversations with your mentee as confidential. If you are concerned for your mentees wellbeing please report this to the programme manager immediately
- Provide feedback to the programme organisers when requested
- Contact the programme manager, Marion Jennette, should any concerns arise

We also expect mentors to respect the impartial nature of the mentoring relationship and not use this as a mechanism to promote your organisations or a client's vacancies and only provide this information if the student has stated it is something they are interested in.

Note: the above are guides only; we recognise individual mentors/mentees will come to mutually convenient arrangements around timings and the duration of the mentor/mentee relationship.

Who will my mentee be?

A current undergraduate student at the University of Warwick in their 2nd year from a widening participation or ethnic minority background.

As a widening participation student your mentee will be from an under-represented group in Higher Education, meaning they may be from one or more of the following groups:

- From a neighbourhood with low participation in HE
- First in their family to attend University
- A care leaver
- Mature student
- From a low-income family
- Ethnic minority

The students taking part are already engaging with our dedicated careers and internship programmes designed to support widening participation students – meaning you will be getting a student who is already keen and actively seeking opportunities to develop.

Students taking part may be at any stage in their career decision making from starting out exploring their options right through to gaining graduate jobs or courses in their chosen profession and seeking help with this transition.

What is not expected of you as a mentor

As a mentor there are some areas of support that we do not expect you to provide and we do make students aware of alternative support services that may be accessed instead. You are not expected to provide your mentee with;

- Counselling or wellbeing support – the University's Wellbeing Team can provide this type of support to current students
- An offer of work experience – if you can offer your mentee support with work experience this is acceptable your mentee will not expect this to be provided for them. Mentees can get support with finding work experience opportunities from the Student Opportunity Helpdesk
- Academic support – mentees needing support with their academic studies should speak with their Personal Tutor
- Careers guidance or specific or in-depth labour market information – whilst you may be able to provide industry insights you may be matched with a student interested in working in a different field to you. Mentees can access this support through the Careers Team
- In-depth support with applications - mentees can access this support from the Student Opportunity Helpdesk
- A friendship – for the duration of the mentoring relationship the focus is on personal and professional development and therefore we ask you do not make social media connections except for LinkedIn.

What makes a good mentor?

As a mentor you will be sharing your experiences and knowledge gained throughout your professional career. There are some characteristics that will help you to do this well and be an effective mentor, these are;

- Being supportive, understanding and approachable
- Able to motivate and inspire

- Encouraging your mentee to develop
- Being a good communicator, ask questions and actively listening
- Challenging your mentee to step outside their comfort zone
- Willingness to share skills, knowledge and expertise
- Having a positive attitude and acting as a positive role model
- Showing your enthusiasm for your field
- Offer non-judgemental constructive feedback

What support can I provide to the mentee?

As a mentor you will motivate and empower your mentee by helping them to reflect on themselves and their goals. You will also share your experience and advice to support your mentee in achieving their goals. It is up to your mentee to establish their own goals.

The support you can provide is;

- Listen to their career ideas and plan to help them reflect
- Advice on how to develop their 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 their transition into the workplace by providing information on what to expect and tips on how to be prepared
- Support with their personal development and developing transferable skills
- Real world insights into professional life and information on how the world of work works
- Provide insight into your job role and the industry you work in (or multiple job roles/industries if you have changed careers)

Matching process

When you apply to be a mentor you will be asked to provide us with information on your career and education. This will help us to match you to students interested in similar fields or with similar education.

We will also ask if you are comfortable to disclose to us some more personal details and information such as your gender, race, ethnicity, if you were from a widening participation background when attending university, if you have changed careers. This is so that we have as wide a range of mentors from different backgrounds and to help us match you to a mentee that would be interested in a mentor from a particular background.

However, we do not guarantee that our students will be matched to a mentor with the characteristics they have asked. Instead we make the students aware that all mentors will be able to support their career and personal development and will have expertise to share regardless of background.

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

Once you have been accepted as a mentor 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 you as a mentor, provide you with tips on how to be an effective mentor and how you are expected to engage with your mentee and the University during the programme.

After you have read and understood the mentoring guidelines, we will look for a suitable mentee to match you with. When we have matched you to a mentee we will send an introduction email to you both and from here you can arrange a chemistry meeting.

How will mentors and mentees work together?

Mentoring sessions will be approximately one hour in duration and take place once a month.

The programme will commence from September 2021 and run until the end of 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 sessions. 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 mentee 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 mentee or you have any concerns for your mentee. 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 address any issues.

Contact Details

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

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