

The Big Deal 2012: Mentor Information

What is the Big Deal?

An exciting enterprise competition for enthusiastic 14 and 15 year old school students, grouped into teams of 2–4, from schools across the country. The aim of The Big Deal is to develop students' skills and business awareness, and enable teams to prepare a business plan over 10 weeks which they will then present to a panel of judges, who will decide on a winning team to take the exclusive prize, which this year has been confirmed as a trip to Milan and Venice! Participants are all members of the Goal Programme, for able students with little experience of Higher Education in their backgrounds.

What would my contribution be?

To act as an online mentor to a team of 2–4 students with a view to helping them win the competition. You will contribute your time and knowledge and experience; there is no financial contribution required from you and we can cover travel expenses where required.

What would I do as a mentor?

On a weekly basis students will be assigned a business task, which will facilitate discussion and guide the mentoring when appropriate. The students will interact with you via the dedicated online mentoring forum 'Big Deal Blogs' (www.bigdealblogs.com) designed by Brightside (www.thebrightsidetrust.org). There is also the opportunity for informal discussion; this is of great value to the students as they might ask you about careers or studying at university.

How many hours per week will I have to invest?

We estimate that you will need to invest between one and two hours per week throughout the 10 weeks of the programme (slightly longer in terms of calendar weeks due to school holidays). It is completely up to you when you allocate this time as you can access the mentoring website at your convenience. We just ask that you respond to students reasonably quickly to encourage their engagement.

Will I meet my team face to face?

You will meet your team at the launch on Wednesday 21 March and at the 'Dragons' Den' style final on Thursday 5 July, when they will pitch their ideas to a panel of judges. These events will take place at the University of Warwick. We also encourage mentors to arrange one visit to the team in their school, usually towards the end of the project, to support the team in the final stages.

Will I be trained?

Training will take place at the launch event in March, where you will learn how to use the web interface and will receive a Mentor Handbook. There are also online mentor training modules.

Will I be the only person supporting my team?

Each team will also have a school coordinator (teacher) whose role is to support the team. It is very much the role of a facilitator, an enabler, a sounding board, rather than a leader. It differs from the role of the mentor in that they will not be as involved with the project itself – the team's weekly tasks and the wider idea and business plan.

What will I gain from taking part?

Mentoring provides an opportunity for you to make a difference by interacting with young people and motivating them whilst improving your communication skills. Mentoring enhances leadership, teaching, and coaching skills and encourages you to become a more reflective practitioner. Above all, mentoring provides a great deal of satisfaction, using the benefits of experience to help students reach their true potential.

Goal

The Goal Programme

The Big Deal is one of a number of events run as part of the Goal Programme. Administered by the University of Warwick, the programme works with gifted and talented students, aged 14-18, with little or no family experience of higher education. It provides a range of unique, personalised opportunities to increase self-esteem, motivation, self confidence, and levels of attainment, with the aim of achieving places at the most selective Higher Education institutions.

Students on the programme often express an interest in exploring careers in business and entrepreneurship, but school staff and parents have highlighted limited access to opportunities and experiences.



Goal e-mentoring

Over a 10-week period (excluding school holiday times), beginning at the Launch Day at the University of Warwick on 21 March, the Goal students, through a tailored and dedicated online interface, will be assigned a series of tasks on business subjects including: research, marketing, finance, and project planning.



Using the online interface, www.bigdealblogs.com, the mentors will provide guidance to support students completing these tasks, providing practical advice on business matters, encouragement and information from their own personal experiences.

The Big Deal competition will finish with a high profile day of celebration on 5 July, again at the University of Warwick. The event will showcase the outcomes of the programme - the students' development of entrepreneurial skills, increase in confidence and business awareness, and aspirations towards a business career. Each team will pitch their business plan to a panel of judges and be in with a chance of winning the fantastic prize.

By working in partnership with The Brightside Trust, the Goal Programme puts young people in touch with experts from the academic and business worlds.

The Brightside Trust

The Brightside Trust is an educational charity working in the area of widening participation. Set up by a group of philanthropic entrepreneurs in 2000, the mission is to provide individuals with the confidence and skills they need to overcome social disadvantage. Working in partnership with government, corporate, and not-for-profit organisations, The Brightside Trust aims to deliver a set of programmes that enable talented but underprivileged young people to aspire to and achieve meaningful careers.

For more information visit www.warwick.ac.uk/go/goal/students/events/bigdeal or contact:
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