



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

SCHOOL OF
PSYCHOLOGY

School of Psychology Alumni Mentoring Programme

Information for Alumni



Welcome back!

I am delighted that you are interested in learning more about the Psychology Alumni Mentoring Programme.

Work Related Learning (which includes mentoring, mock interviews, employer panels and placements) is an important part of our students' experience during their time with us. It enhances their understanding of the world of work; themselves and their potential work environments. As a result, our students are further empowered to enter and succeed in graduate job markets, the world of work and their wider lives.

We have several students who have expressed an interest in mentoring and know that for you, their potential mentor, there are various benefits too including:

- A sense of personal satisfaction in helping develop the potential of others
- An opportunity to share your experience and expertise
- Contributing to your personal and professional development
- Enhancing your communication and facilitation skills
- Enhancing your CV by providing evidence of your abilities in supporting and managing people
- Acting as an ambassador for your organisation or professional body

We look forward to hopefully working with you on this exciting programme.

Patricia Murphy
Alumni Mentoring Manager

Introduction

This document has been developed to provide you with information on the Psychology Alumni Mentoring Programme and provides some information to assist you in developing a successful mentoring relationship.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a great opportunity for students to gain real insight as to what career options are open to them and it is a rewarding experience for Alumni to help someone progress and achieve their full potential in their future career.

Alumni mentoring is a powerful personal development tool. It can help the mentee gain a better understanding of themselves and what they want to do as a career.

It should be driven primarily by the mentee, with the mentor supporting and enabling them to take responsibility for their own development. In this, the mentor acts as a guide, supporter, sounding board and, sometimes, as a role model.

Typical mentoring roles include:

- Sounding board – testing ideas and suggestions
- Critical friend – supportive, giving constructive feedback
- Challenger – challenging assumptions, encouraging different ways of thinking
- Adviser – to give advice, however the mentee decides how best to use that advice
- Facilitator – highlighting opportunities, access to key people
- Motivator – encouraging and motivating to achieve goals
- Expert – a source of technical/professional knowledge

The aims of the programme are:

- to help Psychology students engage with Alumni
- to provide students with a supported framework to think about the extensive career options open to them
- to help them understand the transferable skills they have, as well as the skills they need to develop.

This is very much personal development as opposed to academic guidance or formal career advice.

What do we expect from you?

As a mentor you are expected to:

- Attend a briefing session about the Programme and your role.
- Meet your mentee at least 3 times during the programme. This can be via face to face and/or virtual meetings.
- Provide a supportive and positive atmosphere that encourages rapport between both parties.
- Provide feedback to the mentee.
- Provide feedback to the School about the programme and your experience.
- Signpost the mentee (where appropriate) to Queen's Student Wellbeing Service, if you have concerns regarding their general wellbeing.

What can I cover with my mentee?

Potential topics could include:

- Career development
- Presentations and public speaking
- Business start-up
- Building networks
- Recruitment and training
- Increasing career and business confidence
- Resilience
- Problem solving
- Someone to support me
- Organisation and planning
- Profile and visibility
- Interviews and pitches

Indicative Timeline

- Step 1: Mentors recruited throughout the year
- Step 2: Applications open for students (October)
- Step 3: Mentoring Coordinator reviews and matches Mentees and Mentors
- Step 4: Mentees and Mentors receive an email introducing each other.
- Step 5: Induction session for Mentors and Mentees (October/November)
- Step 6: Mentoring sessions November – March/April.
- Step 7: Feedback session and Celebration event – April.

The Agreement

It is recommended that the mentoring relationship is based on shared expectation about what each party can expect of the other.

The best way to ensure that the relationship runs smoothly is to discuss and agree some ground rules and expectations, which can help to keep the process focused. Whilst emphasizing that the important aspect to mentoring is the people and the relationship and not the process, it may be helpful to complete a Mentoring Agreement (see Appendix 1).

Be clear about the boundaries of the mentoring relationship, keep a professional distance, and remember mentoring does not deal with:

- Counselling
- Mental health
- Personal trauma
- Dependency etc

If you are concerned about the wellbeing or safety of your mentee, please advise them of your concerns and your intention (if appropriate) to contact Queen's [Student Wellbeing Service](#) (SWS) or our in-house Student Support Officer (Avril Hawthorne).

A mentee doesn't have to disclose anything specific for you to be concerned, and referrals don't have to include any specific details. Obviously, if you don't feel they are an immediate risk to themselves or others, then you can only signpost them and/or ask them if they would be happy for you to contact the SWS. The only disclosures that are legally bound in UK legislation relate to child protection offences, the physical abuse of vulnerable adults, money laundering and other crimes covered by prevention of terrorism legislation.

We would also recommend checking out this SWS resource:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/InformationforStaff/Whattodoif/>

The Do's and Don'ts of mentoring

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the mentee is clear about the nature and parameters of the relationship • Agree realistic expectations • Listen • Question your mentee • Give your mentees time to formulate answers to your questions • Encourage mentees to keep a reflective journal of what they have learned through experiences at work • Build flexibility into the organisation and structure of meetings • Make use of the language of your profession • Create a friendly atmosphere • Be honest and patient • Encourage mentees to summarise what they have learned at University / work and in their mentoring sessions • Challenge your mentee to continually develop personally and professionally • Refer your mentees to others for help outside your area of expertise • Provide closure for each session – a suggestion or direction for further training, study, a summary, or a prediction of the next session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take all of the responsibility for planning activities and/or initiating contact with your mentee • Interrupt your mentee unless it is to clarify your understanding of an important point • Spend most of the time talking about your own experiences • Always expect your mentee to get something right first time • Correct your mentee's work – allow them an opportunity to identify and remedy. • Always attempt to solve a mentee's problems for them – offer ideas and support them to find their own solutions instead • Forget that frequent communication is key to successful mentoring

Frequently Asked Questions

How was my mentee/mentor matched to me?

Basic information from the application form is gathered, with mentee to mentor matched based on the information provided.

How much of my time will this take?

This very much depends on each pairing. It is entirely both parties' choice as to how frequently you meet and for how often. We recommend that this is discussed, and some guidelines are set out at the first meeting. However, as a rough guide, we would like you to meet at least 3 times during the programme.

When does the programme start and end?

You will be notified in October/November who you have been matched with, ideally your first meeting should be held within two - four weeks of being matched. The programme will run to March/April.

What happens if we do not get on?

There is a chance that some of the suggested matches will not work in practice, and this will probably be apparent quite quickly.

It is worth bearing in mind that a mentoring relationship is designed to challenge you and make you think differently about yourself and your approach to things. As a result, there could well be points during your meetings where you feel moved outside your comfort zone. In retrospect, this could well be when you gain the most from the scheme. However, if there is a longer-term and more fundamental 'mis-match' please let us know.

How confidential is all this?

What you discuss with your mentee is strictly confidential between the two of you, and you must maintain this confidentiality even after your relationship has ended. You will never be asked for details of what you discuss at your meetings. The only exception to this is if a mentee discloses a risk to themselves or others – where immediate contact / signposting to Queen's Student Wellbeing Service is required.

It is 4 weeks in, and I've heard nothing from my mentor/mentee, what should I do?

Usually, the mentees take responsibility for making the first contact with their mentor and arranging a meeting. If you have made initial contact but then hear nothing, please let us know.

I'm a mentor and feel like I'm out of my depth.

Being a mentor is not about solving problems for other people, but to act as listener and offer insight to your mentee, or to challenge them to think about issues in a different way.

If you are in a position where you feel that you are not equipped to deal with the topics your mentee is raising, please contact us.

How should we keep in touch?

We recommend that you discuss with your mentee on how best to stay in touch between sessions. Everyone has a preferred communication method and frequency, so let them know if you'd like updates via email, telephone calls etc.

I want to withdraw from the programme.

This is a voluntary programme, so this is not a problem. All we ask is that you let us know why you want to withdraw. Mentoring relationships aren't easy, you may be pushed beyond your 'comfort zone', but often this can lead to real insights and gains being made.

Will there be an evaluation of the programme?

Yes, we will ask you to complete an evaluation at the end of the programme

Contact us:

To learn more about how to get involved in our Psychology Alumni Mentoring Programme please contact:



Patricia Murphy
Psychology Alumni Mentoring Manager
patricia.murphy@qub.ac.uk

Appendix 1:

Psychology Alumni Mentoring Programme

The Mentoring Agreement

It is recommended that the mentoring relationship is based on shared expectation about what each can expect of the other. The best way to ensure that the relationship runs smoothly is to discuss and agree some ground rules and expectations, which can help to keep the process focused. Whilst emphasizing that the important aspect to mentoring is the people and the relationship and not the process, it may be helpful to complete a Mentoring Agreement

Responsibilities/ commitment	We are both committed to achieving a productive, confidential, and honest relationship which fosters learning and professional development for both of us
Meeting logistics where, when, how often, length etc	
Contact between meetings	
Boundaries of confidentiality	
Mentee Learning objectives	
Mentor Learning objectives	
Success criteria	
Mentee signature:	Date:
Mentor signature:	Date:

Appendix 2: My mentoring goals (Mentee form)

Name:

Mentor Name:

Date:

Identify 3 goals you want help with achieving through mentoring	On a scale 0 – 10 (0 being the lowest), how do you rate yourself now (before your first meeting)?	What do I need to do to achieve this goal (Complete this with your Mentor)
1.		
2.		
3.		

Appendix 3: Reflective journal (Mentee form)

Name:

Mentor name:

Date:

What topics did we cover today?	
What have I learnt about myself?	
Where can I go for additional support (if required)?	
What do I need to do before my next mentoring session?	
What do I need to do within the next 6-12 months?	
Date & time for next coaching session:	
What did I forget to cover in this session? What would I like to ask at the next session?	