A person with long hair and a blue sweater

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# Welcome

Congratulations for applying and being accepted onto the Career Mentoring Scheme at Sheffield Hallam University.

The one-to-one nature of this scheme means you can personalise your experience to suit your own goals and what your mentor can offer. Some of the areas your mentor may be able to help you with include:

* exploring different career options or areas which interest you
* gaining relevant work experience to enhance your CV
* expanding your network of contacts

Of course, what you get out of it will depend on how much you want to put in. As a mentee, you will take the lead in organising meetings, set the goals you want to achieve and negotiate how you and your mentor can work together to achieve those goals.

## Support during the scheme

This handbook has been designed to support you throughout the scheme. Your mentor and the scheme co-ordinators are also there to help. Please keep the scheme co-ordinators informed of any achievements, updates or concerns throughout your mentoring partnership.

For activities, and meeting and action plan templates, you can revisit the Career Mentoring Scheme website and log into the Resources section. In here you’ll also find suggested ways to help you reflect on the skills you're developing.

“We hope you find this scheme beneficial and enjoyable and that you will gain a lot from your involvement. We look forward to celebrating your achievements with you at the evaluation event at the end of the year. Good luck and keep in touch.”

Lennie Young, Scheme Co-ordinator

A person with long blonde hair

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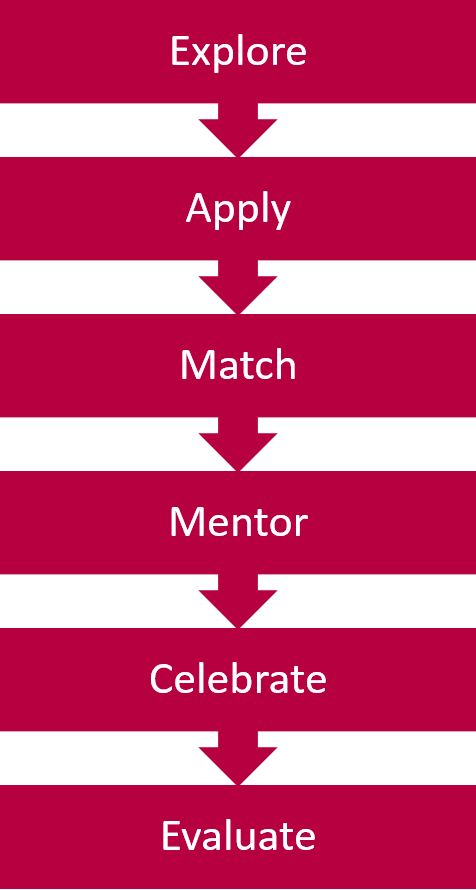
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# Introduction to mentoring

## The mentoring process

The mentoring process involves identifying your learning needs first and discussing them with your mentor. You can then set goals and work towards achieving them by taking action. Reviewing and reflecting is an important part of mentoring as it allows you to evaluate whether the goals you’ve set and the actions you’ve taken have been helpful. This stage can also help you to identify further learning needs, and so the cycle begins again.

## Making time

To make the most of this opportunity, you need to think about how you manage your time. You could start by asking yourself the following questions.

What are you doing which doesn’t need to be done?

For example:

* collecting or creating work for its own sake
* doing ‘nice to do tasks’ or indulging in distractions such as Instagram

Are you doing anything which wastes other people’s time?

For example:

* being late or missing appointments
* not preparing for meetings or giving others vague or inaccurate instructions

If you do some of these things, you’re not alone. Instead of doing those things, you can start to manage your time more effectively by:

* setting clear goals or a ‘to do’ list
* considering factors such as how urgent, important or time consuming the tasks on your list are and prioritising them
* using a diary, time planner, or reminders on your mobile phone to help you allocate the tasks into the time available
* if you have a tendency to put things off until later, try to break the habit and reward yourself when you achieve your goal

# Before you meet your mentor

## Make sure you prepare

To get the most out of this scheme, it's a good idea to do some preparation. This might involve:

* researching the organisation your mentor works for
* reflecting on what you want to get from the experience
* thinking about activities you might want to do
* planning how you will manage your time
* understanding your own preferred learning style/s
* understanding how you work with others

You can find activities on the Resources section of the Career Mentoring Scheme website to support you with your preparation.

# Arranging your first meeting

## Personal safety tips

The following are general safety tips we give to all students.

* Arrange visits at times and places that are convenient, safe and appropriate. Meet in public places such as the University or the employer’s place of work (assuming they don’t work from home), coffee shops or cafés on campus. Do not meet in your homes, pubs etc.
* Tell your friends where you are going and what time you are expected back.
* If you feel uncomfortable about anything, make a polite excuse and leave as soon as possible and inform the scheme co-ordinator immediately.
* Although impolite and unprofessional to use your phone during the mentoring meeting, do take your mobile phone with you should you need to use it in case of emergency or travel delay.
* Ensure you take any medication you may need during your mentoring visit.
* Take care of your own health and safety whilst visiting the mentor’s host organisation or carrying out any activity with the host.
* The University accepts applications from volunteer mentors in good faith and does not give any warranties as to their suitability or the safety of their employing organisation’s premises. By accepting an invitation to meet with a mentor or visit their business premises, you do so at your own risk. Please inform the mentoring scheme coordinator immediately if you have any doubts about the mentor’s suitability.
* Report any accidents occurring during your mentoring meetings, whether they have happened in the mentor’s premises or on visits arranged by the mentor. Inform the scheme coordinator as soon as possible.

## Professional etiquette

Please don’t let the mentor down.

Your mentor has volunteered to join the scheme and is looking forward to meeting with you. Failure to turn up to your meetings, either virtually or in person, without explanation is extremely unprofessional and discourteous and could result in the mentor withdrawing from the scheme, which not only affects you but means other students will miss out on the opportunity.

Remember, the mentor may become a referee, future employer or colleague.

Always be polite and maintain a professional manner. You want to be remembered for the right reasons.

Please try and be punctual.

If you are running late (whether in person or virtually) or if you are having problems with your internet, call the mentor and give an estimated time of arrival to the meeting. Keep your mentor’s contact details with you or log them into your phone. Also make a note of the main reception number for their organisation so you can always get a message to them if a problem arises at short notice.

Don’t be afraid to ask lots of questions

You can ask questions about the mentor, their career history, their organisation, job role etc. Take the initiative to gather the information you would like to know and that could be relevant or helpful to your own career planning.

Be proactive and considerate when arranging meetings.

Make the most of your mentoring partnership by preparing for meetings and setting clear objectives and agendas for each meeting.

Keep in touch between meetings.

This can be via email to keep each other informed of progress. This will demonstrate your commitment to your mentoring partnership.

Respect each other’s differences and keep an open mind.

Be prepared to negotiate differences in a diplomatic manner and be honest in your opinions, but sensitive to each other’s feelings when giving and receiving feedback.

Keep information confidential.

Remember this partnership is based on trust and requires both parties to keep information confidential.

Remember to praise and thank each other.

If you value each other’s contributions, don’t be afraid to praise and thank each other. A gift is not essential, but a card or email of thanks to your mentor for the time they have given you will always be appreciated.

Ask permission

If you would like your mentor to become a referee for you, always ask their permission first.

# Your first meeting

You might find it useful to spend some time in your first meeting discussing how you will manage the partnership. We recommend you discuss and agree some ground rules. This will prevent any misunderstandings later and help you work professionally and effectively together.

The Resources section of the Career Mentoring site contains meeting agenda templates you can use. Here are some ideas for agenda items you might want to include in your first meeting.

## Agenda items

Contact details

* Exchange details of how you wish to be contacted (only provide your mobile or personal email address if you are happy to).
* Collect the mentor’s telephone number, direct dial/extension and the main reception number for their organisation so you can get a message through to them in case of emergency.

Get to know each other

You may want to share some information about yourself, such as:

* your educational and/or family background
* your career choices and long term goals
* what you think you can offer
* what you hope to achieve from the partnership
* why you wanted to join the scheme

You may also want to clarify each other’s expectations of the scheme and each other.

Plan of action

* Discuss which objectives you want to prioritise.
* Negotiate which priorities you are going to work on together.
* Agree how many meetings you anticipate having/needing based on what you want from the experience.
* Provisionally plan the topics to be discussed at each meeting (you can re-negotiate this later).

Acceptable times and venues for meetings and calls

* Discuss where and when you will meet.
* Each party should point out any restrictions to times and places
* Always meet in a public place, meeting room or in the workplace

Confidentiality

* Clarify that you both understand issues of confidentiality within the mentoring relationship and the mentor’s organisation.

Note taking

* Agree who is going to take notes and write up action plans or whether you’d both like to take your own notes.
* If anything confidential comes up, make sure you discuss how this should or should not be recorded.

Monitoring and evaluation

* Discuss how you will monitor your own progress and what to do if any problems arise.

Please contact your assigned SHU Career Mentoring staff member after your first meeting to confirm you have started and are happy with your choice of mentor.

# Working with your mentor

## Things to do

Once you have identified, agreed and prioritised what you want to achieve, you can discuss how you will work with your mentor to achieve those goals. You may find it helpful to complete the learning styles questionnaire in the Resources section of the website to identify types of activities that reflect your individual learning style.

We’ve made some suggestions here but you and your mentor might think of something else.

* Discuss your mentor’s career progression/development.
* Ask your mentor to talk through the activities on their job description so you can gain an understanding of their role and the expectations.
* Look at induction packs for new staff at your mentor’s organisation.
* Read policies and procedure guidelines for your mentor’s organisation.
* Examine the organisational structure chart to understand career progression routes.
* Have a tour of the mentor’s workplace.
* Work shadow your mentor and/or their colleagues
* Discuss particular topics with the mentor or their colleagues.
* Arrange virtual work experience.
* Review your CV, job or further study applications with your mentor.
* Attend team meetings, client meetings or accompany your mentor at training events.
* Attend business lunches or networking events.
* Observe recruitment or selection processes.
* Practise mock interviews.
* Role play potential work situations.
* Read case files (but only if client confidentiality rules permit).

## Agenda for subsequent meetings

In your subsequent meetings you may wish to follow the action plan outline below. Copies are available in the resources section on the Career Mentoring website if you wish to use them for taking notes.

Date and time:

Location:

Action points from last meeting – achieved?

Aims and objectives for this meeting

Key points discussed

Action points agreed (be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time-specific)

Next meeting

Date and time:

Place:

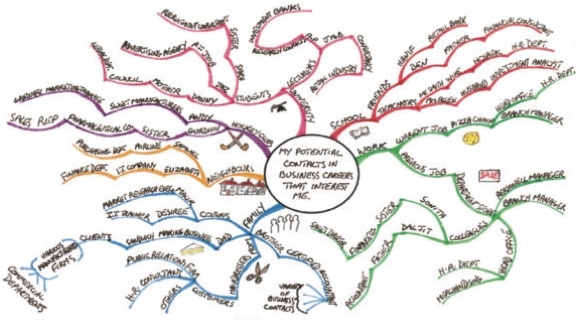
## Networking

The mentoring scheme introduces you to someone who has insights and knowledge into your chosen career area. They are not the only person you may find it helpful to meet with however.

Sometimes you may have several career ideas you want to investigate and one mentor is not enough. We encourage you to use this opportunity to gather views from a range of people and build up a full picture about the organisation/career area from different perspectives.

Talk to your mentor, lecturers, careers advisers, friends and family about other possible introductions they could help you to make. There may be networking events organised through professional associations or you may be able to expand your network through connections made on social media such as Twitter or LinkedIn.

It’s not just who you know, but it’s who they know that may be helpful. Look at the mind map below and think who you could approach.



Resource developed at Brunel University as part of the Merits HEFCE funded initiative.

You can create your own networking mind map using the activity in the Resources section of the website. Keep a record of who you have spoken to and any follow-up action points.

# Your final meeting

In your final meeting you may find it useful to reflect on the progress you have made in your mentoring partnership and what happens next.

Here are some ideas for agenda items you might want to include in your final meeting.

## Agenda items

Review your progress

Refer back to the objectives you set and negotiated with your mentor.

* Review the objectives you have achieved.
* Review the extent to which you now feel confident/aware/experienced in these areas.

Discuss follow-on actions

What objectives from your list are still to be addressed? This last meeting could be an opportunity to fill in the gaps and identify the steps you may need to take to continue achieving your goals on any outstanding issues.

You might want to identify:

* what you can do now to meet these objectives
* who else you may need to speak to

Review your professional conduct

As a graduate within the workplace, you may be responsible for addressing your own personal and professional development needs. The mentoring scheme has been designed with this in mind. Hopefully you’ll have taken the lead in identifying your personal objectives, arranging meetings, setting agendas, negotiating goals and targets for meetings, and following through on your own actions.

You may want to use your last meeting to review how you have worked together. For example, you could review:

* the extent to which you took responsibility for managing the partnership
* how you would rate yourself in terms of your professional conduct
* how you could continue to improve and develop your professionalism

Celebrate!

There will be a Mentoring Scheme celebration/evaluation event that we hope you and your mentor can attend. Have you:

* both got the date in your diaries?
* sent your RSVP to register your attendance at the event?

Say thank you and draw things to a close

Think about how you want to handle the end of your mentoring partnership. Do you want to:

* thank your mentor? Even if you haven’t achieved all of your goals, show your appreciation for the time and help your mentor has volunteered.
* asked if they would act as a reference?

If your mentor offers to keep in touch with you on an informal basis after the scheme, don’t forget to exchange contact details or make a connection on LinkedIn.

# Reflection

## What skills have you developed?

As well as gaining knowledge and experience from your mentoring partnership, you’ll have developed skills too. The skills you’ve developed might include:

* communication
* initiative
* planning and organising
* problem solving
* professionalism
* project management
* teamwork

Now you’ve come to the end of your mentoring partnership, it’s a perfect opportunity to reflect. We’ve created documents in the Resources section of the website to help you reflect on and record the skills you’ve developed. Each document has been designed to help you to explain how you’ve developed your skills using the STAR technique. This is an effective way of answering competency-based questions in interviews.

## Using the STAR technique

Competency-based questions may be phrased in ways such as, “Tell me of a time you have shown initiative or gone over or beyond expectations” or, “Tell me of a time when you have had to solve a challenging problem.”

When employers ask you these types of question, they want you to provide a specific example of when you have had to demonstrate a particular skill or handle a particular type of situation. They are assessing not just what you have done, but how you have handled situations, how you behaved in different circumstances and what you have learned or gained from them.

You may be able to use your mentoring experience as evidence of some of the skills employers seek. The STAR technique is an effective way of presenting evidence or ‘telling the story’ of your skills and experiences.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S** | Situation |
| **T** | Task |
| **A** | Actions |
| **R** | Result |

Here is an example of a STAR story.

|  |
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| Provide an example of where you have had to establish and maintain a professional relationship (200 words)  In my second year I took part in SHU’s Career Mentoring Scheme. This involved establishing and maintaining a mentoring relationship with a professional from the ... sector over the academic year. On first meeting, we spent time getting to know each other, listening to our previous experiences and outlining what we hoped to achieve from the partnership. We prioritised what we were going to work on and how we’d work together to achieve our goals. We agreed ground rules to ensure the partnership worked effectively, respecting confidentiality and personal circumstances. I always respected the mentor’s time by arriving punctually and planning and forwarding a suggested agenda in advance of the meeting so we could prepare accordingly for the discussion. I also kept in regular contact via email and telephone responding promptly and politely to feedback and their support. Although initially I felt quite shy about meeting my mentor, we quickly got to know each other and because my mentor recognised that I was so enthusiastic, I negotiated several meetings with them over the year exceeding the suggested number and we are still in contact now on an informal basis beyond the duration of the scheme. (195 words) |

For a CV this could be reduced to:

|  |
| --- |
| Managed and maintained a mentoring relationship with a professional throughout my second year.   * Prioritised and negotiated learning outcomes and objectives. * Agreed ground rules for how we could work most effectively to achieve our goals. * Respected mentor’s time by arriving promptly, circulating meeting agendas in advance and keeping accurate minutes. * Planned and organised meetings well in advance and kept to arrangements. * Kept in touch by phone and email responding promptly and politely to emails. |

Mentoring reflective report

As part of your commitment to this programme, you are required to produce a reflective report of your mentoring experience. The prompts below may help you. Once completed, please email your report to the scheme coordinator.

* Why did you want to participate in mentoring scheme?
* What did you hope to achieve?
* How did you use your mentor’s time?
* What did you do?
* How did you manage the partnership?
* What did you achieve/learn as a result of the partnership?
* What did you learn about yourself in terms of your professionalism - what did you do well and how could you develop this further?
* How do you intend to follow this up and do you have any future action points?
* Do you have any advice for others taking part in the scheme?
* Do you have any general comments about the scheme or feedback – what worked well/what could be better?

# Frequently asked questions

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| Q | **Whose responsibility is it to arrange meetings?** |
| A | The mentoring scheme encourages mentees to take a lead role in arranging meetings and acting proactively. Remember your mentor is a volunteer and will have other business commitments alongside your mentoring partnership. |

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| Q | **But what if I can’t get hold of my mentor?** |
| A | Be patient and persistent. Try more than one method of communication. Use the telephone, it will be easier to arrange meetings this way rather than by emails. However, if you continue to have problems please contact the scheme coordinator. |

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| Q | **When is it acceptable to contact my mentor?** |
| A | Arrange contact times that are mutually convenient for you both, but you should be aiming to contact your mentor during business hours, unless otherwise agreed. |

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| Q | **Where shall I meet my mentor?** |
| A | You should aim to arrange at least one meeting at your mentor’s workplace. Try to arrange the other three meetings at a mutually convenient place for you both. Take into consideration travel time, safety and expenses incurred. |

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| Q | **What if I need to cancel an appointment with my mentor?** |
| A | Out of courtesy, inform your mentor as far in advance as possible. However if the cancellation is caused by circumstances beyond your control please email and/or phone them immediately. Be proactive in arranging the next meeting as soon as possible. |

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| Q | **What if I don’t get on with my mentor?** |
| A | Remember this is a professional partnership, so try to resolve issues effectively between you and your mentor. However if you are finding this difficult and need further advice, please contact your scheme coordinator. |

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| Q | **What if my mentor is not from a career I am interested in?** |
| A | We try our best to match partnerships based on career interests. However we have found previously that partnerships have been equally productive and successful with matches from different career areas. The objective of the programme is for you to develop transferable skills for employment which can be gained through many types of mentoring partnerships. |

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| Q | **I have work and study commitments and may be under pressure to complete the tasks, what can I do?** |
| A | When you applied for the mentoring programme, you were advised of the commitment levels. The mentoring programme should be seen as an opportunity to develop professional time management, planning and organisational skills. If you have any problems honouring the commitments, explain these to the mentor and try to renegotiate the expectations with them and keep us informed. |

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| Q | **Will I be expected to pay for travel expenses?** |
| A | The Scheme is generously supported by the Hallam Fund, creating the Hallam Fund Career Mentoring Bursary - this means you can apply for a limited amount of money to travel to meet your mentor. This is a great opportunity to attend events or get to meet your mentor in person if they are based outside of Sheffield. For more details on the criteria and how to apply, head to <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/shucareermentoring/hallam-fund-career-mentoring-bursary-information-for-mentees/> or speak to your linked Adviser. |

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| Q | **Will I be expected to pay for other expenses?** |
| A | You can apply for a limited amount of money to undertake work experience or attend events. For more details on the criteria and how to apply, head to <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/shucareermentoring/hallam-fund-career-mentoring-bursary-information-for-mentees/> or speak to your linked Adviser. |