



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

FACULTY OF  
ARTS, HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES

**STUDENT  
MENTORING  
PROGRAMME**

**#MADEatAHSS  
#loveQUB**





# Welcome

The AHSS student mentoring programme was launched in January 2020 and aims to help enhance students' understanding of the world of work; themselves and their potential work environments. As a result, students will be empowered to enter and succeed in graduate job markets and their personal development.

The programme supports a large number of AHSS students every year with feedback, recognising the amazing opportunity afforded by mentoring with one student saying: *"it will open your eyes to so many possibilities that you wouldn't have thought of"*.

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. The purpose of this programme is to help current AHSS students engage with experienced alumni. We want to provide students with a supported framework to think about the career options open to them and help them understand the skills they have as well as the skills they need to develop.

## How It Works

We will establish and manage a bank of experienced mentors who will be made available to those seeking help in the following areas:

- Enhancing practical skills and getting advice on career advancement
- Identifying and applying for opportunities that will aid skill development
- Building networks
- Increase career confidence

Students wishing to have support from the mentoring bank will apply and, once approved will be allocated a suitable mentor.

Each mentee will be eligible to:

- 5 sessions with a mentor
- Attend 2 training seminars
- Receive monthly newsletters
- Attend networking events

Mentoring is a great way to reassure, encourage and support students. As a previous Queen's student, I know how important it is to seek and receive advice in relation to career paths and options. I shared my previous experiences with my mentee; I talked about my career path to date and my ups and downs, and I encouraged her that challenge is good.

BA Criminology (2010) graduate Aisling Laverty



## What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a powerful personal development and empowerment tool. It can help the mentee gain a better understanding of 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 way the mentor acts as a guide, supporter, sounding board and, sometimes, as a role model.

### Typical mentoring roles:

**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

**Goal setter** - helping set and focus on goals

## What are the expectations of mentors?

As a mentor you are expected to:

- Attend mentor induction training which is only mandatory if you have not attended this before
- Meet your mentee at least 5 times during the programme  
This can be via face to face and/or virtual meetings
- Provide a supportive and positive atmosphere that encourages individuals to share personal stories and advice
- Provide feedback

## What is the role of a mentor

- To listen
- Be honest and patient
- To challenge and question your mentee
- Give your mentees time to formulate answers to your questions
- Build flexibility into the organisation and structure of meetings
- Make use of the language of your profession
- Help your mentee develop networks



Mentoring involves listening with empathy, sharing experience (usually mutually), professional friendship, developing insight through reflection, being a sounding board, and encouraging.

David Clutterbuck

## Benefits of becoming a mentor

Whilst the focus of the mentoring relationship is primarily on the development needs and opportunities of the mentee there are also benefits for the mentor including:

- Mentoring contributes to your personal and professional development
- Enhance your communication and facilitation skills
- Enhancing your CV by providing evidence of your abilities in supporting and managing people
- A sense of personal satisfaction in helping develop the potential of others
- An opportunity to share experience and expertise

Mentoring is a great way to share knowledge and experience, to support others and develop confidence in individuals to help them grow, develop and progress.

BSc Business Management (2005)  
graduate Laurie Montgomery

## What topics will we discuss

This is very much about personal development as opposed to academic guidance. Potential topics that students ask for support include:

- Career development
- Presentations/Public speaking
- Business Start-up
- Building Networks
- Recruitment & Training
- Increasing Career/Business confidence
- Resilience
- Problem Solving
- Someone to Support Me
- Organisation & Planning
- Profile & Visibility
- Interviews/Pitches



## How do I become a Mentor?

We are looking for AHSS alumni who would like to use their experiences and knowledge to help someone else progress and achieve their full potential. If you would like to join the mentoring bank you should be able to evidence at least two years' experience in offering mentoring support. Examples of such mentoring experience might include but are not restricted to:

- Supporting colleagues in a work capacity
- Mentoring in an educational context
- Coaching in a career support scheme

You can apply by visiting Student - [Alumni Mentoring Programme | About | Queen's University Belfast \(qub.ac.uk\)](#) or contact [a.carson@qub.ac.uk](mailto:a.carson@qub.ac.uk)

## Programme Structure

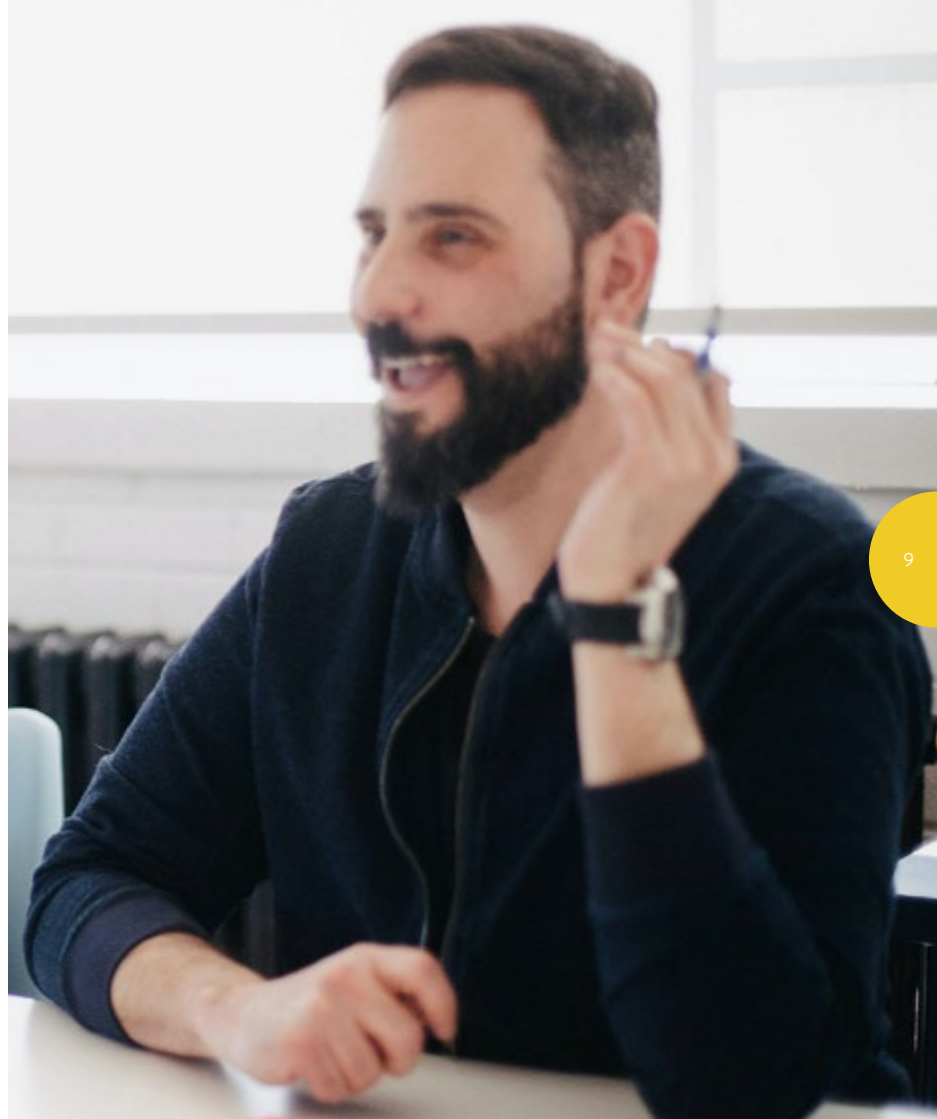
- Apply to become a mentor (September)
- Receive confirmation that you have been approved and added to the mentoring bank
- Attend mentor induction training
- Receive mentor toolkit and code of conduct to review and help prepare for meeting your mentee
- Receive "It's a Match" details, introducing you to your mentee
- Mentoring relationships begin in November and end in April
- Receive monthly newsletters which includes updates, mentoring resources, invites to events and evaluations.





The number one reason for students seeking a mentor is to get 1 – 1 support and guidance on career progression, to learn from someone – who may or may not have chosen a similar profession – and to benefit from their experiences.

Aileen Carson, Programme Lead





## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How was my mentee matched to me?

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

### 2. 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 recommended that this is discussed and some guidelines are set out at the first meeting. However, we have allocated each mentee 5 mentoring sessions.

### 3. When does the programme start and end?

The mentoring sessions will begin in November and finish at the end of April

### 4. What happens if we don't 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 more permanent and fundamental 'mis-match' please let us know.

#### **5. How confidential is this?**

What you discuss with your mentor/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.

#### **6. I've lost touch with my mentee, what do I do?**

These things happen, and some mentees decide the programme is not for them. Please let the programme lead know if you do not hear back from your mentee.

#### **7. 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,

#### **8. 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.

#### **9. Will there be an evaluation of the programme**

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



## Hear from Past Mentors



**Aishling Laverty**  
BA Criminology (2010) graduate  
Team Lead - AdValue Consulting PWC

### Why did you get involved in the mentoring scheme?

I love being able to help people, I have a caring nature and like to support people if I can. I wanted to be able to help and advise a student. As a previous Queens student I know how important it is to seek and receive advice in relations to career paths and options.

### Why is mentoring important?

Mentoring is a great way to reassure, encourage and support students.

### What advice did you give as a mentor?

I shared my previous experiences with my mentee, I talked about my career path to date and my ups and downs. I encouraged the mentee that challenge is good.

### How responsive was the student mentee?

Yes, my mentee was very responsive and eager to develop her career after graduating.

### Would you recommend mentoring to other alumni?

Of course! It was a great experience and learning curve for both myself as the mentor and the mentee.

Queens are passionate about supporting their students and their futures

Aishling Laverty



**Laurie Montgomery**  
BSc Business Management (2005)  
Business Process Consultant at Danske Bank

### **Why did you get involved in the mentoring scheme?**

I had seen the proposed scheme and genuinely thought it was a really good idea. When I think back to my time in Queens I was so focused on my studies and actually completing my degree that I never really gave the next stage any thought. Once I reached that stage I was really quite uncertain of what steps to take, and who to reach out to. This scheme seemed to be a good way to help others who could perhaps find themselves in a similar situation.

### **Why is mentoring important?**

I think it is a great way to share knowledge and experience to support others and develop confidence in individuals to help them grow, develop and progress both as an individual and within their careers. For me,

it gives me an opportunity to give something back and for the mentee hopefully it is an opportunity for them to set clear goals and work towards achieving them more quickly than they would alone.

### **What advice did you give as a mentor?**

That very much depends on the needs of the mentee, but I shared advice and my own experience on Graduate recruitment, when and where to look and how to select what was right for my mentee. I also shared my experiences of working in large organisations and how to establish a network to keep skills and knowledge up to date and to keep avenues open for opportunities.

### **How responsive was the student mentee?**

Very responsive. We had many great discussions on a number of topics and based on some of those discussions I was even able to bring along a member of my team who had recently come through the graduate recruitment scheme and share some very recent experiences.

### **Would you recommend mentoring to other alumni?**

I certainly would, it is a great experience and I find that I get as much out of it as the mentee. I think the programme is a great way of supporting others at a critical time in their career paths. I will definitely be volunteering to do it again.



**Joseph O'Keefe**  
LLB (2003) graduate  
Barrister-at-Law

### **Why did you get involved in the mentoring scheme?**

The Mentoring Scheme is a great opportunity for alumni to help and support students in the progression from study to starting a career.

### **Why is mentoring important?**

It is important that students have access to a range of alumni in many fields who can advise them on the practical steps to take to achieve their ambitions.

### **What advice did you give as a mentor?**

My advice is to get as much practical experience in a variety of professions and careers as possible so that you know what type of work you would like to do and, just as importantly, what type of work is not for you.

### **How responsive was the student mentee?**

My mentee was very good at getting in contact and fitting in with my working week to find time to meet up, either in person or (during lockdown) by video conference call.

### **Would you recommend mentoring to other alumni?**

Yes, mentoring was a good experience. It was good to give something back to the university and to help those who are now in the same position that you once were in university preparing to choose the right career path.

The alumni mentoring programme is an invaluable resource for students at all stages to get practical knowledge and guidance on their chosen career and to ask the questions that they always wanted an answer to about how to get there.

Joseph O'Keefe

Taking part in the mentoring programme was a valuable experience to support a young person to think through career options, and plan for the first steps in their career. Drawing on my own experience of having 'been in their shoes' I found it really rewarding to give something back and hopefully help someone by opening up their mind to new ideas and opportunities, that they may not have been aware of."



**Claire McLoughlin**  
BA Politics and History



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