



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

SCHOOL OF
BIOLOGICAL
SCIENCES

INDUSTRY MENTORING PROGRAMME

MENTOR GUIDE



SHAPING
A BETTER
WORLD
SINCE 1845

RUSSELL
GROUP

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WELCOME TO QUEEN'S SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES



The School of Biological Sciences is a busy, multidisciplinary community. Spanning everything from agricultural technology to zoology. The School has approximately 1000 students broadly covering food security, microbiology, ecosystem biology to sustainability.

Work Related Learning (WRL) is an important part of university life, it enhances students' understanding of the world of work; themselves and their potential work environments. As a result, students are further empowered to enter and succeed in graduate job markets; the world of work and their wider lives.

Over the years we have developed a very successful work placement programme and want to further add to the opportunities to connect students with industry professionals.

As part of our WRL offerings the School of Biological Sciences will deliver a mentoring programme in 2025/26 with the aim of a mentoring cohort being launched yearly.

This booklet has been developed to provide you with information on the mentoring program and provides some resource to assist you in developing a successful mentoring relationship.

Meet the Team

[Patricia Minnis](#) - Programme Coordinator
Careers and Work Placement Consultant

[Katie Torbitt](#)
Careers and Placements Clerical Officer

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 industry professionals to help someone progress and achieve their full potential in their future career.

The aim of this programme is to help current School of Biological Sciences students engage with professionals. 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. This is very much personal development opposed to academic guidance or career advice.

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 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

Benefits of Mentoring

While 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

Mentoring Programme Timeline

When	What	Where
October	Applications open for mentees and mentors. Mentors can express an interest year round through the online form.	To apply, complete the online form or email p.minnis@qub.ac.uk
December	Mentor and mentee applications close 1st December Matches are completed and confirmed. Mentees and Mentors notified 'It's a Match.' Receive Mentoring Toolkit , code of conduct and acceptance form to review and help prepare for meeting your mentor Mandatory mentee and mentor induction session.	You will have the opportunity to attend the induction session in person at the School of Biological Sciences or online.
	Mentoring officially commences Monthly newsletters are issued from QUB to support on topics, resources and engagement.	Mentoring sessions may be online or in person
May	Mentoring officially completes at the start of May Evaluations due from mentor and mentee. Celebration Event! Prize giving and networking opportunity.	The Careers and Placement team will send an email to conclude the programme and seek feedback and evaluations Celebrations will be held at the School of Biological Sciences



ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

Mentoring involves sharing your knowledge, skills and experience to help your Mentee progress, to seek new opportunities and have a clearer idea of their career direction after graduation.

Typically the mentoring has involved online meetings, coffee and informal chats, meeting during an event, site visits and some work shadowing.

Past matches found the most beneficial activities to be: mock interviews, cv editing, goal setting, networking and career directions, career options review, confidence building.



Potential Topics

Potential topics include etc etc:

- 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

Sample Questions

1. What have you found out about yourself and employability since you started your University studies?
2. How has your degree programme contributed to your employability so far?
3. What have you done outside of your formal study (i.e. lectures & tutorials) to develop your generic/transferrable skills (i.e. teamwork, communication, leadership, creativity etc)?
4. What are your thoughts on future career options?



5. What do you need to do to reach your goals?
6. How can you prepare to network? i.e. relevant questions to ask, and summarising your own background.
7. Common interview questions and how to tackle them e.g. what are your strengths in relation to this position?

Potential Activities

- Arrange a tour of your organisation
- Provide application tips for your organisation
- Introduce your mentee to a different area of the organisation
- Set your mentee the task of completing a skills audit
- Set tasks for researching a specific career area or job role
- Set up some work shadowing for your mentee.
- Look at different job adverts and how to apply
- Invite your mentee to attend a business meeting or in house training/events
- Look at different career paths and routes into a specific sector
- Set your mentee the task of preparing and delivering a presentation
- Identify competencies employers require and explore how to demonstrate them
- Discuss the post-mentoring reflection

Expectations of Mentors

As a mentor you are expected to:

- Meet your mentee at least 4 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



MENTORING RELATIONSHIP 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](#). It is entirely up to the mentor and mentee if they wish to do so.

A sample mentoring agreement will be sent to you by the mentoring coordinator.

Clear Boundaries

The boundaries of the mentoring relationship should be made clear, maintaining a professional distance, and remember mentoring does not deal with:

- Counselling
- Mental health
- Personal trauma
- Dependency etc

In these situation, recognise the boundaries.

[Signpost the student to the Student wellbeing team.](#)



DO

- 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 work and in their developmental sessions
- Provide closure for each session – a suggestion or direction for further training, study, a summary, or a prediction of the next session
- Challenge your mentee to continually develop personally and professionally
- Refer your mentees to others for help outside your area of expertise
- Ensure the mentee is clear about the nature and parameters of the relationship



DON'T

- 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
- Always attempt to solve a mentee's problems for them – offer ideas and possible solutions instead
- Forget that frequent communication is key to successful mentoring

CONCLUDING THE PROGRAMME

At the end of the programme the Careers and Placement team will send an email to conclude the programme and seek feedback and evaluations from mentors and mentees.

Conclusion Event

There will be an opportunity at the end of the programme to attend a conclusion and celebratory event of all mentors and mentees.

Continued Engagement

We absolutely encourage mentor and mentee to keep in contact. There is no obligation to do so and this may be something you wish to confirm with the mentee at the end.

TESTIMONIAL

"I applied for the programme as I was unsure with what career path to follow, I thought that this programme would give me an insight into the food industry in more depth and potentially show me options that I maybe didn't know was available. I was keen to get advice from someone working within the food industry to expand my network!"

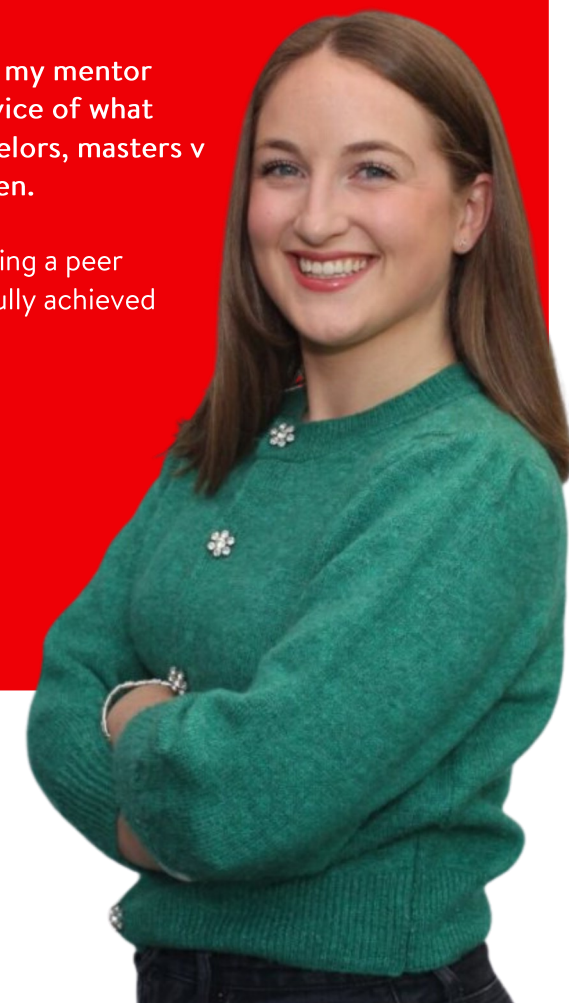
A key benefit of the programme for me was the support my mentor gave me in the run up to an assessment centre. Also, advice of what careers and roles require certain qualifications e.g. bachelors, masters v PhD, as this was something I was trying to decide between.

In addition, through this programme in combination with being a peer mentoring Year 2 of my degree, meant that I have successfully achieved my Future Ready award!"

Chloe McNeilly

BSc Food Quality, Safety and Nutrition

Mentee with Rose Doherty, Pilgrims Food Masters



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

It's 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 with no response, 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 a 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 to best 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 that is not a problem. All we ask is that you let us know why you want to withdraw.

What support will be available?

The programme coordinator is available at all times. We will also send monthly newsletters with information, articles, resources and topic ideas for your meetings. In addition a pack will be made available with an agreement template, meeting notes guide and resources for topic areas.

How was my mentee / mentor matched to me?

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

Get In Touch:



CLICK ME

What time commitment is required?

This varies on each matching and open to the choice of both parties. We recommend a minimum of 4 meetings during the programme.

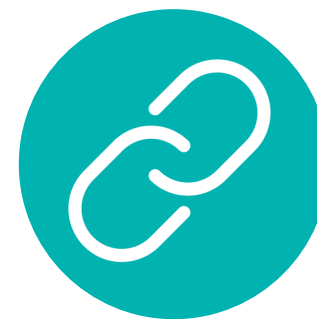
Start and End dates of the programme?

Introductions will be made in November and the programme completes in May.

How confidential is the programme?

What you discuss with your mentee is strictly confidential between the two of you, and this confidentiality is maintained even after the relationship has ended. 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



Useful Resources

Forbes:

[How To Be A Great Mentor](#)

National Mentoring Resource Center:

[Resources for Mentoring. Guides, Handbooks, & Tools](#)

Skills for Successful Mentoring Linda Phillips -Jones:

[Effective mentoring skills for leadership success with checklist](#)

The Open University:

[Exploring career mentoring and coaching](#)

KEY UNIVERSITY CONTACTS

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES CAREERS & PLACEMENT TEAM

Subject specific placement & careers information for Students and Employers

School of Biological Sciences
Queen's University Belfast
19 Chlorine Gardens
Belfast
BT9 5DL

Tel: +44 (0)28 9097 5787

Email: biocareers@qub.ac.uk

Web address: www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/Employability/

LinkedIn: @QUB School of Biological Sciences Careers and Placement Office

Facebook: @School of Biological Sciences QUB

X: @qubbiocareers

PATRICIA MINNIS

Careers and Work Placement Consultant, programme coordinator

Email: p.minnis@qub.ac.uk

KATIE TORBITT

Careers and Placements
Clerical Officer

Email: k.torbitt@qub.ac.uk

STUDENT WELLBEING SERVICES

Physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing support services

One Elmwood Student Centre and Students' Union
University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NN

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 2893

Email: studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk

Web address: www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/

STUDENTS' UNION ADVICE CENTRE

Independent money management, education, welfare and finance advice

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 1049/1166/1135

Email: studentsunion@qub.ac.uk

Web address: www.qubsu.org



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Website:

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SchoolofBiologicalSciences/](http://qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/)



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