

**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**



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STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAMME

MENTOR GUIDE 2023/24



WELCOME



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SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES MENTORING PROGRAMME

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, 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.

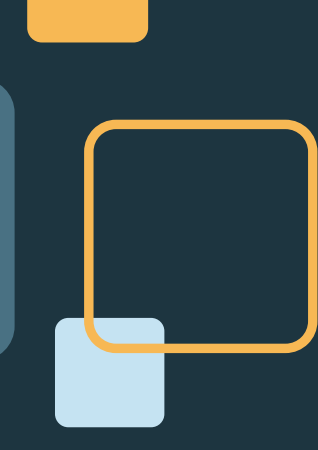
PROGRAMME BACKGROUND



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

As part of our WRL offerings the Biological Sciences will deliver a mentoring programme in 2023/24 with the aim of a mentoring cohort being established 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



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.

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 as opposed to academic guidance or career advice.



HOW TO MENTOR

WHAT ARE THE 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

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

POTENTIAL ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

- 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

- What have you found out about yourself and employability since you started your University studies?
- How has your degree programme contributed to your employability so far?
- What have you done outside of your formal study (i.e. lectures & tutorials) to develop your generic/transferable skills (i.e. teamwork, communication, leadership, creativity etc)?
- What are your thoughts on future career options?
- What do you need to do to reach your goals?
- How can you prepare to network? i.e. relevant questions to ask, and summarising your own background.
- Common interview questions and how to tackle them e.g. what are your strengths in relation to this position?

MENTOR CODE OF PRACTICE

- 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.

BENEFITS FOR A MENTOR

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 expertise



FAQ'S

- **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.

FAQ'S

• **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.

• **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 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

RESOURCES



- How To Be A Great Mentor ([forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com))
- Resources for Mentoring. Guides, Handbooks, & Tools | NMRC (nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org)
- Effective mentoring skills for leadership success with checklist in Pdf (mentoringgroup.com)
- Exploring career mentoring and coaching - OpenLearn - Open University



WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF MENTORS THIS PROGRAMME
WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE. WE THANK YOU FOR ALL
CONTRIBUTIONS