SUGGESTIONS FOR MENTORING ACTIVITIES

The following guidance is intended as a source of ideas and/or direction, as each mentoring experience is designed to be flexible. You are encouraged to use this list to start your career mentoring discussions but bear in mind that many more potential areas are likely to emerge as the mentorship develops. The list is not exhaustive, but these career-related issues have been a common focus in previous career mentoring interactions with students.

SAMPLE AGENDA A: THE FIRST MEETING

The following are important to discuss and agree at your first meeting:

- Aims of the programme.
- Agreement of meeting dates.
- Frequency and length of meetings.
- Location of meetings.
- Expectations of the programme (both mentor and mentee) - refer to the University of Aberdeen’s Career Mentoring Policy.
- Confidentiality.
- Find out about your mentee i.e. degree programme, career goals, interests, previous work experience.
- Provide an overview of your background and experience.
- Agree objectives for future meetings.
- Issues your mentee needs to/should address.
- Keeping a record of meetings (mentor/mentee).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY A

The mentor and the mentee make three or four statements about themselves, one of which is false. The other then asks questions to determine which is false. Although remind your mentee that the career mentoring process is about building trust and being honest! Consider this a potential ice-breaker activity.

SAMPLE AGENDA B: DEVELOPING YOUR EMPLOYABILITY

Employability is one of the current buzzwords in Higher Education. In simple terms, employability is about developing the skills and attributes to succeed at University and recognising how these can be used in other contexts, such as work placements, part-time work or graduate employment. Explore with your mentee their understanding of the term ‘employability’.

Potential Discussion 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 goals are you planning to set yourself to develop your employability?
• Are you able to show how you have developed your subject-specific based skills, generic skills and personal attributes?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY B
Ask your mentee to undertake a SWOT analysis of their employability development so far. (SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.) A SWOT grid for use in this exercise is available from the resources webpage of the Career Mentoring Programme (CMP):
www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources

SAMPLE AGENDA C: CVS
A simple two page CV will generally allow students to provide a clear layout of their skills, academic achievements and interests which they believe make them suitable for a particular placement, internship or graduate position.

Potential Areas for Discussion:
• Talk about the two key aspects to consider when developing a CV i.e. content and format.
• Explore your mentee’s understanding of tailoring their CV. Discuss areas such as matching skills and experience in CVs with the job description. Using language given in the job description to describe experiences. Reordering, adding or removing information to better match the job description.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY C
Look at the CV information provided on the Careers Service website (linked from the CMP resources webpage: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources) and discuss what makes an effective and ineffective CV. What are the most common CV errors?

Provide feedback on your mentee’s CV - use the information and guidance on the Careers Service website to support your discussions. Request your mentee considers your comments and returns to a subsequent meeting with a revised draft.

SAMPLE AGENDA D: NETWORKING
Networking is a necessary part of any career development and an important aspect of working life. It involves meeting people and building long-term relationships, networking through face-to-face meetings or online networking through social media such as Twitter or LinkedIn.

Potential Discussion Questions:
• How do you start a networking conversation?
• How do you introduce yourself?
• How can you prepare to network? i.e. relevant questions to ask, and summarising your own background.
• How much should you talk about yourself?

www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring
Email: mentor@abdn.ac.uk; Tel: 01224 273601
Updated: Oct-18
• How do you overcome shyness or feeling uncomfortable with new people?
• How do you use social media effectively to job hunt?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY D
• Practise networking conversations to enable your mentee to feel more comfortable in the networking role.
• Consider involving your mentee in a workplace activity that enables them to meet colleagues informally.
• Discuss one of the networking resources from the Careers Service virtual library (linked from the CMP resources webpage: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources).

SAMPLE AGENDA E: JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES
Talk about creating a solid job search plan and how to go about this by:
• Understanding your values, skills, motivations and interests.
• Studying the employment market in your field of interest.
• Identifying employment opportunities that match your goals.
• Developing an effective CV and interview skills.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY E
• Suggest your mentee writes a short profile to sell themselves to potential employers.
• Encourage your mentee to write a cover letter and provide feedback to your mentee on both content and format. Refer to the University of Aberdeen Careers Service website for further information (linked from the CMP resources webpage: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources).

SAMPLE AGENDA F: INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE
Discussion points:
• How do you prepare for an interview? Researching the employer, personal presentation, practice interviews, organising your journey etc.
• Common interview questions and how to tackle them e.g. what are your strengths in relation to this position?
• Discuss the information about interviews on the Careers Service website on interviews (linked from the CMP resources webpage: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY F
Set up a practice interview and provide feedback to your mentee.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR MENTORING ACTIVITIES
If you run out of ideas on what to cover in your sessions with your mentee, here are some suggestions you might like to consider. You are under no obligation to tackle any of these; they are merely suggestions as your focus will vary depending on the student.
SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Arrange a tour of your organisation.
- Provide application tips for your organisation.
- Introduce your mentee to a different area of the organisation.
- Explore Aberdeen Graduate Attributes (www.abdn.ac.uk/graduateattributes) and analyse their relevance in your organisation/employment area.
- Set your mentee the task of completing a skills audit. A sample grid for your mentee to complete is available from the resources webpage of the Career Mentoring Programme: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources
- 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 template available on the resources webpage: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources

FURTHER MENTORING INFORMATION

The Scottish Mentoring Network is an online resource for information and advice on mentoring projects. Registration is not required to access the Resources Library which contains a wide range of peer-reviewed mentoring articles and case studies. (www.scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk).