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**UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN**



University of Aberdeen

Career Mentoring Toolkit

www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring

Principal's Foreword

The University of Aberdeen attracts students of exceptional calibre who, as graduates, go on to be highly sought after by employers globally. Our Career Mentoring Programme is part of the University's Strategic Plan 2015-20, it underpins our commitment to ensuring that, alongside the traditional academic excellence of our graduates, our students acquire the skills and competencies to support them in the varied employment that they will encounter. This will also help them to stand out in an increasingly competitive and complex employment environment.



The Career Mentoring Programme would not be possible without your support. I want to take this opportunity to offer you my personal thanks and the thanks of our University community for supporting our students to help achieve their career aspirations. I think it is testament to the strength of our community and our ongoing commitment to each other that so many of you are yourselves graduates of the University.

This Career Mentoring Toolkit has been designed by our Careers Service as a catalyst to support your discussions regarding career development planning and employability opportunities with your student mentee.

I hope that you find this Toolkit a valuable resource.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "George A. Boyne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Professor George Boyne
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

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“What a fantastic programme - I wish this had existed when I was a student! Both the student and the mentor get so much out of the relationship. It’s a great thing to be involved with.”

Julia Harvie-Liddel,
Global VP - Head of Resourcing, BP

Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for joining us as a mentor on the University's Career Mentoring Programme. I hope that you will find the experience both enjoyable and interesting. I am very grateful for the time and guidance you are giving to help our students develop their employability skills and in supporting their transition from academic study to the world of work.



The Career Mentoring Toolkit outlines what mentoring entails from the mentor's perspective and explains how the programme operates. Included in this Toolkit are tips, mentoring exercises and strategies for developing and strengthening your career mentoring interactions.

The Toolkit is designed as a starting point for those with no experience of mentoring and can also be useful as an aide-mémoire for those with some prior mentoring experience. Whatever your position, I hope this Toolkit is practical and that you will contribute to its evolution by providing feedback.

I wish you every success in the rewarding experience of mentoring our students.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey Innes".

Tracey Innes
Head of Careers Service

The Career Mentoring Toolkit was authored by Dr Joy Perkins, Educational & Employability Development Adviser (j.perkins@abdn.ac.uk) at the Careers Service, with helpful contributions from Sandi Thomson, Deputy Head of Careers and Kate Robertson, Employability Officer.

September 2018

Career Mentoring at Aberdeen

The Career Mentoring Programme (CMP) is an employability initiative which has been introduced to support students' career planning and personal development. The programme provides an opportunity for students to spend time with a working professional, gaining an insight into their role and career path. Since 2011 the initiative has proven to be a huge success and this is reflected in the five distinct career mentoring streams offered: general, law, engineering, medicine and biosciences research.

The programme is offered November to April for undergraduates, March to April for postgraduates, while the medicine stream runs July to December. The initiative involves a minimum of 1-2 hours of your time per month for the duration of the programme which comprises at least two face-to-face meetings (but this could be via Skype/FaceTime), with other interactions occurring via phone, email or Skype/FaceTime. Prior to a student meeting their mentor, all students attend an introductory career mentoring workshop. This introductory session for mentees highlights the possible ways mentees can make the most of the mentoring process, and also outlines the boundaries and expectations of the programme.

Being a Career Mentor

A good Career Mentor is an individual with a sound and broad knowledge of a particular employment area or role, and the skills required within this area or role. A mentor should have good communication skills, be non-judgemental, be a good listener and have the ability to encourage, motivate and develop others.

Typical roles of a mentor include:

ADVISER

Provides advice, which the mentee decides how best to use.

SOUNDING BOARD

Testing ideas and suggestions.

MOTIVATOR

Encouraging and motivating to achieve.

FACILITATOR

Highlighting opportunities for personal development.



Preparing for your First Meeting

Come prepared to talk about expectations and hopes for the mentorship, but more specifically to share some career experiences and anecdotes to establish common ground. We recommend that, where possible, each mentorship has a face-to-face meeting at the mentor's place of work at least once over the course of the programme. However, this will not always be possible and regardless of where and how you meet (face-to-face, via telephone, online) the following are important to discuss and agree at your first meeting:

- Set meeting dates.
- Decide on the frequency and length of meetings.
- Choose an appropriate location for your meetings.
- Discuss the expectations of the programme (both mentor and mentee) - refer to the University of Aberdeen's Career Mentoring Policy (on pages 7 and 8).
- Discuss 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.
- Look at issues your mentee needs to/should address.
- Ensure you are both keeping a record of meetings (mentor/mentee) - a meeting record template can be found on the resources page of the Career Mentoring Programme (CMP): www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources

Your mentee has been encouraged to take the lead on setting up meetings with their mentor and agreeing the focus of each meeting in advance. All students have been advised to take time to plan meetings ahead, taking account of exam periods, vacation times and the busy schedules of mentors.

Here are some preparatory questions to reflect upon before your first meeting:

- What can I offer someone I mentor?
- How do I visualise mentoring someone?
- What career experiences have helped me most in my own professional and personal development?
- What are the important lessons learnt from my own career path?

Suggested First Session Ice-breaker Activity

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. However, remind your mentee that the career mentoring process is about building trust and being honest!

Next Steps...

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.

A. Sample Meeting Agenda: 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, postgraduate study, 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 Employability Activity

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 CMP resources webpage:

www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources

B. Sample Meeting Agenda: 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, postgraduate study 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 to target the requirements of each vacancy or postgraduate application. Discuss how to analyse a description to identify the requirements and then use appropriate language to demonstrate a match.

Suggested CV Activities

- Look at the CV information provided on the Careers Service website www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/cv-applications-interviews/cvs.php 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 (www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/cv-applications-interviews/cvs.php). Request your mentee considers your comments and returns to a subsequent meeting with a revised draft.

C. Sample Meeting Agenda: 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?
- How do you overcome shyness or feeling uncomfortable with new people?
- How do you use social media effectively to job hunt?

Suggested Networking Activities:

- Practise networking conversations to enable your mentee to feel more comfortable in the networking role.
- Consider involving your mentee in a work place 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).

D. Sample Meeting Agenda: Job Search Strategies

Talk about creating a solid job search or postgraduate study plan and how to go about this by:

- Understanding your values, skills, motivations and interests.
- Studying the employment market or postgraduate opportunities in your field of interest.
- Identifying opportunities that match your goals.
- Developing an effective CV and interview skills.

Suggested Job Search Activities:

- Suggest your mentee writes a short profile to sell themselves to potential employers or to use in a postgraduate study application.
- 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).

E. Sample Meeting Agenda: Interview Technique

Potential 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 Interview Activity

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

Additional Meeting Suggestions

Here are some additional 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.

- Arrange a tour of your organisation.
- Provide application tips for your organisation.
- Introduce your mentee to a different area of the organisation or place of work.
- 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 CMP resources website: 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, in-house training/events or a seminar.
- 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 and/or postgraduate opportunities require and explore how to demonstrate them.
- Discuss the post-mentoring reflection template available on the resources webpage: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring/resources
- Social media and job searches, use the Online Professionalism & Employability Guide to help you. www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/resources/documents/5665.pdf

Other Useful Links

University of Aberdeen Career Mentoring Case Studies

www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/skills-attributes/case-studies-422.php

University of Aberdeen Careers Service Mentoring Programme video:

<http://bit.ly/Hq8vQg>

Career Mentoring Programme Policy

The Career Mentoring Programme links students with working professionals who are willing to share their experience and expertise. The initiative is designed to help students make contacts in specific employment areas and to provide them with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills and employment knowledge outside of their academic study. Work placements, internships or future graduate employment are NOT guaranteed as part of the programme.

Participation in the University's Career Mentoring Programme assumes full understanding of and adherence to the content of this policy. Please read it carefully and contact the Careers Service (mentor@abdn.ac.uk) if you have any questions about its content *before* you commence your mentoring relationship.

Mentors and Mentees

- Participation in the Career Mentoring Programme is voluntary for both mentors and student mentees.
- Mentors and mentees are expected to maintain regular contact with each other for the duration of the mentorship.
- Participants are expected to commit to a minimum of 1-2 hours per month to the programme.
- Normally mentoring interactions occur via face-to-face meetings or via e-mentoring i.e. online, Skype or telephone. Mentors and mentees are expected to keep a record of all interactions for the purposes of the end-of-programme evaluation. Mentees are expected to take the lead in arranging, keeping track of and recording any actions from mentoring meetings.
- Mentors and mentees are required to prepare for each meeting to maximise benefits from mentoring interactions.
- Student-funded or university-funded journeys to visit mentors within or beyond the UK with either an overnight stay or a flight in an aircraft, students must register with the University Insurance (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/insurance-367.php>).
- Mentors and mentees may contact the Careers Service at any time during normal office hours (9-5pm, Monday to Friday) for assistance or advice, or to discuss mentoring issues. Email mentor@abdn.ac.uk or telephone 01224 273601.
- As far as possible, mentors and mentees should endeavour to reply to communications from their assigned mentor/mentee and from the University within 5 days.
- Participants should inform their mentor or mentee of any major absences such as illnesses that limit their ability to respond to communications.
- Mentors and mentees will inform the Careers Service immediately if they are unable for any reason to continue to participate in the programme.
- Mentors and mentees should respect confidentiality. Confidentiality should be discussed during the first meeting when boundaries are established. Mentees should be prepared to sign confidentiality agreements when required by their mentor's organisation.
- Participants are reminded that the mentorship represents a professional relationship. It is the responsibility of both mentors and mentees to conduct themselves appropriately. Face-to-face meetings should be arranged at the mentor's place of work, at the

University or in a public place such as a café. If required, the Careers Service can suggest suitable meeting venues on campus.

- Mentors wishing to park free of charge on campus must contact the Careers Service at least 72 hours prior to their visits to allow the request to be processed. Car parking is normally allocated behind Elphinstone Hall. All mentees will be expected to complete an introductory online session and then complete the end-of-programme evaluation in order to help the Careers Service to improve the quality of the programme for future cohorts.
- Mentors and mentees can informally extend the mentoring process beyond the 6 month period if both wish to do so.

The Careers Service will:

- Provide support for all student mentees and mentors, and provide supporting mentoring documentation in advance of each mentorship commencing.
- Provide a Career Mentoring Toolkit to support mentors in their interactions with mentees.
- Provide a supporting introductory online session for student mentees
- Be available to provide support and guidance and to respond to requests for room bookings or car-parking space for mentors.
- Address issues arising in a mentoring relationship providing these are brought to the attention of the Careers Servicer in a timely manner.
- Ensure that all personal details are maintained in a secure environment and are not revealed to a third party.
- Provide help with travel expenses, subject to available funding, for student mentor visits outwith Aberdeen City and Shire. Note financial support must be approved by the Careers Service prior to the visit.
- Monitor student participation in the Career Mentoring Programme and determine final approval of the Programme onto the Enhanced Transcript to demonstrate students' wider university learning.
- Recognise and reward a mentor's contribution to the 6 month programme via a continuing professional development certificate. Mentors should apply for the certificate by contacting the Careers Service.

Tracey Innes, Head of Careers Service
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Telephone: 01224 273601



Careers Service

Certificate of Participation

This certificate is awarded to

for participating as a volunteer Career Mentor in the 2018-19
University of Aberdeen's Career Mentoring Programme.

This continuing professional development programme involves:

- Providing a supportive environment for mentees to enhance their knowledge and career development learning.
- Committing to meetings of at least 1-2 hours per month for 6 months with mentees.
- Supporting mentees in the development of their employability skills.
- Agreeing action plans with mentees and monitoring their progress.
- Empowering mentees to reach their career potential.

Organised by the University of Aberdeen's Careers Service

Professor George Boyne
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
University of Aberdeen

Tracey Innes
Head of Careers Service
University of Aberdeen

And Finally

The University of Aberdeen Career Mentoring Programme website contains further information including previous mentor/mentee case studies and frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the programme: www.abdn.ac.uk/mentoring.

A successful mentorship is based on clarity of commitment and expectations. With the student, establishing clear goals and objectives at the beginning of the 6-month session. The direction of the mentorship may change as time passes and the goals and objectives should be re-assessed regularly. The mentorship represents a professional relationship; the purpose of the match is to improve the student's careers knowledge and employability.

Help the student access existing resources and further support

It is also important for mentors to remember that there are other resources on campus that are designed to deal with a host of student needs and should be utilised when appropriate. The Careers Service website: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers has extensive information on the wide range of careers and further study related topics. For academic and pastoral issues, students should be directed to Infohub: www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub.

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