

A Quick Guide to Mentoring and the Alumni Mentoring Scheme

This guide gives you a quick overview of mentoring and the Alumni Mentoring Scheme; how to sign up, how the mentoring process works, how to get started and what's expected of you.

What is mentoring and who are the mentors?

A mentor is someone who gives you support, encouragement, advice and who shares their knowledge, insights and skills from the position of being further ahead in their career and experience of life.

Our mentors are professionals who have forged successful careers. Many are former students of the University of Wolverhampton. They have all volunteered to help you, often because they know from personal experience that the transition between university and a professional career can be hard.

Our mentors work in a huge range of industries including: education, law, IT, health, science, sport, engineering, media, charities, design, arts and more. You can search for mentors who you think will suit you. If there's no one quite right, let us know: we may be able to find a mentor for you.

Benefits of being mentored

The benefits of mentoring are enormous. Mentors can:

- ◆ give you an insight into what it's like in a particular job/ industry that you wouldn't get anywhere else – useful if you're making career choices and applying for jobs
- ◆ provide advice about how to "get in" – for any career it's vital to know what employers are looking for so you can build the right skills, knowledge and experience
- ◆ introduce you to others in their field – getting work in some fields tends to be through people who know rather than formally applying for advertised jobs. Having a mentor working in the field you want to enter can unlock doors and help you build useful contacts
- ◆ offer work shadowing and work experience opportunities – work experience is essential to get into professional level careers, but it can be hard to secure; however, some of our mentors are able to offer this
- ◆ help you craft an industry-specific CV and prepare for interviews – mentors know first-hand what employers in their area look for
- ◆ share their experiences – everyone faces barriers of some sort when establishing their career. Hearing how your mentor overcame theirs can help you tackle your own.

Having a mentor is a fantastic way to progress your career. Everyone needs a mentor!



The sign-up process

Getting started is easy.

1

Sign up at: wlv.ac.uk/mentoring

2

Wait for us to approve you (we need to check that you are a current student or recent graduate of the University of Wolverhampton).

3

Access the Alumni Mentoring Scheme, make your profile, search for your ideal mentor and connect with them. The system will guide you through, or there are screen shots of the process in the mentoring guide if you need them.

4

Away you go! Mentoring can happen via video chat, email, phone calls, in person etc. You can contact your mentor just once, or lots of times – whatever you agree with your mentor.

Getting going with mentoring

Once you're matched on the system with a mentor, you need to get in touch with them to start the mentoring process. It may feel strange making the first move but our mentors are all approachable and have voluntarily given their time to help you. Remember, they were once students and recent graduates trying to start their own careers!

In your first message to your mentor you could:

- ◆ introduce yourself
- ◆ explain briefly why you would like to be mentored by them
- ◆ suggest how you would like to proceed – would you like to speak to them on the phone or via video, would you like to do everything via email etc. You should be able to see the ways your mentor would like to be contacted in their profile.

Remember to read everything on the mentor's profile before approaching, and make sure your profile is complete so the mentor can have a good first impression.

If you do not receive an answer immediately remember to follow-up a couple of times.

Your initial mentoring conversations

To ensure that your mentoring is purposeful, it is good to be very clear with your mentor about the current situation you are in, what your career aspirations are, and the help you would like. You can then agree on how the mentor is going to help you and set some objectives.

It's also important to agree how frequently you're going to converse and the method of communication going forward. The length of your mentoring relationship is up to you and your mentor. It may last just a week or so, or much longer – a year or more.

In the mentoring guide there is a mentoring agreement template. You don't have to use this, but it does give some useful prompts about what to consider as you begin to be mentored.



Expectations of you as a mentee

Your mentor is volunteering their time and expertise for your benefit, so show them your professionalism, enthusiasm and reliability. It is vital that you:

- ◆ engage with your mentor – read their profile, send a first message to them, listen to their advice, ask questions, proactively arrange follow-up meetings
- ◆ are active in sharing your ideas, concerns and aspirations
- ◆ consider what you want to get out of being mentored
- ◆ follow up on everything you agree to in your mentoring conversations
- ◆ thank your mentor for all their help.

Who we are

We are a small team from the Careers Centre and Alumni & Development Office who are passionate about mentoring and providing opportunities for current students and recent graduates to meet alumni of the University who want to share their knowledge and experience.

You can reach us at any time at:
mentoring@wlv.ac.uk