



Alumni and Development

CONNECTING YOU

University College Cork

Mentorship Handbook

2023-2024



Career
Services

Contents

Mentoring Contacts	2
About Mentoring	3
Mentor Guidelines	5
Mentee Guidelines.....	9
Mentorship Workbook.....	11
Mentorship Workbook: Track your Journey!.....	12

Mentoring Contacts

Mentor

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Mentee

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About Mentoring

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. In this case, alumni provide support to students in a variety of ways, through a structured mentorship programme, offering both parties an opportunity to develop their professional skill set and career. The tailored guidelines for Mentor and Mentees in this handbook aim to help make mentoring a success for you.

Commitment level

The level of interaction is guided by the mentor/mentee relationship. However, we recommend three one-hour meetings over a 6-month period. Each of these virtual meetings, organised by the mentee, can be structured around a theme based on the mentee needs, to encourage mentors and mentees to get the most from their time. Questions, queries and concerns can also be communicated via email if this works for the specific mentor/mentee. You are in control of how much time you have to give to mentorship and can change your level of commitment as you see fit.

You will be invited to attend an orientation session and a meet and greet with fellow mentors and mentees in October.

You may also be requested to complete mentoring feedback surveys on your experience.

How are the participants matched?

By completing the application form, you are providing us with a profile which we can then use to manually match a mentor with a student mentee who is interested in pursuing a career in similar field of expertise.

More information on how we use your data can be found via the following links:

- [University College Cork Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Alumni & Supporter Data Protection Policy](#)
- [University College Cork Acceptable Usage Policy](#)
- [University College Cork Records Management Policy](#)
- [University College Cork Mentor's Data Protection Notice](#)

Mentor Guidelines

What it means to be a mentor?

Mentors can provide support in a wide variety of areas. From discussions around CV building, interview skills to standing out from the crowd and gaining experience, students are keen to hear from those who have gone before them. The specific shape of the relationship is defined by the mentor and mentee and can be an extremely rewarding experience for both.

Our programme is mentee-led. This means that the responsibility lies with the student to organize the three meetings, whether online or in person, and to set the agenda for each. We will provide the students with tips and tools to get the most out of their interactions with you.

How to become a mentor?

We aim to facilitate mentorship in whatever structure best suits you, be it in person or online. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact alumni@ucc.ie and a member of the Alumni and Development team will be in touch.

Who can mentor?

Any graduate, staff member or former staff member of University College Cork can be a mentor. If you do not fall under of these categories, but would like to become a mentor please contact Alumni and Development.

Who should mentor?

Please do not be put off by the thought that you are not experienced enough or do not have an interesting enough job to be a worthwhile mentor. Your support can be valuable to students at any point in your career. For example:

- **Recent graduates** – you can share your insight into finding a first job, applications and interviews, making the most of time at university, and how to successfully transition to working life.

- **Mid/Senior career** – you likely have a deep knowledge of the industry sector you work in, and possibly other sectors as well. You are also well-equipped to help students with longer-term career planning and goal-setting, and to help them build confidence and resilience.
- **Self-employed** – University College Cork has many entrepreneurial students who are keen to start their own businesses. These students would greatly value your advice on the challenges and rewards of self-employment.
- **Postgraduate researcher or an academic** – the many students who consider academic careers can benefit from your experience of academia and of winning research positions and funding.

Our students and alumni take a wide variety of paths in life, we aim to represent all opportunities and experiences in our mentorship programme.

Quick tips for mentors

If you have just received a mentoring request from a student, these quick tips are for you.

- **Consider how you could help** - Your mentee may be able to learn a lot from you even if they are not currently interested in following your career path.
- **Tell them about yourself** - If you agree to mentor them, try to tell them a little more about yourself and your interests. This will make them more comfortable and help to get the conversation started.
- **Plan your time commitment** - Mentoring can be time-consuming; be realistic about how much time you have for the student before accepting them.
- **Ask for more information if you need it** - If you are not sure what support this student wants from you or you do not know enough about them, you can send a response to them before accepting them as a mentee.
- **Manage their expectations** – If your time is limited, tell them that – and give them a realistic idea of how quickly they will hear back from you.
- **Provide support** - We also ask that you are available to offer advice via email and answer any queries your mentee may have when possible.

- **Explore their reflections with them** – Each student mentee is given a Mentorship Workbook at the outset of the programme to track and record their mentoring journey. On completion of the three meetings, your mentee will be asked to submit a Mentorship Tracker. Please encourage your mentee to discuss their reflections with you.
- **What if your mentee is the wrong fit** – Approaching a mentor takes time and thought and can be nerve-wracking, so a kind response will be appreciated? If you decline a request, there should be a good reason to do so. We encourage you to at least have an initial conversation to explore whether the relationship would be mutually beneficial.
- **Offer feedback on the mentoring programme** – Your thoughts and advice on the mentoring programme will be very beneficial. At the conclusion of the programme, we will send you a feedback survey to complete.

Important Principles and Guidelines

- If you need guidance on how to help progress your mentorship at any point, don't hesitate to get in touch with Alumni & Development.
- What if your mentee is the wrong fit? Mentors and mentees can be incompatible for any number of reasons. If you find yourself in this situation, you can contact Alumni & Develop confidentially and we will try to find you another mentee.
- Should you have any questions in relation to the program, please contact University College Cork Alumni and Development at alumni@ucc.ie

What are the benefits of becoming an alumni mentor?

- *Expand your skill set:* Develop your leadership, communication and management skills through mentoring a student who is interested in a career in your field.
- *Enhance your CV:* Volunteering is valued by employers and will add another dimension to your resumé.
- *Gain confidence in your own abilities:* Mentoring gives you an opportunity to reflect on your own achievements and experience, and to realise how far you've come in your own career.

- *Reconnect with UCC:* Give back to your university by helping the next generation make the transition from student to young professional.

Get started now!

If you are interested in mentoring but would like some further information, please contact alumni@ucc.ie

Mentee Guidelines

What it means to be a mentee

Becoming a mentee can be an extremely rewarding experience. Alumni mentors have experience of UCC and navigating the post-university world. Providing unique insights, tips and tricks. Communication is key to a successful mentoring relationship, whether by email, phone, video or face-to-face. Mentors are willing to provide practical help such as reviewing your CV/ LinkedIn profile/ application or interview practice as outlined in the mentorship workbook. To be the best mentee you can be we encourage you to follow these guidelines:

- Be specific, clear and brief in your application form.
- Activities can include: sending a message, requesting a brief conversation by phone or online on a topic e.g. a mentor's day to day job role, requesting a CV/LinkedIn review.
- Thank the mentor for their time.

How to become a mentee?

We aim to facilitate mentorship in whatever form best suits you, be it in person or online. If you are interested in becoming a mentee, please contact UCC Career Services.

Mentors have a limited number of resources available to them and we may have to decide which of several mentee applicants to choose from first. Give yourself the best chance of selection by having a complete profile including your interests, aspirations and what you are studying.

NOTE: We aim to match all applicants, however in the event you are not matched we will be in touch to discuss other services that can assist you in your career progression.

I've been matched with a mentor. What next?

Once you have been matched with a mentor, you will be invited to attend an information session. This session will outline what you can expect from the programme and give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Following this information session, you will be asked to take part in a networking session where you can meet your mentor. Prior to these sessions, you will be provided with information about your mentor. However, we ask you to wait to be formally introduced before reaching out.

Following introductions, you will be connected with your mentor via email. It is up to the mentor/mentee how and when your sessions take place. However, we recommend you aim for three meetings over a six-month period. For some suggestions of topics, please refer to the mentorship workbook.

Quick tips to get the most from your mentor

- Take the lead. Remember your mentor is busy and will need you to take the initiative. Set-up meeting dates early on and try to be flexible if the mentor needs to change the schedule.
- Introduce yourself, what year you are in and what you are studying. Tell them about your career ideas and plans. If you are unsure of your plans, tell them your areas of interest.
- Be clear about what you hope to gain from mentoring.
- Outline any skills you are interested in honing e.g. networking.
- Identify what it is about the mentor that inspires you and ask for more information e.g. 'How did you find/apply for your first/current role?'

Important Principles and Guidelines

- If you need guidance on how to help progress your mentorship at any point, don't hesitate to get in touch with [Career Services](#).
- What if your mentor is the wrong fit? Mentors and mentees can be incompatible for any number of reasons. If you find yourself in this situation, you can contact Career Services confidentially and we will try to find you another mentor or help you utilise other services in order to progress your career.
- Should you have any questions in relation to the program, please contact University College Cork Career's Services or Alumni and Development.

Mentee Code of Conduct

- [University College Cork Student Conduct Guidelines](#)

Mentorship Workbook

The Mentorship Workbook is a document mentees are asked to complete to track and reflect on your mentoring journey. To complete the mentoring programme, you must have at least three meetings with your mentor and track your progress using the below guideline. You must return the completed workbook, signed by your mentor, via the Mentorship Tracker by **the end of March in semester two**. Download the tracker [from this webpage](#).

Setting the agenda for each meeting:

As the mentee, it is your responsibility to schedule meetings with your mentor, decide on the location (in person or online) and set the agenda. You should have a list of questions and discussion topics for your mentor for each meeting.

While the topics of each meeting are entirely up to you and your mentor, we suggest the following loose structure:

Meeting 1: Introductions & Goal Setting

- What jobs can I work in after my degree?
- How can I tell which careers would suit me?
- What is the best route to working in my area of interest?

Meeting 2: Professional Development

- How can I stand out from the competition?
- Which postgrad should I choose?
- How should I go about organising my own internships or voluntary experience?

Meeting 3: Presentation & Employability

- Networking, both online & off
- CV review
- Interview practice

Mentorship Workbook: Track your Journey!

Mentorship Goals:

At the outset of your mentoring journey, write down three goals or outcomes that you aim to get out of the programme:

1.

2.

3.

Meeting 1:

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

Actions:

Notes & Reflections:

Meeting 2:

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

Actions:

Notes & Reflections:

Meeting 3:

Date & Time: _____

Location: _____

Actions:
