



Bournemouth  
University

# Alumni Mentoring Handbook



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# Welcome to alumni mentoring at BU

**This programme is designed to match the aspirations of our students with the skills and experiences of our graduates. The focus is on career exploration and preparation, but we hope that mentoring will be equally beneficial for both parties. Some of our alumni mentors have told us how much they appreciated the chance to give back, reconnect with BU and get fresh insights from the latest talent entering their industry.**

Whatever stage you are at in your learning or career, mentoring can offer opportunities for personal growth and professional development.

The Alumni Mentoring Programme is led by BU's Alumni Relations Team and delivered in partnership with colleagues from our faculties and professional services. At the start of your mentorship you will be appointed a supervisor, who will be a key point of contact throughout. If you have any questions or feedback, please do get in touch.

### Best wishes



**Michelle Poole-Winter**  
Alumni Relations Officer



**Sam Roberts-Aird**  
Alumni Relations Officer

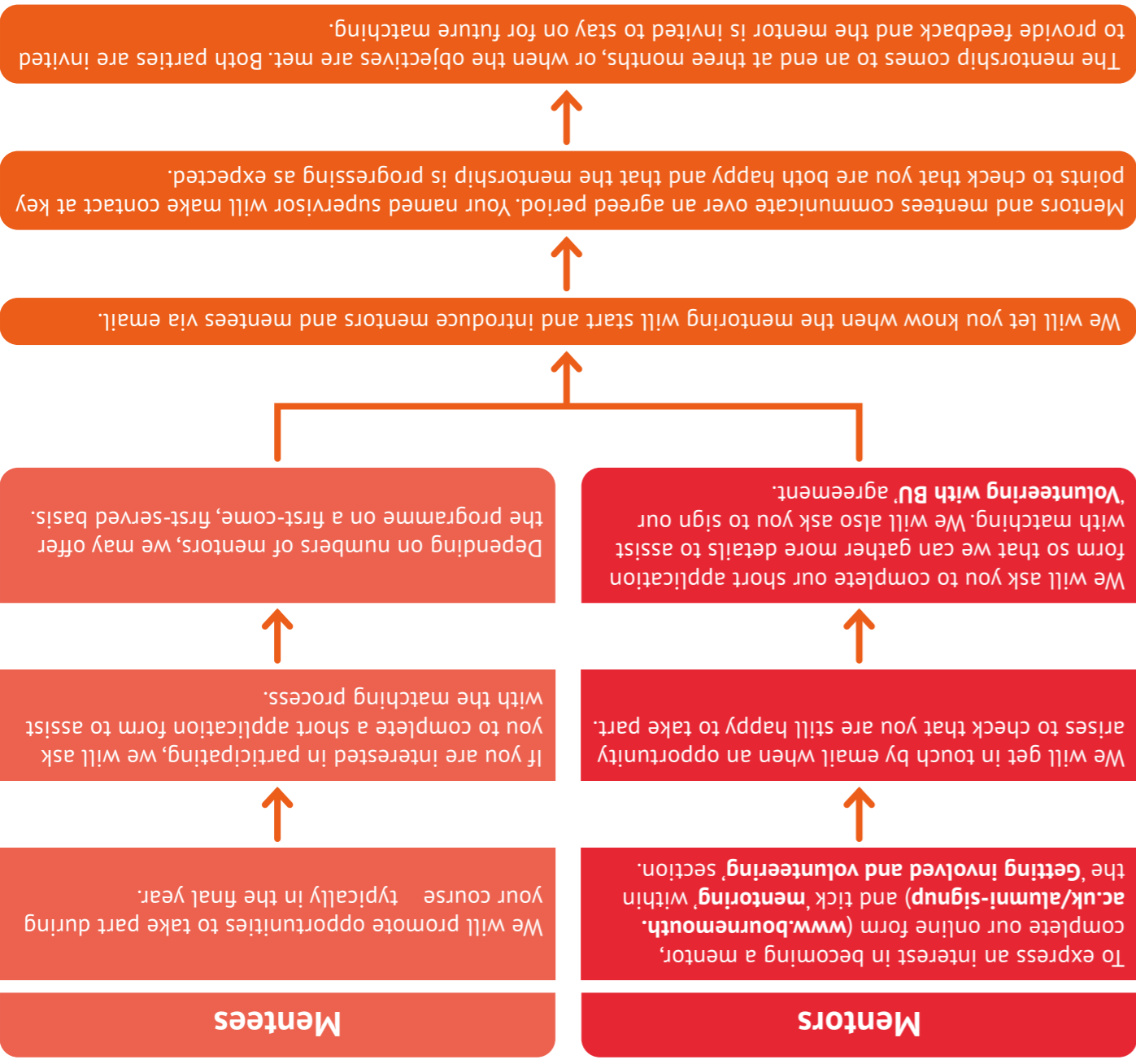


**Jonathan Goode**  
Head of Alumni Relations

# Overview



- **Mentoring programmes** start at various points throughout the year and typically run for three months
- **Mentors and mentees** are matched to achieve the best possible fit between students' career aspirations and the experiences of the mentors
- **Contact between mentors and mentees** is predominantly via email although in some instances mentors and mentees have decided to speak by Zoom or Teams or meet up in person
- **As a guide, the time commitment for mentors** is no more than two hours a month, which is likely to be broken up into smaller chunks
- **Mentors and mentees should be prepared to provide feedback** on the programme to support its development.
- **Mentors and mentees should treat each other with respect** and take time to understand each other's skills, experiences and needs
- **Mentors and mentees will be supported** by a named supervisor typically a member of the Alumni Relations Team who will check in at key points and respond to any questions or concerns
- **Objectives for mentoring** will be mutually agreed by the mentee and mentor at the start of the programme



# Process

# Guidelines



# Setting objectives

Establishing goals will help to direct the topics for discussion, and ultimately enable both parties to evaluate how successful the mentorship has been. The application forms will ask the mentee and mentor to indicate the areas they are interested in working on – for example time management, industry-specific skills and attributes, managing work pressures and advice for interviews. The mentee should propose their objectives for the programme and agree these with the mentor.

Try to identify objectives for the mentorship that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound – for example:

- Review my CV in order to start applying for roles by May
- Work on likely interview questions and answers to increase my confidence before attending my first interviews
- Understand what I should include in a portfolio to show a potential employer.

## Top tips

### Tips for mentees

- Show interest and enthusiasm in what your mentor has to say – even if an email does not require a response, it is good practice to acknowledge it and thank the sender
- Try to find common ground such as shared professional interests or similar experiences from your times at Bournemouth University
- Don't be afraid to ask questions – your mentor is there to help
- Be open about your areas of interest and aspirations – the more you put in, the more you'll get out of the experience.

### Tips for mentors

- Keep in mind your mentee's aims and goals
- Try to give constructive feedback, be specific and offer clear suggestions
- Draw on your experiences, both as a student and as a professional
- Be honest about your time commitments and let your mentee know if you are going to be out of contact for any period of time – for example during holidays.

## Guidelines for mentors

| Mentors should:   | Mentors should not:  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide relevant advice, feedback and professional insights</li> <li>• Offer support over a pre-determined timescale</li> <li>• Give one-to-one guidance which respects confidentiality</li> <li>• Make suggestions for further career exploration or professional development.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide financial support or feel obliged to provide employment opportunities</li> <li>• Complete work on behalf of the mentee</li> <li>• Make decisions on behalf of the mentee</li> <li>• Act as a counsellor for personal issues (if you have any concerns, please contact your named supervisor)</li> <li>• Take the place of a tutor or academic advisor.</li> </ul> |

## Guidelines for mentees

| Mentees should:  | Mentees should not:   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be proactive and make initial contact with their mentor following introductions</li> <li>• Be mindful of their mentor's work commitments and allow sufficient time for responses</li> <li>• Agree objectives for the mentorship and be open about areas for development</li> <li>• Be prepared to share insights which could benefit the mentor as part of establishing a two-way professional relationship.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask their mentor's views on the quality of their academic work</li> <li>• Make direct approaches relating to employment unless opportunities are raised by the mentor</li> <li>• Introduce/refer the mentor to other students at BU</li> <li>• Share details of the mentor's advice/experiences publicly, including via social media.</li> </ul> |

## Discussion starters

As you make contact with your mentor, you might want to take the opportunity to find out how they got into the industry, how they found the transition from studying to employment, and how they got to where they are now. On these pages you will find some discussion areas and possible topics to help you.

| Discussion area                        | Possible topics covered by mentors and mentees   |
|--|--|
| <b>Introductions</b>                   | Agree goals and objectives for the mentorship programme  |
|  | Exchange career and educational backgrounds  |
|  | Enquire about skills required for the industry and for a specific job role   |
|  | Agree how you will keep in touch (by video call, phone or email) and whether you want to schedule future meetings  |
| <b>Career</b>                          | Has your mentor taken a particular approach to career planning – for example by setting out a five-year plan and, if so, has this been helpful and how did they go about it? |
|  | What skills has your mentor needed to develop to achieve their career goals?   |
|  | Seek advice and feedback on your CV  |
|  | Are there areas of weakness on the CV and, if so, how can they be improved?  |
|  | Seek advice on completing application forms  |
|  | Explore how to prioritise university commitments with job hunting  |
|  | What skills do employers value?  |
| <b>Work/life balance</b>               | Understand what's important for you and create a plan or tips to ensure that you are able to achieve professional success without sacrificing your personal/family life      |
|  | Discuss the challenges in achieving work/life balance  |
| <b>Potential or perceived barriers</b> | Explore strategies for coping with barriers in the workplace   |
|  | Find out how diverse the industry or a particular workplace is. How does your mentor's organisation support diversity?   |
|  | Explore assistance available in the workplace – for example, use of technology, flexible hours, home working, travel   |
|  | Ways to build confidence   |
|  | Looking after your mental and physical health  |
| <b>Leadership/teamwork</b>             | The importance of leadership and teamwork as it relates to success   |
|  | What challenges do you each face in being part of a team?  |
|  | Are there other people it would be useful to meet and talk to?   |
|  | What traits make a good leader?  |
|  | How can you support your colleagues?   |
|  | How can you improve your leadership skills?  |

## Discussion starters

| Discussion area                                     | Possible topics covered by mentors and mentees  |
|---|---|
| <b>Industry</b>                                     | Look at work experience/volunteering opportunities  |
|   | Get advice on how to approach employers for work experience or volunteering opportunities           |
|   | Ask to hear more about the organisation the mentor works for  |
|   | What sort of projects do graduates who are new to the mentor's organisation work on?                |
|   | What are the opportunities for career development?  |
|   | Ask about issues faced over the course of this year in your mentor's industry                       |
|   | How do they navigate the issues in the industry?  |
|   | What lessons has your mentor learnt during their time in industry?                                  |
| <b>Networking and building a professional brand</b> | How do you make contact with people from your career area of interest?                              |
|   | How do you grow your network of contacts?   |
|   | How should I create my personal brand?  |
|   | How can I optimise my LinkedIn profile?   |
|   | How can you use social media to network?  |
|   | How can you use events to network?  |
|   | Guide to your first networking event  |
|   | Could the mentor/mentee endorse each other's skill set on LinkedIn?                                 |
|   | How do you keep your network up to date? Have you got any contacts to help me start my own network? |
|   | What content should I share on my professional profiles?  |
| <b>Other</b>  | Other topics that you have not previously covered but wish to share with each other                 |
|   | When do we review the mentor/mentee relationship?   |

## Mentoring testimonials



Here's what some of our previous mentees and mentors have had to say about the experience.

### Mentee feedback

"I have found the mentoring programme to be extremely helpful and it has provided me with a lot of really valuable information in the areas I am interested in. The experience has been brilliant overall."

**Cameron Falconer-Cunningham**

"I would highly recommend the scheme for any students who are unsure of their future career choices, need tips and recommendations for interviews, CV or presentation skills, as well as those wanting to maximise their time management skills throughout their final year. It's great to be connected with an expert in your area of interest, who encourages you to pursue potential career opportunities as well as providing useful advice throughout the entire year at university, and after."

**Holly Sumpter**

"I've found the scheme extremely helpful. My mentor works as a TV editor and has given me lots of advice around my CV and entering the industry. Applying for the scheme is so easy and you get so much out of it."

**Jemma Wood**

"This programme has given me a real understanding of where I want to be after I graduate. My mentor has inspired me to look into alternative opportunities that I would not have originally had the confidence to apply to."

**Manjot Sekhon**

"Caroline, my mentor, was very supportive. Our conversation offered great insights into the sector I wish to work in. She offered really good advice regarding looking for jobs and helped me to understand the short-term goals I should aim for whilst finishing my final semester at BU."

**Martha Davis**

"The alumni mentoring scheme has been very beneficial for me. It has allowed me to gain an understanding of life after graduation and how to navigate my way through applying for jobs and building an outstanding CV. It has also been uplifting building a professional relationship with someone in a position I aspire to be in! My mentor has been great, answering all my questions and advising me on any queries I have. I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested as it's been such a fun and valuable experience for me."

**Tessa Thomas**

## Mentoring testimonials

### Mentor feedback

"I found the reflective process of trawling my experience to provide targeted advice very rewarding. I was impressed with the mentee's clearly defined objective, they just needed guidance on possible pathways. I hope some of my insight proves helpful to the mentee in finding clarity in forging a career."

**Chris Stooling**

"I've really enjoyed the Bournemouth University mentoring programme so far, it's very fulfilling and a great way to give back. I used to attend every guest lecture at BU and ask a tonne of questions to get advice from the industry professionals. Being able to access this advice now through the mentoring programme on a 1-1 basis is a fantastic way for students to get valuable career support and I'm very happy to pass on my personal experiences to others looking to enter the media industry."

**Dan Brown**

"The mentoring programme for me has been really interesting. I've been able to be the person I felt I needed when I was going through my last year of university. Next steps and careers felt really daunting despite going to the seminars and lectures that were offered to help at the time. To be able to help others with what I know now (and I am still learning) is rewarding and hopefully my mentee feels the same!"

**Emily Daniels**

"My degree from Bournemouth has been the bedrock of my career, so being part of the mentoring scheme was a great way of showing my appreciation and getting involved. Working with my mentee hopefully helped him to better define his career choice, but was equally as rewarding for me, providing the opportunity to offer advice to the new generation of PR professionals."

**Kevin Coles**

"It is important to support the people trying to better themselves and progress however we can. I also recognise how beneficial it can be to have a current student or graduate from the course come back and talk to the students. It helps to hear from people that have experienced the issues you are experiencing, knowing that they have progressed as a result of all their hard work and giving you an idea of what potentially lies ahead."

**Malcolm Bussey**

"I have found the mentoring experience both humbling and rewarding. I feel honoured that my mentee let me be a part of her university journey and pleased to have helped to provide guidance, even in the smallest of ways. I'm proud of the fact that BU recognises the value alumni can add to the university experience."

**Roxanne Opas**

# Confidentiality and support



## Confidentiality

In order to foster a strong professional relationship, it is important to establish at the outset that conversations between mentor and mentee should be treated as confidential. Please do not share any personal information without seeking the other person's permission. On the rare occasion that mentees mention something which flags a concern, mentors should speak with the named supervisor in the first instance.

If you take part in our mentoring programme, we will hold the information you provide on our database for the purposes of administering the scheme. Your data is held securely, in line with data protection guidelines, and processed in line with our Privacy Notice. You can find out more about how we hold and use your data at [www.bournemouth.ac.uk/alumni-privacy](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/alumni-privacy).

## Support

The Alumni Relations Team is here to support all of our mentors and mentees. For more information, ideas or inspiration relating to your mentorship, please get in touch. If you feel at any stage that you are no longer able to take part in the Alumni Mentoring Programme, then please contact us.

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