



Mentoring Resources

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Finding a mentor?

- The *Trinity Alumni Online* platform facilitates online mentoring connections between alumni and students/other alumni. The online mentoring platform includes profiles of graduates who are willing to be mentors.
- Events are also run throughout the year in Trinity and abroad to facilitate face-to-face connections as part of or separate to the online connections. Please go to MyCareer, Events for mentoring events on campus. Visit www.tcd.ie/alumni for networking events abroad.
- Once you have found a potential mentor use the messaging facility to contact your mentor. For subsequent contact your mentor's online mentor profile indicates their preferred mode of communication e.g. email, phone, Skype or face to face. Make an appointment for your first conversation using the online scheduling facility.

How do I approach a mentor?

Once you have found a potential mentor, you need to contact them via the *Trinity Alumni Online* platform to ask them to be a mentor.

How to structure a mentoring request

- Introduce yourself, what year you are in and what you are studying.
- Tell them about your career ideas and plans. If you do not have any yet, say so.
- Be clear about what you hope to gain from mentoring.
- Say what made you choose them as a potential mentor. What appeals to you about their profile?
- Before you send the request:
 - check your spelling and grammar
 - ensure your message is polite and professional. Aim to make your language at least as formal as the mentor's own writing on their profile or how they presented themselves at the mentoring event
- For students, if you would like further help or advice around this, [book an appointment with your Careers Consultant through MyCareer](#)

What happens next?

- Once you have sent your request to the mentor. They will either accept your request or decline your request with an explanation.
- If you do not receive a reply within 7 days, you can send them a reminder message or approach another mentor instead. Please remember that mentors are often busy people and if they have not responded there may be a good reason for this. Please contact Trinity Development and Alumni alumni@tcd.ie if you continue to experience difficulty with contacting a mentor.

What do you want from mentoring?

- “I want to explore your job role/industry so I can understand if I could be happy and successful in it”
- “I need help with developing [or, selling to employers] the skills I am developing through my degree”
- “I would like your advice on finding jobs not advertised”
- “I need help with prioritising my free time to make myself more employable”
- “I am looking for assistance with networking”

Don't ask for this as they will probably say no:

- “I would like a job or internship at your company”

Once I have a mentor. What then?

Has a Trinity alumnus agreed to mentor you? Congratulations! It is now time to start building a relationship with your mentor.

Getting started – checklist

- Say thank you!
- Discuss how and when you will contact each other
- Find out more about each other
- Remind your mentor what you hope to gain from mentoring
- Work together to set some objectives
- Take the lead

Say thank you!

Your mentor is generously giving you their free time, so make sure you thank them before doing anything else.

Discuss how and when you will contact each other

- Give your mentor your contact details and ask them how they would prefer to talk to you – this could be by email, phone, Skype or face-to-face. If they prefer phone or Skype, make an appointment for your first conversation.
- Some mentors prefer to stick to email or online messaging, they will speak to you by phone or in person once they have gotten to know you.
- Do ask how often they can be contacted. Be realistic in your expectations. Your mentor is a volunteer, so do not expect too much and show that you are grateful for their time.

Find out more about each other

You can take the lead in this by telling them more about yourself. Where are you from? What are your interests? Why did you choose Trinity? What work experience, volunteering and student activities have you done? What are your plans for the future?

Remind your mentor what you hope to gain from mentoring

In your mentoring request, you should have told them what you want to achieve from mentoring. However, you should definitely mention this again. This will make sure they remember what you want and also will help to make your first contacts focused and productive.

Work together to set some objectives

- Mentoring is usually more effective when you start with a clear set of goals. So as a first step, choose a few [SMART](#) objectives with your mentor for what your relationship will achieve. Your mentor and you should work together to write the objectives and make sure that they are SMART.
- You should keep a record of your objectives so you can review them later. Write them down and share them with your mentor. Try to make a simple plan of what you need to do to reach the objectives, and add what you have planned to your calendar or to-do list.

Take the lead

As a mentee, you are expected to lead the mentoring relationship and make sure it keeps progressing. Your mentor is your guide and helper, not your manager. You need to be proactive – request their help when you want it and keep them up to date with your progress.

Your mentor is busy and does not get paid for their time. They should not have to chase you, nor put in more effort than you.

What to do during mentoring

Review your progress

To get the most out of mentoring, you need to look back as well as forward. For a more in-depth mentoring relationship set aside time with your mentor each time you meet to review your progress.

Remember to...

- **reflect** – look back on your progress
- **celebrate** – be pleased with what you have achieved
- **appreciate** – show your appreciation for your mentor's support

The focus of your review should be the [SMART objectives](#) you set at the start. Have you met those objectives, or are you on course to meet them soon? What should your objectives be for the next 1–6 months?

Also reflect on yourself and your career plans more generally. How have you developed, and how have your ideas changed? What do you need to do next?

A discussion of these questions with your mentor will be hugely valuable to you. It will also prepare you both for continued progress in your mentoring relationship.

Students who complete, sign and submit the [‘Tracking My Mentoring Journey’](#) document to MyCareer by a specified date in March will receive a Mentoring Certificate of Completion. This document sets out a framework for tracking the mentoring relationship between you and your alumni mentor with the purpose of clarifying your goals, assisting with reflection and optimising learning. As part of this process mentors need to discuss the document with you and co-sign it.

Ending the relationship

As a guideline, we suggest that you aim for the mentoring relationship to last for a period of six months. Either your mentor or you can decide to end the mentoring relationship. Please do talk to your mentor before ending the relationship if possible. You may also benefit from reviewing your progress with them in your final mentoring conversation.

If the relationship does not work

You may need to end the mentoring relationship before you have met your objectives, if you do not get along with your mentor or you do not feel you are benefiting from them.

If this happens, do not be put off by one bad mentoring experience. Try again with another mentor. If you feel comfortable, you could even mention what did not work this time when you approach the next mentor, so they can better judge whether they are a good fit for your needs and interests.

Adapted from original source: Mentoring Guides, Careers & Placements, University of York