



Mentor Guidelines

Mentoring is an interactive learning and educational experience, provided to support students and fellow alumni with developing their career. It is a relationship between a 'mentee' and a more experienced 'mentor'. Below are guidelines to help make mentoring a success for you.

Before you start

Complete your profile. This gives you the best chance of being found by a suitable mentee, so please take time to complete it in detail. Make sure that the checklist of the mentoring 'services' you are able and willing to provide is kept up to date and the number of simultaneous mentoring relationships reflects your capacity. We want you to volunteer based on the time and energy you have available. As a guideline aim for about three meetings of about an hour's duration over a six month period in addition to replying to any e-mails/questions/concerns. To engage in mentoring you must adhere to the mentor agreement. You may wish to review the mentoring resources for mentors and mentees at the [Careers Advisory Service website](#).

Being a mentor

Mentoring activities can range from helping a mentee to find out more about what it's like to work in a specific role or sector, reviewing a CV or LinkedIn profile, providing advice on interview strategy, or helping your mentee to practice professional communication and networking. It is a rewarding experience that generally results in personal growth for the mentor as well as the mentee. The specific shape of the relationship is up to you.

Commitment level

When volunteering as a mentor you choose from a list of mentor 'services' that range from answering a few questions over email through to a more ongoing mentoring relationship that may last a number of months. As a guideline aim for about three meetings of about an hour's duration over a six month period in addition to replying to any e-mails/questions/concerns. You are in control of how much time you have to give to mentoring, and can change your level of commitment as you see fit. Please complete the mentoring feedback surveys sent to you.

Ideal number of alumni/students to mentor

A mentor can decide how many mentees s/he wishes to accept. For those who are new to mentoring and those with limits on their time, it may be appropriate to engage with just one or two to begin with, monitor progress with them, and take on others as and when you feel comfortable to do so.

Ways you could help as a mentor

Your support can be valuable to students/alumni at any point in your career. For example:

- **If you only graduated a few years ago** – 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.
- **If you are further into your 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/alumni with longer-term career planning and goal-setting, and to help them build confidence and resilience.
- **If you are self-employed** – Trinity 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.
- **If you are a postgraduate researcher or an academic** – the many students/alumni who consider academic careers can benefit from your experience of academia and of winning research positions and funding.

Responding to mentoring requests

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

- **Be realistic about your time commitment** - Mentoring can be time-consuming; be realistic about how much time you have for the student/ alumni before accepting them.
- **Ask for more information if you need it** - If you are not sure what this student/alumni wants from their mentor or do not know enough about them, you can send a response to the student/ alumni before considering 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.
- **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 your conversation started.
- **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.
- **Thank the student/alumni for their interest** - Approaching a mentor takes time and thought and can be nerve-wracking, so a kind response will definitely 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.
- **Report anything you are uncomfortable with** - Please report any problems to Trinity Development and Alumni (alumni@tcd.ie). This is important, not just for your benefit but for all other mentors the student/alumni may come into contact with.

How can the College support you?

Where career or personal development advice is sought by a student mentee outside your specialist area, you should refer back to the [Careers Advisory Service](#) or careers@tcd.ie or the [online career portal MyCareer](#) so that a careers consultant can work with the student.

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