



A Quick Guide to Mentoring

What is mentoring?

Career mentoring is a relationship between a student or graduate ('mentee') and a more experienced graduate ('mentor'), who is there to support the mentee with developing their career. The purpose of the relationship is the passing on of knowledge, experience and offering advice. Mentors can help with preparing for the world of work, discuss career options and offer practical assistance with getting jobs and a place on a postgraduate course.

Mentoring at Trinity is facilitated by the Trinity Alumni Online (TAO) platform, managed by Trinity Development & Alumni, through which students and alumni can engage with each other. The Careers Service has developed the mentoring framework to help optimise relationship building between mentors and mentees in person and online. The Careers Service supports students to make the most of mentoring as part of their career development.

Trinity alumni mentors work in a wide range of sectors and locations. It is up to the mentee to select a mentor that interests them. Graduates and students of Trinity have exclusive access to Trinity Alumni Online, where mentees can connect with mentors and build a relationship.

How can I become a mentor?

Sign up to Trinity's Online Mentoring Platform

To connect with students and alumni for online mentoring, please sign up to our mentoring platform at [Trinity Alumni Online](#). Please take time to complete your profile in detail as this gives you the best chance of being found by a suitable mentee. 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.

Once you have activated your profile, students and alumni will be able to send you a mentoring request. You can easily set your preferences for the number of mentees you can accept and the types of mentoring services you can offer. After you've connected with a mentee, you can choose how you want to connect - via email, phone, in person, etc. - as well as how often.

Attend a Mentoring Event on Campus

We run several in-person mentoring events at Trinity throughout the year. Please go to our [Mentoring page](#) for upcoming mentoring events.

What should I do if I have technical issue with Trinity Alumni Online?

Please contact us at alumni@tcd.ie and we will assist you with your issue if you are experiencing any technical issues on Trinity Alumni Online such as but not limited to:

- Forgot your username or password



- Education details are not accurate
- Loading issues.

If you are having difficulties resetting your password and/or the password reset email is not going to your inbox, please contact our platform's service provider helpdesk at help@aluminati.net.

Do I have to accept someone's mentor request?

The Trinity Alumni Online platform affords the mentor the opportunity to accept or decline a mentee, dependent upon the information given by the mentee. 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.

Responding to mentoring requests

If you have just received a mentoring request from a student or fellow graduate, here are a few quick tips to help you in your response.

- **Consider how you can best help this individual** - 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 / alumni before accepting them.
- **Ask for more information if you need it** - If you are not sure what the prospective mentee wants from you or you do not know enough about them, you can send a response to them requesting more details 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 can expect to hear back from you on any requests and queries.
- **Thank the student/alumni for their interest** - Approaching a mentor takes time and thought and can be nerve-racking, so a kind response accepting/declining will be appreciated and help get the relationship off to the right start. 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 & Alumni by email at alumni@tcd.ie. This is important, not just for your benefit, but for all other mentors the student/alumni may come into contact with in future.

Where can I meet with my mentee in-person?

We encourage mentors and mentees to meet each other, helping establish a relationship and doing so online is perfect. If you wish to meet in person as long as there is no restriction or geographical issues, please feel free to do so.



We recommend meetings take place in a public location, such as on Trinity's campus, a convenient coffee shop or in the canteen/common room of your workplace. It is best to avoid any venues where alcohol is served.

If you are looking for a place to meet on campus in person, you are welcome in our Alumni Room in East Chapel. The room is open to all alumni from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. We also have a meeting room, which can be booked in advance by contacting alumni@tcd.ie.

Boundaries for mentor and mentees

While a mentoring relationship involves mutual respect, trust and communication, the power differentials between a mentor and mentee are always present and easy to overlook or misinterpret.

To be an effective and reliable mentor for your mentees means protecting yourself from burn out, maintaining professionalism in all circumstances and treating each mentee the same way you would any other mentee, without bias or prejudice.

These boundaries have been put in place to help ensure that you maintain positive, healthy relationships with your mentees in a way that won't have a negative impact on your personal life:

- Ensure you are **clear about when you are available** to your mentees, and don't be overly generous with your time. If you wouldn't take a 1am phone call every morning, don't take one at all.
- Be mindful of **appropriate venues** for one-to-ones – if you can't meet on campus or in a workplace canteen/common room, keep it to public places suitable to the conversation. Don't use venues where alcohol is served – this will exclude some mentees and sends entirely the wrong message about the type of relationship you are forming.
- While friendships and relationships may develop between you and your mentees, remember there is a slight power differential between you and your mentees – ensure that this is not misused **in any way**. It's an absolute rule that **mentors cannot enter into romantic and/or physical relationships with their mentees**. This protects you from any accusations of abuse of power, protects them from any situation where they feel unable to express a lack of consent, and gives you a very gentle way of deflecting any mentee who does develop feelings for you.
- **Support, don't solve** – there's a huge difference between helping a mentee develop a CV/portfolio, for example, compared to giving them a job. Remember that, however wonderful direct intervention/problem solving might be in the short term, in the long term it's disempowering.
- **Respect your mentees' right to privacy** – don't discuss anything they tell you with people who it doesn't concern.
- **If you're concerned about a mentee for any reason, refer them** to a source of support, and get support for yourself. If you find things that they have said to you are going round in your head and causing distraction, it's time to debrief with someone (see Referrals).
- **Don't take on too much or go out of your depth** – refer if you think it's necessary for you as well/instead of them!



Can I leave the programme?

We understand that people's circumstances change and life is very busy, so if you to leave the mentoring programme, that is completely fine. Please just let us know by contacting us at alumni@tcd.ie so that we may remove you from the mentoring programme. If you have any mentees at the time you wish to leave, please make sure to let them know so they can find another mentor.

Even though you are no longer participating in the programme, your profile will remain on the platform, just like any social media account, and you have the option to re-join the mentoring programme at a later date if you wish.

Support from College for Mentors

Where career or personal development advice is sought by a student mentee outside your specialist area, you can refer back to Trinity's [Careers Service](#), at careers@tcd.ie, or advise your student mentee to visit the online portal [MyCareer](#) so that a careers consultant can work with them. If you are concerned about your mentee's emotional well-being, please contact the Student Counselling Service at telephone (01) 896 1407 for guidance and suggestions.

Mentees who are current Trinity students can also be referred directly to the Student Counselling Service for support. If your mentee is not a current student, the service can still support you and will help you to identify an appropriate source of support for anyone of concern.

Places to refer a TCD student (which office will depend on the particular issue):

- Student Counselling Service, ph. +353 (0)1 896 1407
- College Tutor (contact details will be on the student's my.tcd.ie portal)
- Students' Union, ph. +353 (0)1 646 8431
- Senior Tutor's Office, ph. +353 (0)1 896 2551
- College Health Service, ph. +353 (0)1 896 1556/1591
- College Chaplains, ph. +353 (0)1 896 1260/1901
- International Office, international@tcd.ie
- Disability Office, disab@tcd.ie
- Equality Office, equality@tcd.ie
- Niteline (9.00pm—2.30am every night in term) 1800 793793
- Instant messaging service also available at: <http://www.niteline.ie/onlinelistening.php>