



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

SCHOOL OF
BIOLOGICAL
SCIENCES

INDUSTRY MENTORING PROGRAMME STUDENT GUIDE



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GROUP

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WELCOME TO QUEEN'S SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES



The School of Biological Sciences is a busy, multidisciplinary community. Spanning everything from agricultural technology to zoology. The School has approximately 1000 students broadly covering food security, microbiology, ecosystem biology to sustainability.

Work Related Learning (WRL) is an important part of university life, it enhances students' understanding of the world of work; themselves and their potential work environments. As a result, students are further empowered to enter and succeed in graduate job markets; the world of work and their wider lives.

Over the years we have developed a very successful work placement programme and want to further add to the opportunities to connect students with industry professionals.

As part of our WRL offerings the School of Biological Sciences will deliver a mentoring programme in 2024/25 with the aim of a mentoring cohort being launched yearly.

This booklet has been developed to provide you with information on the mentoring program and provides some resource to assist you in developing a successful mentoring relationship.

Meet the Team

Dionne Alexander - Programme Coordinator
Careers and Work Placement Consultant

Katie Torbitt
Careers and Placements Clerical Officer

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a great opportunity for students to gain real insight as to what career options are open to them and it is a rewarding experience for industry professionals to help someone progress and achieve their full potential in their future career.



The aim of this programme is to help current School of Biological Sciences students engage with professionals. We want to provide students with a supported framework to think about the career options open to them and help them understand the skills they have as well as the skills they need to develop. This is very much personal development opposed to academic guidance or career advice.

Mentoring is a powerful personal development and empowerment tool. It can help the mentee gain a better understanding of what they want to do as a career.

It should be driven primarily by the mentee, with the mentor supporting and enabling them to take responsibility for their own development. In this the mentor acts as a guide, supporter, sounding board and, sometimes, as a role model.

How Mentoring Works

We will establish and manage a bank of experienced mentors who will be made available to those seeking help in the following areas:

- Enhancing practical skills and getting advice on career advancement
- Identifying and applying for opportunities that will aid skills development
- Building networks
- Increase career confidence

Students wishing to have support from the mentoring bank will apply and once approved will be allocated a suitable mentor.

Each mentee will be eligible to:

- 4 sessions with a mentor
- Attend 1 training seminar
- Receive monthly newsletters
- Attend networking events
- Complete a reflective evaluation and attend a celebratory event

Benefits of Mentoring

There are several key benefits to being a mentee including:

- Increased confidence and performance
- The opportunity to learn from a role model
- A broader perspective
- Explore possible solutions
- Help in clarifying and setting development goals
- Expanded network
- A safe environment to test out ideas and suggestions

How Do I Become a Mentee?

This programme is available to current QUB students studying within the School of Biological Sciences. who would like help with career progression and 1 – 1 support from an experienced mentor.

You can apply by completing the [mentoring application form](#) or contact Dionne Alexander d.alexander@qub.ac.uk

Mentoring Programme Timeline

When	What	Where
September	Applications open for mentees and mentors. Mentors can express an interest year round.	To apply, complete the online form or email d.alexander@qub.ac.uk
October	Mentor and mentee applications close mid October Matches are completed and confirmed. Mentees and Mentors notified 'It's a Match.' Receive Mentoring Toolkit , code of conduct and acceptance form to review and help prepare for meeting your mentor Mandatory mentee and mentor induction session.	You will have the opportunity to attend the induction session in person at the School of Biological Sciences or online.
November	Mentoring officially commences Monthly newsletters are issued from QUB to support on topics, resources and engagement.	Mentoring sessions may be online or in person
April	Mentoring officially completes at end of April Evaluations due from mentor and mentee.	The Careers and Placement team will send an email to conclude the programme and seek feed back and evaluations
May	Celebration Event! Prize giving and networking opportunity.	Celebrations will be held at the School of Biological Sciences

MENTORING RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT

It is recommended that the mentoring relationship is based on shared expectation about what each can expect of the other. The best way to ensure that the relationship runs smoothly is to discuss and agree some ground rules and expectations, which can help to keep the process focused.

Whilst emphasizing that the important aspect to mentoring is the people and the relationship and not the process, it may be helpful to complete a [Mentoring Agreement](#). It is entirely up to the mentor and mentee if they wish to do so.

A sample mentoring agreement will be sent to you by the mentoring coordinator.

Clear Boundaries

The boundaries of the mentoring relationship should be made clear, maintaining a professional distance, and remember mentoring does not deal with:

- Counselling
- Mental health
- Personal trauma
- Dependency etc

In these situations, consider reaching out to [the Student wellbeing team](#).

What are the Expectations of a Mentee?

- Commit to the programme and engage with their mentor
- Liaise and arrange meetings with their mentor
- Be open and honest around goals, expectations, challenges and concerns
- Respect the confidential and trusting environment
- Seek advice, opinion, feedback, and direction from their mentor
- Be open to constructive criticism/feedback and ask for it
- Come to meetings prepared with a clear idea of what topics or issues they want to address
- Respect the mentor's time and resources
- Apply what is learnt from your meetings back on the job

Potential Engagement Topics

Potential topics include:

- Career development
- Presentations and public speaking
- Business start-up
- Building networks
- Recruitment and training
- Increasing career and business confidence
- Resilience
- Problem solving
- Someone to support me
- Organisation and planning
- Profile and visibility
- Interviews and pitches

Sample Mentor Questions

- What have you found out about yourself and employability since you started your University studies?
- How has your degree programme contributed to your employability so far?
- What have you done outside of your formal study (i.e. lectures & tutorials) to develop your generic/transferrable skills



(i.e. teamwork, communication, leadership, creativity etc)?

- What are your thoughts on future career options?
- What do you need to do to reach your goals?
- How can you prepare to network? i.e. relevant questions to ask, and summarising your own background.
- Common interview questions and how to tackle them e.g. what are your strengths in relation to this position?



Programme Conclusion

At the end of the programme the Careers and Placement team will send an email to conclude the programme and seek feedback and evaluations from mentors and mentees.

Conclusion Event

There will be an opportunity at the end of the programme to attend a conclusion and celebratory event of all mentors and mentees.

Continued Engagement

We absolutely encourage mentor and mentee to keep in contact. There is no obligation to do so and this may be something you wish to confirm with the mentor at the end.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How was my mentee/mentor matched to me?

Mentees and mentors are matched based on the information provided in their application forms.

How much of my time will this take?

This very much depends on each pairing. It is entirely both parties' choice as to how frequently you meet and for how often. We recommended that this is discussed, and some guidelines are set out at the first meeting. However, we have allocated each mentee 4 mentoring sessions.

When does the programme start and end?

The mentoring sessions will begin in November and finish at the end of April.

How should we keep in touch?

We recommend that you discuss with your mentor on how to best stay in touch between sessions. Everyone has a preferred

communication method and frequency, so let them know if you'd like updates via email, telephone calls etc.

What happens if we don't get on?

There is a chance that some of the suggested matches will not work in practice, and this will probably be apparent quite quickly. It is worth bearing in mind that a mentoring relationship is designed to challenge you and make you think differently about yourself and your approach to things. As a result, there could well be points during your meetings where you feel moved outside your comfort zone. In retrospect, this could well be when you gain the most from the scheme. However, if there is a more permanent and fundamental 'mis-match' please let us know

What support will be available?

The programme coordinator is available at all times. We will also send monthly newsletters with information, articles, resources and topic ideas for your meetings. In addition a

Get In Touch:



CLICK ME

pack will be made available with an agreement template, meeting notes guide and resources for topic areas.

How confidential is the programme ?

What you discuss with your mentor is strictly confidential between the two of you, and this confidentiality is maintained even after the relationship has ended. The only exception to this is if a mentee discloses a risk to themselves or others - where immediate contact /signposting to Queen's Student Wellbeing Services is required

I've lost touch with my mentor, what do I do?

These things happen, don't worry, just reach out and you

can pick up from where you left off. Please contact ahssdevevoffice@qub.ac.uk if you don't hear back from your mentor.

Will there be an evaluation of the programme?

Yes we will ask you to complete an evaluation at the end of the programme.



Useful Resources

Careers, Employability and Skills: [Future-Ready Roadmap](#)

The University of Edinburgh: [GIBBS Model of Reflection](#)

Indeed: [How to write SMART Goals](#)

KEY UNIVERSITY CONTACTS

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES CAREERS & PLACEMENT TEAM

Subject specific placement & careers information for Students and Employers

School of Biological Sciences
Queen's University Belfast
19 Chlorine Gardens
Belfast
BT9 5DL

Tel: +44 (0)28 9097 5787

Email: biocareers@qub.ac.uk

Web address: www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/Employability/

LinkedIn: @QUB School of Biological Sciences Careers and Placement Office

Facebook: @School of Biological Sciences QUB

X: @qubbiocareers

DIONNE ALEXANDER

Careers and Work Placement Consultant, programme coordinator

Email: d.alexander@qub.ac.uk

KATIE TORBITT

Careers and Placements Clerical Officer

Email: k.torbitt@qub.ac.uk

STUDENT WELLBEING SERVICES

Physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing support services

One Elmwood Student Centre and Students' Union
University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NN

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 2893

Email: studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk

Web address: www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/

STUDENTS' UNION ADVICE CENTRE

Independent money management, education, welfare and finance advice

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 1049/1166/1135

Email: studentsunion@qub.ac.uk

Web address: www.qubsu.org



**QUEEN'S
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CONTACT US

Email:

bio-placement@qub.ac.uk

Website:

[qub.ac.uk/schools/
SchoolofBiologicalSciences/](http://qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/)



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