The Career Mentoring Programme

Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the University's Career Mentoring Programme which supports Heriot-Watt students' career planning and personal development. The Programme is an opportunity for students to spend time with a professional and gain an insight into their role and career path. Should you decide to participate we hope you find the experience interesting and rewarding. We greatly appreciate the support of the Career Mentors who share their time and experience to help students: explore their career options, develop their employability skills and make the transition from academic study to the world of work.

Best wishes
Heriot-Watt University Careers & Graduate Futures Team

Why Get Involved?

Through mentoring a student you will have an important effect on their career and perhaps even their life! You will be able to share the knowledge and insights that you have gained from your own and perhaps others' experiences with a student who is aspiring to be a successful professional in your field.

Previous Mentors have stated that they became involved for reasons such as wanting to encourage graduates into their field; wanting to give something back by helping undergraduates at their previous university; and seeing mentoring as a way of developing their own skills.

"Mentoring can be as much or as little as you and the student want it to be; those students who sign up for the programme tend to be thinking ahead of their degree as to career choices, and welcome a friendly and - I hope - experienced eye, but who is neither a parent nor a tutor. It's a most worthwhile investment of my time, and one I have found both stimulating and interesting."

Heriot-Watt Career Mentor
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Preferable Criteria for Mentors

- A graduate of any university
- Over 2 years post-graduation work experience with a sound knowledge of their professional area or role.

The Career Mentor Role

An effective mentor has the following characteristics:

- Desire to share information, expertise and experience and to act as a resource
- Ability to recognize and encourage the mentee’s potential
- Willingness to invest time and effort in the mentoring relationship and fulfil the agreed commitments
- Ability to give and receive constructive and honest feedback
- Commitment to assisting the mentee in their decision-making processes by listening, sharing and reviewing options
- Willingness to facilitate networking opportunities through professional contacts.

The role can include the following:

- ADVISER: Provides advice, which the mentee decides how best to use.
- SOUNCING BOARD: Test ideas and suggestions.
- FACILITATOR: Highlighting opportunities for personal development.
- MOTIVATOR: Encouraging and motivating to achieve.

Depending on the specific needs of your Mentee, some objectives of the relationship could include:

- Explaining how your organisation works
- Offering an insight into your role
- Helping to build their self confidence
- Listening to problems they might have with their subject
- Offering challenging ideas regarding their career options
Time Commitment

Mentors and mentees are expected to contact each other at least 4 times during the academic year (typically one hour per meeting). However, the Career Mentoring Programme is designed to be flexible to suit the needs of you and your mentee. If difficulties arise in meeting in person, meetings may be held via a virtual meeting platform such as Microsoft Teams or Facetime, by email or over the phone.

Getting the Most from Mentoring

Professional boundaries - Both yourself and your mentee need clear guidelines about levels of responsibility and commitment. The relationship itself must have clear boundaries.

Meeting up - Ensure that you communicate clearly with each other about the times you plan to meet and agree when and how you will contact each other if you must cancel a meeting.

The mentee drives the process – The student (mentee) is responsible for driving the mentoring process (not the mentor). As a mentor, however, you may need to help the student if they are finding a part of the mentoring process difficult.

Preparation – Ensure that you are prepared for your meetings and that you have carried out any actions which you have agreed with your mentee.

A mentor’s role – As a mentor, you will be able to offer advice and support on a range of issues to do with your career, but you are not expected to know the answer to all of your mentees questions and where appropriate we encourage you to signpost your mentee to the Careers Service for support.

The first meeting with your Mentee should provide the basis of the direction of the partnership. It requires an honest and open exchange of information about backgrounds, experience, achievements, aspirations and expectations.

Some specific elements of the relationship could be:

- Discussing your Mentee’s needs at the outset and identifying appropriate ways in which you can help to meet them.

- Setting out a plan of action with your Mentee including the number of times that you both think you should meet.

“I always find having a few meetings is vital in helping to build confidence and understanding between each other, and therefore set a trusting framework upon which we can build ideas in which we can improve the experience.”

Heriot-Watt Careers Mentor
Confidentiality

Anything you discuss with your mentee is confidential, unless as a mentor you feel that either your mentee or anyone else may be at risk of potential harm. If this happens, we ask you to make accurate notes of the discussion and contact the Career Mentoring Co-ordinator Heriot-Watt University as soon as possible.

Your safety - You should always hold your meetings in public or professional settings, not in private.

Support for Mentors

The Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator will contact you by email as soon as we have found a suitable match for you. The Co-ordinator will then maintain contact to ensure the match is working well and will be available throughout the Programme to help with any queries or problems.

If your circumstances change or you move into a new job, please inform us as soon as possible.

Karen Beattie
Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator
Email: mentoring@hw.ac.uk

“Overall, the Career Mentoring Programme has been an excellent experience, both in terms of networking and learning lots about how working life is like. My confidence has been increased and I feel a step closer to being a graduate. Much appreciation to the people that organised this.”

Heriot-Watt Student
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