

MANCHESTER GOLD

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HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MENTORING TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

Preparation

Now you know who your mentor is, where they work and what they do, spend some time thinking about how you feel they can help you achieve your objectives. What are you looking to achieve through the programme? An insight into a specific industry or job role? Help with applications? To make a decision about which route to take? Will your mentor be able to support you with all your objectives or do you need to explore the possibilities of accessing their networks too? If so, how will you address this with your mentor?

Plan your communications

In your first email or meeting, agree with your mentor how you wish to communicate and how regularly. How many meetings will you aim for? If you are matched with a mentor who is either elsewhere in the UK or indeed overseas, how many emails will you exchange per month? Will you be able to have Skype/telephone conversations?

There will be times when you have more capacity to focus on things outside of your studies. It would be advisable to arrange with your mentor to communicate more regularly during these times. Equally your mentor may have busy periods at work, so it is important to discuss this early on.

If your mentor is not based in Manchester, you may be able to plan face to face meetings if and when they are visiting or if you are back home during vacations. You might wish to save certain activities and discussions for these occasions.

What to discuss

About your mentor: what has their career path been since University? What experience did they need to secure their role? Have they undertaken further training? What did they do whilst at Uni which they feel has helped them in their career?

About their role: What do they do? What do they enjoy? What hours do they work? What skills do they use? What are their plans for the future?

About their organisation/industry:

What is the culture like? Have there been any major changes in recent years? How has this affected your role?

Job searching and career planning:

Where should you look for vacancies? What process did they have to go through to secure their role? Can they feed back on CVs, applications etc? How do you tackle tough interview questions? Can they conduct a mock interview for you?

Appreciating the value of mentoring

There may be times when your commitment to the programme might seem to conflict with other interests. We do hope however that you can appreciate that you are being given an invaluable opportunity and will maintain commitment and contact with your mentor. This is your chance to gain realistic insight into the world of work, learn from the experiences and advice of a professional, demonstrate that you are committed to your future and hopefully gain confidence, make more informed decisions and kickstart your career.

You can contact the Manchester Gold team at anytime if you need help and support on 0161 275 2828 or mentoring@manchester.ac.uk

Mentoring Checklist

Have you covered the following in your first official communication?

- Introduce yourself and why you are taking part in the scheme
- Frequency and methods of contact
- Number and length of meetings, if any
- Content of communications (this may include knowledge and experience that you as a mentor/mentee can bring to the relationship, what knowledge and experience may need to be brought in from elsewhere?)
- Agreeing boundaries (this may include deciding appropriate times for contact, agreeing what you as a mentor/mentee can and cannot bring to the partnership)
- Purpose of the process (identifying what each individual hopes to gain from Manchester Gold and through working with each other)
- Reviewing the process (how will the process be reviewed to ensure you are reaching the objectives of each individual)
- Agreeing confidentiality

You may wish to form a written agreement with your mentor in order to clarify what you have discussed and what you have both committed to. You can download a template from the website if you need it.

Discussion points

Refer to the list to ensure you're covering key mentoring topics:

- Mentor's career history
- Mentor's company and industry
- Sector trends
- Core transferable skills
- Specific skills
- My CV
- Interviews
- Work Experience/Vacation Work
- PG Study/Training

You can use your Mentoring Diary to record what you have discussed. You will find this useful to collect examples of how the mentoring has benefitted you, should you need it for future job applications etc. This is available via the Mentee website.