

MANCHESTER GOLD

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# Mentor Handbook 2014/2015

# ABOUT MANCHESTER GOLD

The Careers Service has been running mentoring programmes since 1998.

Manchester Gold incorporates the collective experience we have acquired during this time and is an award winning programme, with approved status.

The programme is managed by Nia Watkins Jones, with assistance from Victoria Goodwin, Sarah White, Lisa Maycroft and Bridget Kik.

The aim of Manchester Gold is to find career mentors for our current students. Our mentors are professionals from a wide range of sectors who are willing to share their advice, experiences and career journey to date in order to help their mentee with planning their next steps, decision making and exploring opportunities.

## **How do we match mentors and mentees?**

Our students are required to apply for the scheme, using a comprehensive online form. They provide us with details of their course, previous work experience, career areas of interest and motivations for wanting a mentor.

Each year we receive over 1000 applicants. The team reads through every single application and shortlists according to where we can find appropriate matches. We use the information mentors provide on their registration form as the basis for this. The matching is done by hand – we have no software to help us. We feel that this helps us to make more accurate matches and hopefully facilitate more successful partnerships as a result. Some mentors request us to send a few possible matches, others are happy with just one.

Once we have found a suitable match, we invite the mentee for a one-to-one session with us. We outline the requirements, ask them to sign a Statement of Commitment, talk through the match and ensure they are aware of what is involved. This happens with all of our mentees. Again this helps us to instigate fruitful mentoring relationships.

All of our matched mentees are then invited to an induction workshop, which further clarifies how the programme works and how they can make the most of the opportunity.

## **Manchester Gold Timeframe**

\*Mentee choices sent to mentors from the end of October. Matching is complete by the end of November.

\*Mentor and mentee inductions take place throughout November.

\*We have a mid-term review.

\*The programme draws to a close in April/May.

# MENTEE & MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Mentors and mentees join the programme for a wide variety of reasons and have their own specific expectations. We try our best to manage expectations throughout to ensure that mentoring is an enjoyable and valuable experience for all.

## What can mentors expect from mentees?

All mentees sign a **Statement of Commitment** which asks them to agree to the following:

- \*Taking the lead in contacting their mentor and ensuring that communication is maintained regularly throughout
- \*Responding to communications in a timely manner
- \*Agreeing levels of contact and confidentiality and observing these arrangements
- \*Ensuring that the focus of the mentoring is careers related

If you are experiencing difficulties with your mentee, you must contact the Manchester Gold team on 0161 275 2828 as soon as possible.

## What should mentees expect from mentors?

By agreeing to become a Manchester Gold mentor, you are committing to:

- \*Sharing your advice and experience within a careers context
- \*Being as honest as is reasonably possible
- \*Treating the relationship as confidential and offering an impartial perspective

It really helps our mentees to make the right choices if they can obtain a true insight into the ups and downs of working in your sector/organisation/role.

## What are the most common expectations of our mentees?

Insights: sector/industry info; routes into certain roles; organisational culture

Skills: building confidence; improving employability skills; networking

Support: advice on CVs and application process; feedback; making new contacts

Added Extras\*: office/site visits, work shadowing; work experience

We spend time working with all of our mentees before the programme starts to ensure that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

\*mentors are under no obligation to provide any of these additional opportunities

# MEETINGS & COMMUNICATIONS

Back in 1998 our mentoring programmes were predominantly based on face to face meetings, approx 4 over the six month period. Now most of our partnerships combine, where possible, face to face meetings with email and telephone communication. Some partnerships are conducted entirely at distance.

## Face to face meetings

We still recommend that you aim for approx 4 meetings over the six month period. Where this is not a possibility, for example if you are not based in Manchester, we would suggest arranging one or two slightly longer meetings. It is always helpful if your mentee can meet you at least once (with the exception of overseas mentors). Please note that, unfortunately, we cannot cover travel expenses for either mentors or mentees.

We suggest meeting in quiet yet neutral environments, such as café, at least for the first meeting. It helps to put your mentee at ease. It can be beneficial if your mentee is able to meet you at your place of work too, as this provides a better insight into your working environment.

We may have rooms available within the Careers Service which can be booked for mentor meetings if necessary, for those based in Manchester. See 'Support & Useful Resources' for details.

## Setting Expectations

It is important to set down expectations from the first meeting/communication. Both mentees and mentors need to be clear about what they can hope to achieve/offer through the partnership. Agreeing ultimate outcomes early on will provide a framework and keep the relationship focused, helping you to identify possible tasks, activities, timescales and deadlines. If your first contact is by phone, a follow-up email to confirm discussion points may be advisable.

You may wish to use an informal agreement, such as the **Statement of Commitment** issued by Manchester Gold, to clarify expectations.

## Mentoring Activities

Here are some of the ways you can help your mentee develop their employability:

- Critique your mentee's CV – perhaps using your own as a point for comparison
- Look at job descriptions, application processes and identify subsequent skills gaps
- Invite your mentee to industry networking events, seminars etc
- Conduct a mock interview and provide feedback
- Create a career plan and job search strategy with your mentee
- Introduce your mentee to colleagues in and outside of your organisation

# DISTANCE MENTORING BY EMAIL, SKYPE ETC

Distance mentoring has enabled us to expand the programme - forming matches with mentors based outside of Manchester and even overseas. It can be a more flexible way for mentors to take part, as communication can be conducted at convenient times. Moreover mentors have the luxury of reflection and considering their responses to mentee questions.

In all our literature, we estimate that Manchester Gold will involve around 15 hours commitment but this is largely based on a partnership involving face to face meetings. Translating this time commitment to an e-mentoring relationship can be tricky. However e-mentoring partnerships equally need structure and direction in order for them to be manageable and effective.

Set down your parameters in the beginning. How often would you like your mentee to contact you? Once a month? Twice? On average, our e-mentoring partnerships have exchanged emails 10 – 12 times during the course of the match. Do you want them to email your work address or your personal email? How quickly can they expect a response from you?

It is important to consider what can be successfully conducted by email and equally what cannot. Depending on your mentee's objectives, you may decide that you will need to include some telephone/Skype communication too. Providing a career history and feedback on written applications is good for email but offering advice on what kind of role might suit your mentee may require a more interactive discussion.

In order to provide your mentee with alternative ways of contacting you and more of an insight into you as an individual, you may wish to invite them to connect on LinkedIn or perhaps you might even set up a separate private Facebook profile for you as a mentor? This may require a new email address but this could in fact help you to manage your mentoring exchanges separately. Your mentee might wish to do the same too. Skype is also a useful resource.

Setting the tone of your emails will set the tone of your relationship. Email can encourage less formal interactions and students are often not used to using email as a formal medium. If you prefer your relationship to be more business like, adopt an appropriate tone and your mentee will invariably echo this in their responses.

## Points to consider

When communicating, try to ask open questions and respond in an open way (ie not just yes/no). This will facilitate a dialogue and keep the relationship interactive.

If you find you haven't got time to respond fully to a mentee's email, drop them a quick note to say you will be in touch soon. E-mentoring relationships can easily fail if either party assumes that the other has lost interest due to delayed Responses.

Through our LinkedIn group and networking events, ask other mentors to share their experiences on what has worked for them when using email/telephone based mentoring.

Could you use some 'synchronous' distance communication tools?  
– instant messaging, video conferencing etc



# WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR cont.

G.F Shea in the book 'Mentoring: A guide to the basics', states that 'Mentors are people who, through their action and work, help other achieve their potential.

The mentor may take on different roles at different stages of the mentoring relationship which can include the following:

- Sounding board – offering the opportunity to try out new ideas in safety
- Listener – giving time and space and helping them problem solve
- Coach – giving encouragement and feedback
- Networker – helping to develop connections
- Role Model – examples to learn from
- Critical friend – telling the truth (even if it hurts)
- Change agent – challenging the status quo
- Visionary – being inspirational

Your role as a mentor will be to help them achieve their objectives and one way of doing this it to follow a three point model.

**Evaluate** – help to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the mentee in order to identify personal development needs. This could include:

- reviewing the mentee's activities to date
- considering areas for development
- evaluating the mentee's current skills and experience

**Stimulate** – encourage and motivate the mentee to develop him or herself. This could include:

- focusing the mentee on key areas they want to develop and suggest possible ways of developing them (coaching skills)
- supporting and encouraging the mentee throughout the process and recognise success
- signposting and opening up professional networks

**Facilitate** – you may be in a position to help the mentee with access to learning opportunities, influential people or resources. This could include:

- agreeing objectives and parameters
- identifying resources required
- reviewing progress

# SUPPORT & USEFUL RESOURCES

## The Team

The team are here to help with any queries, issues and concerns you may have relating to your mentoring partnership. You must feel free to contact them anytime via e-mail or phone.

Tel: 0161 275 2828

[nia.watkinjones@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:nia.watkinjones@manchester.ac.uk)

[victoria.goodwin@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:victoria.goodwin@manchester.ac.uk)

[sarah.white@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.white@manchester.ac.uk)

[lisa.maycroft@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:lisa.maycroft@manchester.ac.uk)

They are particularly keen for you to get in touch if things are not going well, as they can help to resolve failing partnerships. However they are also delighted to hear success stories too.

To book a room for mentee meetings, contact Bridget Kik [bridget.kik@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:bridget.kik@manchester.ac.uk)

## LinkedIn group

Last year we set up a LinkedIn group for mentors, by request. Please join the group. This will provide you with an opportunity to share experiences with fellow mentors, start discussions and network.

You can access the group via: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=2567824>

We will also send all mentors a link to the group via email.

## Mentee Materials

We provide all mentees with a pack of resources to help them. This includes a Skills Portfolio, which is useful in helping mentees identify strengths and areas for development and a Mentoring Diary for recording objectives, deadlines and any action points. Encourage your mentee to access these materials via the **Useful Downloads** section of the Manchester Gold website.

## Additional Support from the Careers Service

We are an award winning Careers Service which offers a very wide range of services to our students.

- 1 to 1 guidance appointments and shorter CV & Applications Advice clinics
- Mock interviews and video interviews
- Skills workshops and practice psychometric tests
- Recruiter events – including presentations, workshops and business games
- CV Kickstart online diagnostic tool

If you feel unable to help your mentee with any specific career related questions, please refer them to the Careers Service via the team.

They can also access support online at [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk)

**Manchester Gold mentee website:**

[www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/)

# MENTOR FAQs

## **What if I am unable to deliver what my mentee expects of me?**

If you are new to mentoring, you may feel unsure about what your mentee expects from you. Manchester Gold is a career mentoring programme which aims to focus the student on getting a job and on the transition from university to working life. As this is something you have probably been through, it is certainly something you can talk about and help them with.

However, every mentee has slightly different expectations and it is important to establish these at the outset. If you feel you are not the best person to help in certain areas, then perhaps you can introduce your mentee to personal contacts who are better placed to assist. Some mentees will be very focussed and specific, whilst others may need more general guidance. Some mentors worry that they are not “doing” enough but it is important to remember that it is the little things that count, like having an impartial sounding board and feeling they are being supported.

## **What if my mentee has applied to my organisation but has been unsuccessful?**

They have got someone ideally placed to give them thorough and honest feedback and to help them to develop so that they succeed next time. You can help your mentee work on selling themselves by setting up mock interviews, looking at transferable skills and suggesting areas where they could improve.

## **I am an e-mentor. Do you have any advice on how to get the most out of an e-mentoring relationship?**

Although e-mentoring may sound easier than meeting face-to-face, there are certain things you should think about at the outset. It is a good idea to establish how frequently you intend to communicate and to factor in any periods when either of you is unavailable so that this is not interpreted as not getting in touch. You may also need to work harder to ensure that your mentee is meeting their objectives – for example, as you will not be able to ask for a completed CV by the next meeting, you will need to set a date by which they should send it.

## **I am not in the position to arrange work experience for my mentee, is that a problem?**

You are under no obligation to provide your mentee with work experience and this is made clear to all participants at the induction.

A key objective of the scheme is however that the student gains an insight into your industry, so you should spend some time talking about day to day tasks, office politics and office etiquette, trying to give them a really good feel for what working life is like for you. If you are in a position to arrange any form of experience or work shadowing, this would obviously be of great benefit to your mentee.

## **Is our relationship confidential?**

The relationship needs to be open and honest from both sides and we emphasise the need for confidentiality to all mentees in their screening sessions. You should reiterate this on your initial contact with your mentee however, possibly drawing up a memorandum of understanding between yourselves to clarify this issue alongside as other expectations..

# MENTOR FAQs

## **I have not heard from my mentee in a while and I am concerned that the relationship is not progressing**

Although your mentee is supposed to take the lead in making contact, it could be that they feel intimidated or worried they might be seen as a burden. For this reason, we do encourage mentors to take the lead if they have not heard anything after the induction, to break the ice and kickstart the partnership.

If you have already had contact with your mentee and you are finding it hard to maintain because your mentee is not returning calls or emails, please let the Manchester Gold team know ASAP.

## **My mentee is no longer interested in a career in my work area, should I stop mentoring my mentee?**

Many students do have misconceptions about what careers in certain sectors entail and Manchester Gold helps to bridge this gap by providing them with a realistic picture. Even if your mentee decides they no longer want to work in your sector, there is still a great deal you can help them with. You can advise them on CVs and interviews, as well as helping them to address skill gaps. You may also be able to introduce them to someone who works in the field they have now chosen. Most importantly though, you have already saved them a great deal of time by helping them to find out what they *don't* want to do.

## **I am not based in Manchester, when will I see my mentee?**

Although it would be ideal to have a mentor based in Manchester or the North West, this is not always the case, especially with specific industries such as investment banking, law and advertising. We do ask mentors based outside of Manchester to be more flexible with meetings: it may be easier for your mentee to visit you during reading weeks or holidays, for example. If you do find yourself in Manchester, please let your mentee know so that you can co-ordinate a visit. You might also consider less frequent but longer meetings.

## **Where should the meetings take place?**

We do ask that, where possible, you have at least one meeting with your mentee at your place of work. This way you can show your mentee around your offices and introduce them to colleagues. This will help them to get a sense of the company culture. Subsequent meetings should take place at mutually convenient places. We do have meeting rooms available at the Careers Service, and these can be booked by contacting Miriam O'Neill by telephone: 0161 275 2828, or via email: [miriam'o'neill@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:miriam'o'neill@manchester.ac.uk)

## **What if my work commitments change and I no longer have time for the programme?**

Manchester Gold requires a very small time commitment, so in most cases you should be able to continue with the programme. If you are struggling with time pressure, you could discuss ways of continuing the relationship that demand less time. E-mentoring, for example, means that you don't have to be available at a mutually convenient time and you can respond to queries when it suits you. However, if you really feel you can no longer commit to the programme, please contact Anna Lomas by telephone: 0161 275 2828 as soon as possible.

# THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART

The programme simply could not run without your involvement. We are very grateful for your support and hope that you will enjoy a successful mentoring experience in 2012.

Our mentors can benefit in many ways:

- Engaging in CPD by developing new skills, such as coaching
- Giving something back to the undergraduate community, sharing knowledge & expertise
- Talent spotting for future recruits
- Raising their profile as a supportive and accessible organisation
- Gaining an understanding about today's graduates, their expectations & abilities
- Interacting with fellow mentors, building networks and sharing best practice.
- Reaching specific target groups of interest to their organisations

## Previous Mentor Feedback

'I have broadened my understanding of the student job market currently as well as the perceptions students have about the impact of the economic situation. I have also developed my coaching style to ensure I am motivating my mentee to take action towards achieving his goal'. **Graduate Recruitment Manager, Lloyds TSB**

'I have developed my coaching skills, being better able to facilitate my mentee coming up with authentic answers for herself, than just providing them'. **Apprentice Manager, BT**

## Nia and Victoria

Manchester Gold Team 2014/2015