

## Things to do with your scheme...

The outline of a model Peer Mentor scheme will have given you the basic structure to your year, but over the next few pages you'll be able to read in much more detail about the events you can run, plus a number of additional things you can do with your Mentors and first years will be outlined.

**FRESHERS WEEK** is when all the new first year students arrive at the University - the perfect opportunity for your Peer Mentoring scheme to start the year with a bang!



The focus of Peer Mentoring activity in Freshers' Week is generally on **induction** - lots of schemes run things like **campus tours, welcome parties** and **'meet the mentor' events** designed to help the new students to settle in to life at the University and on your course.

You should look to hold a short talk which introduces your scheme and allow time for Mentors to meet their mentees. **Email addresses** or other contact details **must** be exchanged so that all parties involved can get in contact with one another. Events such as meals out give further opportunity for first years to talk to their Mentors and one another – the Curry Mile is often a great place to do this as many of the restaurants can accommodate large numbers of people and will often do a good deal on prices.

Coordinators and mentors really can be as **creative** as they wish when designing induction activities - anything that helps the new students make friends and feel happy in their new environment is a winner!

Despite Fresher's Week being a great time for introductions, things thrown at them in Fresher's Week so use October as a time to remind your mentees who you are and what you're there for.



**Coordinators should bear in mind that these events can take a while to organise and get put on your discipline's Freshers' Week timetable - so start planning early!**

### SEMESTER ONE

Although Freshers' week is often the most hectic time of the year for Mentor Schemes there are so many things that can be done throughout the year. Throughout the first semester the Mentor Scheme may want to run a **book sale**, or focus on areas such as **first essays** and **exam preparation** by holding a **workshop**.

**Drop-in sessions** and **workshops** are a great way for Peer Mentoring schemes to provide invaluable support to first year students on a **range of issues**. Mentees will be experiencing University essays for the first time around reading week and



University exams for the first time around January time so may need extra support in preparing for these, maybe in terms of **study skills** or even just to ask a few practical questions. This is somewhere where the Peer Mentoring scheme can help. Mentors should be involved in publicising and running the session.

**The Student Coordinator must liaise with the Staff Coordinator to see which modules (if any) require a service of this kind. Once identified, the input of the lead academic for that module should be sought, the location and timing arranged, followed by publicising the session. Make sure the session is relevant and useful - always ask if you'd have attended if it were on offer in your first year!**

**ACCOMMODATION** is often one of the most exciting, yet stressful aspects of first year, and one of the biggest decisions that first years will need to make.

It may be of great help to students on your course to hold a mentor-run **accommodation talk** at this time, and possibly invite **Manchester Student Homes** along to say a few words. It is a good opportunity for mentees to ask their mentors about their **own experiences** of and tips for house hunting! Many schemes find it useful to collaborate with one another to arrange these kinds of events. Sabbaticals will work to put the contacts in place to allow you to easily work together with each other.



**Considerations here are timing, location, publicity, staff approval, and liaising with external speakers.**

### **SOCIAL EVENTS**

Involving Mentors and Mentees should be happening throughout the year and can take a number of different formats - **coffee mornings, cinema trips, bar crawls** or **bowling trips** for example. The more you manage to get your Mentors and Mentees together, the stronger their relationship will be. These could be events organised by you, or your Mentors can invite their Mentees out on a smaller scale.



**The principles for arranging an activity are very similar:**

- Will the activity be suitable for all the students?
- Will the mentees be able to see the benefit of the activity?
- Is there any funding available?
- How is the event going to be publicised?
- Is there a realistic timescale?
- Are people likely to attend?

Funding is available when organising events so make sure you ask your sabbatical how you get

your hands on some extra money to help you out!

## SEMESTER TWO



**PRE – ARRIVAL GUIDES** are mentor-written booklets which aim to provide a **student friendly perspective on life at the University** by covering topics that prospective students will find useful, relevant and of interest - content typically includes things like an introduction to the Peer Mentoring scheme, Mentor Profiles, hints and tips for first years on your course, a round up of Manchester nightlife, and details of support services available.

The guides are **sent out to students over the summer period**, and the consistent praise they receive from the first years highlight them as a resource that all Peer Mentoring schemes should endeavour to publish.

**Coordinators and Mentors should work together from Easter onwards to produce the booklets, which need to be finalised and printed by mid-July.**

## RECRUITMENT

March is the best time for recruitment for the next academic year, as this is when training of new mentors occurs. Mentors and Coordinators should publicise the training sessions via email, posters, and sign-up sheets. Some schemes even hold Q&A sessions so people can find out what mentoring involves.



**Mentors will have to go through training so you will need to make sure you liaise with your staff coordinator and sabbatical to make sure they are allocated a place.**

## END OF YEAR

It's nice to **round off the year** for the mentees. Some mentors say goodbye with a BBQ, others with a **coffee**, and some **just with an email**.

Another option is that of an **end of year ball**. Some disciplines have societies that arrange these already, but where not, the mentor scheme may choose to arrange something.



These require **massive planning and organisation** - so make sure you're committed to the project - but the hard work is always worth it in the end! Once again these may be good places to **collaborate** with other schemes – this will ensure more thorough **organisation** and a greater **turn-out**.

**As a coordinator you might consider applying for funding for such an event, to subsidise the cost to students. Again the usual event planning considerations (above) apply.**