



# MENTOR GUIDE



TOWER HAMLETS COLLEGE  
MENTORING  
PROGRAMME



removing barriers, raising achievement for everyone



**CONTENTS**

**WELCOME**  
 Introduction to mentoring..... 2  
 How does mentoring work? ..... 4

**GETTING STARTED**  
 Definitions and roles ..... 6  
 Frequently Asked Questions ..... 8

**THE FIRST MEETING**  
 Preparation ..... 12  
 Content..... 13  
 Ending the session ..... 13

**ACTIVITIES**  
 What our mentors and mentees say ..... 16  
 Outline of the mentoring process..... 17

# Welcome to mentoring at Tower Hamlets College

The word ‘mentor’ derives from Homer’s classic, *The Odyssey*, in which Odysseus, off to war, left his son Telemachus in the care and guidance of his trusted friend, Mentor.

Mentor is now used to describe *someone who has a guiding, supporting, protecting and coaching role.*

A mentor may be someone who has been specifically allocated the role of adviser and role model. The term ‘mentoring’ has been coined to describe the formalisation of this kind of relationship.

We have seen an explosion of mentoring programmes around the country in the last ten years. Mentoring has become a proven way to increase the performance and fulfil the potential of protégés and to help them to raise and realise their aspirations.

**Thank you for being a part of this realisation.**

## a mentee perspective

“My mentor has helped me a lot by helping me plan for the future, she has helped me grow in confidence and is a very understanding person. I have benefited from meeting new people from her firm and have also had the opportunity to develop my networking skills which has well equipped me in my job search skills.”

**Hena Begum,**  
 Business Administration student

## a mentor perspective

“Mentoring secondary school and College students is one of Deloitte’s core volunteer projects as part of the firm’s Community Investment Programme. It is one of the most popular projects and the feedback we get from both mentors and students is extremely positive. In our last evaluation, 98% of our mentors would recommend the mentoring scheme to a colleague.

It benefits the students as they can talk to an adult, who is not a teacher or parent, about their studies and ideas for the future and benefits our mentors by developing their counselling, coaching and listening skills.”

**Jane Mortimore, Community Investment, Deloitte**



The THC Mentoring Programme is one practical way of turning the rhetoric of our mission into a reality for individual students.

The Mentoring Programme is designed to help students realise their potential through the ongoing support, advice and encouragement of a role model. Mentors share their experiences and understanding to help students develop the skills, behaviour and attitudes necessary to succeed in their career goals.

The Programme also aims to raise the motivation of students and combat social and educational exclusion. We hope to provide an enjoyable experience for all participants in the Programme.

# INTRODUCTION TO MENTORING

Tower Hamlets College mission:

**removing barriers, raising achievement for everyone**

## We offer students the following opportunities:

- to meet a role model outside a direct learning or accountability structure
- to undertake voluntary partnerships and extra-curricular activities that will enhance their job prospects and/or university applications
- to gain advice and support from someone outside the College system
- to gain insight into the world of work
- to build self-confidence by raising career aspirations and broadening horizons

## We offer mentors the following opportunities:

- to develop personal transferable skills relevant to the workplace
- to increase understanding of the local community and a chance to give something back
- to gain personal satisfaction and insight through supporting a mentee
- to promote their company and enhance its image
- to gain insight into the issues facing young people today
- to be a role model
- to motivate and support a young person to raise their level of attainment and fulfil their full potential

## It is also our long-term goal to promote the benefits of mentoring and working with others to set standards at a local and national level by:

- developing excellent training packages including adaptable materials of the highest standard
- forging long-term vibrant links with local and national press and other media
- creating and implementing flexible and transparent quality assurance and best practice systems
- involving participant consultation at all levels

# HOW DOES MENTORING WORK?



We bring students from Tower Hamlets College into contact with professionals from across diverse sectors and industries.

Students will have the opportunity to directly find out about the practical aspects of the world of work, how to make contacts and networks and gain useful inside information from people who know the market they want to enter.

The programme is available to all students across all college centres and courses. Students meet with mentors at mutually arranged times and we recommend an hour every month or so.

We hope the relationship will last one academic year beginning in September but students can get involved in the middle of the year too.

#### What will mentoring involve?

- mentors and mentees meet once every month
- at the meeting mentees generally talk about their College work and academic goals
- mentors and mentees can meet at College, outside College, or at the mentor's workplace
- students can choose to be mentored one-to-one, in a pair or in a larger group

#### Mentors will be asked:

- to meet regularly with the mentee over a period of six months to a year (or until the student leaves the College)
- to provide objective support and guidance to the mentee according to the mentee's aspirations and career plans
- to ensure that the meeting place is safe and accessible
- to be accessible and reachable at work

#### Profile of our Students

There are five common groups of students at the College that are targeted for mentoring:

- A level students
- Adult students
- Entry level students
- Refugee students
- Vocational students

#### Support from the College

The College will provide ongoing support throughout your mentoring relationship.

We will help by:

- arranging and co-ordinating meetings between mentors and mentees, if required
- providing advice and support whenever necessary
- providing training for our mentors and mentees
- providing a venue for mentor and mentee meeting
- providing a three way meeting at the beginning and end of the mentoring relationship



## getting started

# DEFINITIONS AND ROLES

**Mentor** A person who motivates, guides, advises and befriends another (usually younger) person.

**Mentee** Also called mentoree or protégé. A person who has the support of a mentor.

**Mentoring** The process by which a mentor provides encouragement, guidance and advice in order to develop the potential and improve the performance of a mentee, raise their self-confidence and help them to develop certain skills, behaviour and attitudes. These may be in the arenas of education, business or personal development.

### The mentoring process may consist of:

- the mentee talking about current, personal issues and receiving feedback
- the mentor providing specific advice, for example, on university applications or what a certain profession is actually like, based on their own knowledge and personal experiences
- the mentor giving constructive feedback on the mentee's activities and progress
- visiting and sharing ideas and attitudes about places of interest and inspiration

A mentor is not expected to replace the role of a careers officer, a teacher, or a doctor. If a mentee requires the services of these people, the mentor will be supported in sign-posting them. Mentors are expected to bring advice that is personal and not professional.

### Roles, rights and responsibilities

- the relationship between mentor and mentee is based on mutual respect
- the role of the mentor is to support the mentee's needs, respond to the mentee's aspirations and career plans and make recommendations
- the mentee should respond to the mentor's suggestions seriously and may choose not to follow any given advice
- we ask that mentor and mentees meet once a month. The College will help to arrange the meetings, if required
- both mentee and mentor have the right to keep discussion of their private lives out of the mentoring relationship
- disclosure of private addresses/phone numbers is at the discretion of the mentor or mentee
- either the mentor or mentee may choose to end the relationship at any time, although we would hope that they would have discussed the situation with each other and the Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator
- both mentor and mentee have the right to be aware of and use the College's complaints procedure
- all mentors are required to undergo a background check by the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau)





## getting started

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How flexible are the meeting times?

Meeting times are arranged to suit you and your mentee. It is a good idea to always have the next two meeting times agreed. Ideally a meeting should last between one and two hours. If you are unable to attend, please try to rearrange a meeting rather than cancel. You don't have to stick to a strict three/four week schedule if this is inconvenient. It is more important that the times are convenient for you.

### What are the minimum and maximum lengths of commitment?

We do not specify a minimum or maximum length of time. Our recommendation is that one academic year is the most fruitful and satisfying commitment for both parties. This usually means from September to June or until the exam season, but the process can start or stop at any time of the year. Continuing the mentoring relationship with the same student for the next academic year is always a good idea if the mentoring is going well.

### What kind of training is available?

We ask you to attend a two hour training session before you begin mentoring. The session covers listening skills, giving constructive feedback and facilitation. If you are an experienced mentor and have attended training in the past, this training will not be necessary.

### What am I expected to achieve with the mentee?

When you begin mentoring, we hope you will follow some of our tips in this guide. We would hope that you discuss what it is that you both want to gain from the experience. You are not expected to transform your mentee! Very often the mentee's objective may be to increase their level of confidence or find encouragement and support to pursue a certain profession.

### What do I do if my mentee asks to borrow money?

In this unlikely event, say no! Mentees are aware that this is inappropriate. If it is helpful, refer them to us or tell them it is against the Mentoring Programme Policy.

### What can I personally expect to gain from Mentoring?

Whatever you set out to achieve — this could include:

- developing leadership skills
- developing interpersonal skills
- the opportunity to learn about different cultures and groups of people
- personal satisfaction through helping a mentee to achieve
- increasing your own self-confidence and self-esteem

### How will I know if what I am doing is useful?

You are encouraged to talk to your Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator to share information about his/her progress. You will have the opportunity to participate in evaluative exercises. The Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator will regularly evaluate the progress of students and will keep mentors updated.

### What do I do if my mentee misses our appointment?

In our mentee inductions, the mentees are made aware of the inconvenience that can be caused by missing appointments. Please call one of the Mentoring Team should this happen. If the reason for missing the appointment is unsatisfactory, the student will receive a warning and we will do our best to ensure that this does not happen again. Measures we can take include confirming attendance with the mentee beforehand and accompanying them to the place of the meeting.

### What do I do in the event my mentee discloses something serious?

Disclosures are very unusual. They include a young person confiding in you about abuse or serious problems with friends or family or involvement in crime. In the event of a disclosure, please phone a member of the Mentoring Team straight away for your own support and peace of mind. Confidentiality in this situation is at your discretion.



## getting started

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What happens if I need to cancel a meeting?

We understand that sometimes you will face time constraints or other difficulties that mean you have to cancel meetings. This is fine. Please let your mentee know as soon as possible. We will be happy to relay the message to them if you cannot contact them in time yourself.

### Where can we meet?

Please refer to 'Activities' in this guide for examples of places to meet. Remember that you can always meet at the College, where we can book rooms for you.

### Am I expected to provide work or work experience?

No. However we do encourage mentors to invite their mentees into their place of work. Work experience and work shadowing is great mentoring activity if it is possible. The students have been briefed that work experience is not the purpose of mentoring and if you can offer a short experience of this kind it will be a bonus.

### Who am I accountable to?

Ultimately you and your mentee are accountable to each other. However, the Mentoring Team takes responsibility for the matching process and supporting the mentoring activity. Please keep in contact and let us know how things are going.

### What do I do if my mentee and I are not getting on?

The first step is to discuss the situation between yourselves and work out why you are not getting along. Changing targets, meeting times and venues may improve the situation. If this does not help, it is important that you let us know immediately. We may be able to help. If not, we will endeavour to place both of you with another partner.

### What is the procedure if I cannot continue mentoring?

We value the time you put into mentoring, but also recognise that other commitments may take precedence. You may end the mentoring relationship at any time. Please talk to your mentee first and let us know as soon as possible.

### What happens at the end of the year?

If you wish, you may continue your mentoring relationship with your mentee into the next academic year, provided they are still a student at the College, or you may choose to mentor a different student for the next year.

After the mentoring relationship has ended, it is up to you how your personal relationship continues. Some mentors form friendships and keep in touch with their ex-mentees. We hope you will want to continue mentoring with a new student. You can build a network of people you have encouraged and helped.





# THE FIRST MEETING

## Preparation

### Try to memorise your mentee's name!

This may sound obvious but is very important in inspiring confidence and self-esteem in your mentee.

We will be happy to help you with the correct pronunciation. If you are unsure, please do not hesitate to ring and ask.

## Beginning the session

### Introductions

When introducing yourself, try and give a holistic picture of your life and interests rather than a CV style list of your jobs. The student is likely to be interested in your motivation and the process you went through as much as the activity or job itself.

### Icebreakers

To find out a bit more about each other you can try asking the following questions:

my hobbies are.....

I would like to .....

I enjoy .....

I really love .....

I don't like .....

I really wish that .....

## Beginning the session (continued)

### Mentoring and your objectives

Don't forget to discuss why you are involved in mentoring and what you hope to achieve.

### Encourage your student

Remember that your student will at first be unsure what and how much to reveal about himself or herself. The first meeting will really set the foundation of your relationship, so if you encourage, enquire and show interest, you will be establishing the basis of a relationship developed through trust and friendship. It is a delicate balance. Asking too few questions may suggest lack of interest, asking too many may be intrusive.

### Ask open questions (what, how, where...?)

These help to draw out information and help mentee to talk about themselves.

### Some essential dos and don'ts for mentoring

- take the time to develop a good rapport with your mentee
- be encouraging and positive
- express interest in remembering what your mentee has said and done, as it is one of the best ways of developing trust and a strong relationship
- a mentor and mentee should plan to meet at least once a month
- any information and advice given by mentors will be based on their personal experience and is not intended to replace professional advice where appropriate
- the mentor and mentee should not visit each other's home
- no alcohol should be consumed at meetings between the mentor and mentee
- please contact the Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator if you have anything you would like to discuss about the programme at any time
- meeting record sheets should be completed at the end of each meeting and sent or emailed to the College

## Content

Things that you might want to cover in your first session:

### Confidentiality

You might just want to discuss this informally, talk about what it means and why it is important. Reassure your mentee that everything you share will be confidential. If a student confides in you about an issue, which is very serious, we will support you.

### Goals/targets

On a practical level, what do each of you want to gain from mentoring and when? Find out what your mentee's objectives are.

### Format

How will your sessions work in terms of content? Will they all be talking sessions? Will you meet somewhere to talk and then move on to visiting a venue? Will every other session be at a library to help with College work? Is your mentoring relationship going to be more social or academic or professional?

### Timetable

Most importantly perhaps, you should agree how often and for how long you would like to meet.

## Ending the session

You might want to decide on a topic, plan or agenda for the next session to ensure continuity and prevent uncertainty when you next meet.

It is useful to have action points for both parties, partly for the sake of continuity but also so that both parties feel that they are achieving and contributing. You may decide to set tasks (which may range from finding out information to completing an assignment/application).

**NB: Do not forget to exchange contact details in advance of your first meeting!**



# THE FIRST MEETING

## Conversation ideas

- prepare notes or points you'd like to raise beforehand
- undertake research if you feel your current knowledge is insufficient. This need not be researching for a thesis; for example, if the mentee is choosing between Botany or Pharmacology, your research may be ten minutes on the internet and a couple of print-outs.
- make notes of what you discuss. It is usually appropriate to do this after the session, but that may change as you get to know each other better. Reasons for taking notes include being able to remember what recommendations were made, what action plans were agreed on etc.
- agree on a subject for your next session

Ensure that an action point emerges from your conversation. For example, perhaps your mentee would like to apply for university. You could suggest that your mentee lists the pros and cons of relevant universities through research. Don't forget to allocate some action points for yourself so that the mentee does not feel they are doing all the behind-the-scenes work.

**Good luck and thank you for your participation in the programme.**

## Activities

### Suggested places to go

- Café**
- College library**
- Public library**
- College meeting room**
- Museum**
- Restaurant**
- Cyber-café**
- Park**
- Your place of work**
- Drop-in centre**

### Things to talk about

- Career paths** – How you got to where you are/your mentee's plans
- Higher education** – Why university/which university/which subject? Most students will have very little experience of university and most of their knowledge will come from the prospectuses
- Leadership** – Developing managerial skills, motivation and self-confidence
- Different professions** – Sharing ideas about careers/jobs
- Friends/Family** – Don't be afraid to talk about other personal support networks
- Achievements** – Since your last session
- Planning revision** – Preparing for exams
- Part-time work** – Help them decide what part-time or voluntary work would be helpful and how to find it
- CVs** – Talk your mentee through your CV; what works and what doesn't; help them to draft their own

# WHAT OUR MENTORS AND MENTEES SAY



## What some of our mentors have said:

**James Borley, Financial Services Authority, describes his relation with his mentee:**

“We get on well and find no difficulty establishing rapport and common ground during our meetings. I use mentoring to encourage my mentee to think through problems, offering suggestions rather than solutions, giving my mentee the benefit of my experience.”

**Ben Sills, Euromoney PLC, gave us these reasons for signing up:**

“Tower Hamlets is one of the most interesting parts of London. From my perspective, as a white middle class male working in the city, it is also one of the most inaccessible. The mentoring scheme is a way for me to really engage with, to better understand, and to give something back to the place where I live.”

**Clare Vanstone, Community Affairs Co-ordinator at the Financial Services Authority:**

“(The programme has)... provided training sessions complemented by relevant information... to ensure our staff are prepared for a mentoring role, which can be taxing. These opportunities, so close to our offices, give our employees the opportunity to learn new skills, including communicating with different audiences, leading meetings, tenacity and making an impact. Our staff get a lot of satisfaction from taking part in the programme and learn more about the local community in the process.”

## What some of our mentees have said:

**Sayedun Nessa, Business student**

“My mentor’s support and encouragement provided me with the motivation that I needed to make some important decisions.”

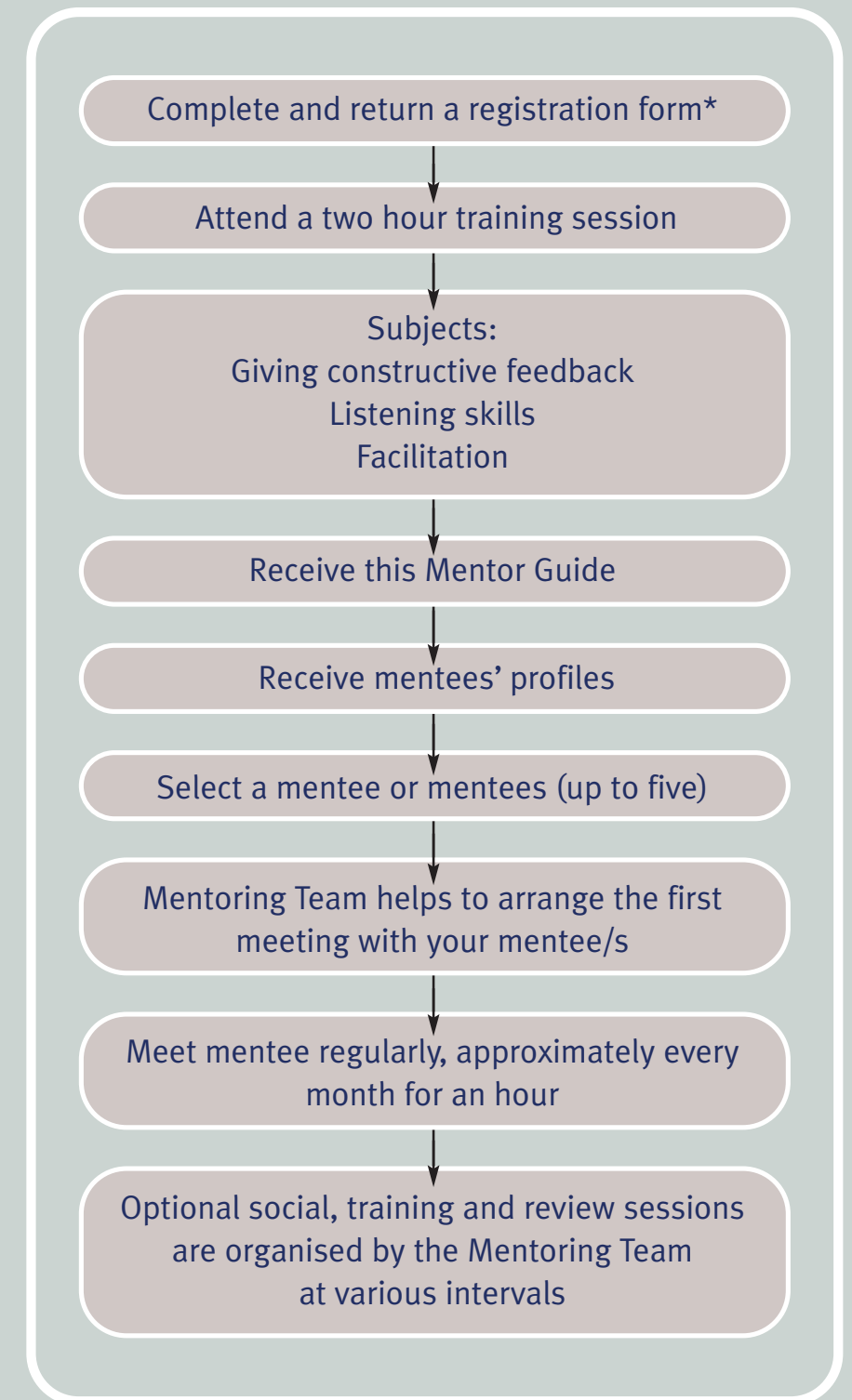
**Joyal, AS level Geography, Computing and Biology student**

“The programme made me grow more confident in doing my College work. It has helped me by letting me know that I have to be serious in getting my assignments and coursework done. My mentor has been there for me, done a lot for me in terms of helping me grow more confident – helping me to see things that I haven’t really thought about or wanted to do before.”

**Shafiqul Islam, A level Maths, Computing and Law student**

“Mentoring has been very useful in helping me decide what I would eventually like to do in the future.”

# OUTLINE OF THE MENTORING PROCESS



\*Registration forms are available online at:  
[www.tower.ac.uk/mentoring](http://www.tower.ac.uk/mentoring)

For further information please contact:

The Mentoring Team  
Employment Solutions  
Tower Hamlets College  
Poplar High Street  
London E14 0AF

Telephone: 020 7510 7755/7754  
Email: [mentoring@tower.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@tower.ac.uk)  
[www.tower.ac.uk/mentoring](http://www.tower.ac.uk/mentoring)

## why mentor at Tower Hamlets College?

“The programme made me grow more confident in doing my College work. It has helped me by giving me a path in letting me know that I have to be serious in getting my assignments and coursework done. My mentor has been there for me, done a lot for me in terms of helping me grow more confident – helping me to see things that I haven’t really thought about or wanted to do before.”

**Joynal, AS level Geography, Computing and Biology student**

“Mentoring secondary school and College students is one of Deloitte’s core volunteer projects as part of the firm’s Community Investment Programme. It is one of the most popular projects and the feedback we get from both mentors and students is extremely positive. In our last evaluation, 98% of our mentors would recommend the mentoring scheme to a colleague. It benefits the students as they can talk to an adult, who is not a teacher or parent, about their studies and ideas for the future and benefits our mentors by developing their counselling, coaching and listening skills.”

**Jane Mortimore, Community Investment, Deloitte**

design: www.realtether.com | photography: lambailey.com (excl. pg. 8 PhotoDisc)

For further information please contact:

The Mentoring Team  
Employment Solutions  
Tower Hamlets College  
Poplar High Street  
London E14 0AF

Telephone: 020 7510 7755/7754  
Email: [mentoring@tower.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@tower.ac.uk)  
[www.tower.ac.uk/mentoring](http://www.tower.ac.uk/mentoring)

