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# Peer Mentoring for Post-Primary Schools

Pupil Handbook





# Mentoring Programmes in Higher Education



# About Peer Mentoring for Post-Primary Schools

Based on our work with schools across the region, Atlantic Technological University Access and Widening Participation Service has produced this resource for schools who deliver peer mentoring programmes. This is part of our work to support individuals from underrepresented groups to access and participate in Higher Education. Mentoring plays an important role in supporting students to progress through their education journey.

This resource aims to provide general guidance to teachers/ staff and pupils in post-primary schools who are involved in peer mentoring in their school. This is provided as a guide only since any decisions concerning peer mentoring programmes in schools rests solely with school management and participating school staff members.

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# Mentoring

**Mentoring is a process that involves one person offering support to another person.**

The person that provides the support is called a mentor and the person that receives the support is called a mentee. The type of supports offered by mentors can include advice, knowledge, skills support and guidance. Mentoring is led by the mentee who decides what goals they would like to achieve as part of the mentoring process. Mentoring is voluntary for everyone.

Mentoring in a higher education context is defined as any process that facilitates someone with lived experience to provide guidance, support and knowledge in a way that allows another person (the mentee) to thrive over time in the mentoring relationship (Brady et al, 2024).

## Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring involves one pupil who has experience in the school supporting a pupil/group of pupils who is/are new to the school. Usually, a peer mentor is a **senior cycle pupil who supports an incoming first-year pupil (mentee)**. Peer mentors provide informal guidance and information to their mentees as they become familiar with their new school. Mentors help their mentees to settle into life at post-primary school by providing them with useful information and advice about their school.

## What does Peer Mentoring involve?

Mentors and mentees meet approximately three times during the school year and discuss topics that the mentee wishes to learn about. In order to make the mentoring partnership as meaningful as possible the mentee, along with their mentor, sets out clear goals that they wish to achieve. It is important that the mentee uses a **Mentoring Action Plan** to keep track of their goals and their plan for achieving these goals. The mentee's Action Plan can be used a guide for what to discuss at the mentoring sessions and it will help you both to stay on track. You will find the template for your action plan on pages 11-13 of this booklet.

# Benefits

## for the Mentee

- Managing a positive mentoring relationship with your mentor
- Helping you to identify your mentoring goals
- Supporting you to achieve your mentoring goals
- Supporting you with adjusting to life at your new school
- Developing knowledge and awareness of your new school
- Learning new skills and qualities

## for the Mentor

- Managing a positive mentoring relationship with your mentee(s)
- Developing your leadership qualities
- Applying your skills such as: communicating, listening, instructing and critical thinking
- Enhancing your employability

# The Role

## of a Mentee is to:

- ✓ Develop my knowledge of my new school
- ✓ Identify some goals that I want to achieve
- ✓ Fill in my Mentoring Action Plan, with the help of my mentor
- ✓ Respect my mentor
- ✓ Meet with my mentor
- ✓ Work to achieve my goals

## of a Mentor is to:

- ✓ Offer support and guidance to my mentee
- ✓ Respect my mentee
- ✓ Meet with my mentee
- ✓ Help my mentee achieve their goals

# Mentoring is not:

## **The same as teaching**

As a mentor you can help your mentee figure out how to achieve their goals. Your job is not to be their teacher.

## **Instant**

It takes time for a mentor and a mentee to get to know each other.

## **Compulsory**

Mentoring is voluntary for both the mentees and mentors.

## **The same as friendship**

You do not need to become friends with your mentor/mentee. It is about sharing experiences, knowledge and skills.

## **About finding faults**

Mentoring should be a positive experience.

# Respect the mentoring boundaries

We all know that a mentoring relationship is based on respect, trust and confidentiality. Here are some boundaries that we think you should all respect:

## **Contact**

Be very clear about how you will contact each other for mentoring purposes (e.g. in-person meetings in a public place in your school). Mentors do not need to be available for their mentees all the time.

## **Mentoring Sessions:**

Select public places for meetings such as the school canteen or common room. Your teacher/staff member who is the leading the mentoring programme in your school will advise you on the most suitable locations for your meetings as well as your meeting schedules.

## **Relationships**

There is always an element of power involved in mentoring. Mentors and mentees cannot enter into romantic and/or physical relationships.

## **Other services:**

Please remember that as a mentor you cannot solve all of the mentees issues/challenges/problems. You can direct your mentee to a particular service within the school whenever appropriate.

## **Privacy**

Respect your each other's right to privacy and confidentiality.

## **Support for Mentors**

Avail of the supports for mentors provided by your school and by ATU.

# Contact

If at any point you have concerns about the mentoring partnership or would like to reconsider your role in the mentoring programme, please contact your teacher who is leading the mentoring programming in your school.

My teacher's name:	
How do I contact my teacher:	

# Tips for Mentoring

- 1. Establish your ground rules and boundaries (mentors and mentees)
- 2. Agree your goals from the start of the mentoring process
- 3. Let the mentee lead the mentoring programme
- 4. Become familiar with the different services offered by your school
- 5. Be consistent and reliable
- 6. Be prepared and open-minded for your meetings
- 7. Ensure all sessions are positive
- 8. Review your progress at the start of each session
- 9. Record your thoughts in a Mentoring Journal

# Mentoring Activities

There are many activities you can do with your new mentee, depending on what is permitted within your own school. Here is a list of some simple activities that we think might be a fun and helpful place to start.

**Please note:** We recommend these activities take place on school grounds under the supervision of a teacher/staff member. Please remember, your teacher has the final say and has your best interest at heart.

- Icebreaker activities
- Playing sport
- Playing cards / board games
- Sharing skills e.g. completing a Rubik's cube
- Walking activities on school grounds
- Provide a tour of the school
- Share useful study tips with your mentee
- Visit the Library in your school
- Help your mentee use the computers/digital tools in the school

# Ethical Guidelines and Standards

The mentor and the mentee should always try to keep the mentoring relationship positive and helpful. Before the mentoring programme starts, the mentor and mentee, with their teacher(s) should agree on the format of the mentoring sessions. This includes what you will do in the mentoring sessions, how often you will meet and how long each session will last.

## Confidentiality

The mentor and mentee must respect each other’s privacy. If you hear sensitive or private information about your mentor/mentee then you must keep this confidential. However, if you think that the mentor/mentee needs urgent help you can seek advice from your teacher/staff member who is leading the mentoring programme in your school.

## Boundaries

Do not cross the boundaries of the mentoring relationship. This includes forming inappropriate friendships and romantic/physical relationships. Mentors, please remember that you are not expected to be teachers or counsellors to your mentees. If anything becomes too much for you to cope with please contact your teacher/ staff member who is leading the mentoring programme in your school. Filling in your mentoring journal can help you to keep boundaries in check.

## Disclaimer

*These guidelines are a reference only as regarding the type of dilemmas and/or issues you may come across whilst you are involved in mentoring. It is not legal advice. Always ensure adherence to school/centre policies.*

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## Declaration

I have read the above information with my Mentor/Mentee/Teacher and I agree to uphold these Ethical standards.

Signed: (Mentor/Mentee)	Date:
Signed: (Parent/Guardian)	Date:
Signed: (Teacher/Staff Member)	Date:

# Mentoring Action Plan

Details:	Meeting 1	
Name of Mentee		
Name of Mentor		
Date of Meeting		
Location of Meeting		
Action Plan		
My goals are:	I will achieve these goals by:	Timeframe
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Date of Next meeting		
Points to discuss at next meeting		
What am I achieving?		

\* The above template is a guideline for you. For example, you may have 10 smaller, short-term goals or 3 larger long-term goals you wish to focus on. You will decide on the number of goals at your first meeting with your mentor.

# Mentoring Action Plan

Details:	Meeting 2	
Name of Mentee		
Name of Mentor		
Date of Meeting		
Location of Meeting		
Action Plan		
My goals are:	I will achieve these goals by:	Timeframe
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Date of Next meeting		
Points to discuss at next meeting		
What am I achieving?		

# Mentoring Action Plan

Details:	Meeting 3	
Name of Mentee		
Name of Mentor		
Date of Meeting		
Location of Meeting		
Action Plan		
My goals are:	I will achieve these goals by:	Timeframe
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Date of Next meeting		
Points to discuss at next meeting		
What am I achieving?		

# Mentor/Mentee self-evaluation

Congratulations on completing the peer mentoring programme!  
Now it's time to reflect on all the great work you have done as a mentor or a mentee.

Question:	Answers
I learned	(e.g. skills, qualities, information, something about myself, etc.)
Next time what I would do differently is:	
The best part of being involved in a peer mentoring programme is:	

# Sample Peer Mentor Application Form

## (Post-Primary Pupils)

Personal	
Name	
School	
Year	
Your school email (if applicable):	
Mentor or mentee?	
Why would you like to become a peer mentor?	
What do you think the role of a mentor should be?	
<b>Further details</b> These details will help us match the mentees and mentors. Providing these details to us is voluntary. Fill in as much or as little information as you would like.	
Age:	Gender:
Interests/hobbies:	
What skills and/or qualities do you feel that you have to fulfil this role?	



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# Access and Widening Participation Services

The Access & Widening Participation Service supports individuals from marginalised backgrounds to access and participate in higher education. We work with all education providers, community and advocacy groups, and prospective and registered students. Our supports include:

## Who We Support

**HEAR**

**Traveller  
and Roma  
Community**

**Carers**

**Mature**

**Single  
Parent**

**People with  
Convictions**

**QQI/FET**

**Care of  
the State**

**International  
Protection**

# What We Support

## Access Pathways

- Access Programmes
- HEAR Admissions
- Mature Entry
- Further Education Entry

## Financial Support

- Student Assistance Fund
- Laptop Loan Scheme
- Scholarships
- SUSI Advice
- Financial Readiness for Life

## Outreach Opportunities

- Campus Visits
- Taster Sessions
- Open Days
- Mentoring
- Application Support
- Community and Advocacy Groups

# Contact us

## Donegal campuses

T: +353 (0) 74 9186170  
E: [access.donegal@atu.ie](mailto:access.donegal@atu.ie)

## Sligo campus

T: +353 (0) 71 9305417  
E: [access.sligo@atu.ie](mailto:access.sligo@atu.ie)

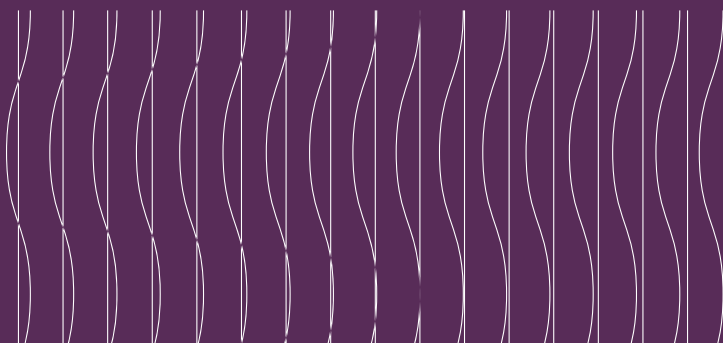
## Galway and Mayo campuses

T: +353 (0) 91 742598  
E: [ap.galwaymayo@atu.ie](mailto:ap.galwaymayo@atu.ie)

## St Angelas campus

T: +353 (0) 71 9179516  
E: [access.stangelas@atu.ie](mailto:access.stangelas@atu.ie)

Scan Here



## Mentoring for Access and Widening Participation



CREATING  
PATHWAYS  
TO HIGHER  
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A joint Higher Education Cluster Access Project between  
Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and University of Galway.



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