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## Data Protection

Both mentors and mentees must act in accordance with the University’s Code of Practice on Data Protection. Contact details and personal information must be treated as confidential unless there is a risk to the well-being of yourself or others. If you feel uncomfortable or worried about information disclosed to you please contact your co-ordinator.

Where you have provided personal information, the University will use this for administration purposes only. If you have concerns with regard to the use of your personal information please contact the University lawyer on 0113 343 4079.
The peer mentoring programme at Leeds is designed to help new students settle into university life by providing signposting and assistance through peer mentoring. Each group is made up of four to six new students (mentees) and two existing students (mentors) who are able to share the information they gained during their first year.

Many students will benefit from the programme, both as mentors and mentees. The aim of this booklet is to explain your role as a mentor and to act as a useful reference.

Peer mentors are volunteer undergraduate students in their 2nd or 3rd year who have undergone training to help equip them for their role. They are normally matched with a small group of first year students from their own department and where possible, from the same course.

The programme is administered by a co-ordinator in the academic school.

Peer Mentoring Aims

- To assist a smooth transition to the University by giving new undergraduate students the opportunity to meet with current students in the same academic school, during their first year.

- To provide students with the skills and information they need to help fellow students settle in.

- To help new students feel an early sense of belonging to their peer group, school and the University.

- To ensure that there is always somewhere to go for information and assistance.

- To contribute to developing an excellent supportive environment by utilising our most valuable resource, students.
Guidelines for Mentors

Do…
- arrange to meet your mentees in a group following your initial introduction meeting
- ask about their experience to date, of living and studying in Leeds
- find out if they have been oriented and had a tour of campus, this might be something you can do together, in which case find out where their school is (if appropriate) and which things they are particularly interested in seeing

Don’t…
- turn into a counsellor – if necessary refer them to the Student Counselling Centre or the appropriate support
- as part of your mentoring role, meet your mentees “one to one” outside of the mentee group
- guarantee outcomes like “this will happen” or “you’ll be fine”
- be overbearing, your mentee is the decision maker, you are the guide
- impose your own ideas, values or solutions
- encourage dependency or over-commit yourself time wise
- overstep the boundaries of your role by giving guidance or advice

Boundaries
- always contact your mentee and the co-ordinator via your university email account or mobile phone
- always meet on university premises or in a public area
- never give out personal details such as your address or landline phone number
- all discussions are confidential between group members, unless there is a risk to well-being
- if you feel that your mentee needs support which falls outside your role of mentor, encourage the mentee to seek appropriate help

Further support
- always inform the co-ordinator about any problems and/or changes in contact details
- if you have any concerns about information disclosed to you, speak to your co-ordinator
- if you have any need for further help or guidance, or wish to discuss any aspect of the programme, please contact your co-ordinator

Note: mentors should be aware of both the expectations and limitations of their role. They are NOT expected to “do it all” but they ARE expected to know where and who to refer to.

Mentors are NOT counsellors, social workers, financial advisers or academic tutors.
**Mentors’ Questions**

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<td>What will I be expected to do?</td>
<td>The role of a mentor is to help make the transition to university life as easy and enjoyable as possible so think about the things you were concerned about when you arrived as a new student. Share your experience with new students. Think of a plan with your other mentor – you could arrange a tour of the campus which shows them short cuts or the cheapest place to get sandwiches. For example, let them know which bus goes closest to the train station or the bus station and which taxi rank telephone number is useful to have in their mobile phone.</td>
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<td>When will I find out who my mentees are?</td>
<td>After a potential student has accepted a place at Leeds they will be sent an application form to join the programme. Students wishing to join will usually complete and return these to the University before the beginning of term. In the first few weeks of term your faculty will arrange the mentoring groups and your first introductory event, where you will meet your mentees.</td>
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<td>Will it involve a lot of my time?</td>
<td>Being able to manage your time is an important skill that you develop whilst at university and moving into your second or final year the amount of academic work you take on will no doubt increase. The programme is ‘front loaded’ with initial introductions and early meetings - after that the amount of time you put into it is up to you. For the programme to be successful there has to be time and effort invested by all involved. You will learn how to manage any time issues about your relationship with your mentees in the same way you do with your personal friends or other students on your course – the programme is designed as an exciting opportunity – not a burden!</td>
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<td>Can I be paired up with a friend?</td>
<td>We can arrange for you to be paired with a friend if you prefer. It can help make the role easier if you have someone with you that you know well, but you may want to take the opportunity of being a mentor to meet new people and make new friends. Its important to be friendly and accessible so don’t let your friendship with your fellow mentor make your mentees feel excluded!</td>
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<td>What happens if I don’t get on with my mentees?</td>
<td>The programme is designed as a two (mentors) to many (4-6 mentees) to try to reduce the difficulties faced when people don’t get on with each other. It helps to think about mentoring as an opportunity to broaden your skills and experiences and being able to get on with all sorts of people is an important skill. We would encourage you to work to resolve any difficulties and problems, but would try to re-allocate participants if the relationship just isn’t working.</td>
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<td>What will I get out of it?</td>
<td>Being a mentor will help your personal development and can provide evidence of the skills you have built up, like time management, organisational and communication skills. You will be awarded a certificate by the university acknowledging your involvement in the scheme and all this extra-curricular activity will look really good on your CV.</td>
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What Students Say . . .

**Mentees**

“I think the scheme is a fantastic idea”

“My mentors were very friendly and willing to chat about issues such as housing which in the second year is invaluable”

“What I found particularly useful was that my mentors were doing a similar course so I could ask them questions about the course, not just about Uni.”

“Mentors are brilliant, they are down to earth and very approachable”

“University is a massive step in anyone’s life, so any extra help that can be available can only be positive”

“I think it’s really important to help first years to settle in and to have someone to talk to on the same course can really help”

“I found it difficult in my first year, especially felt that there was nobody to get in touch with for small queries so thought this was a good idea”

**Mentors**

“It was good to socialise with people and hear their reflections on university life. Being a mentor has also shown me how much I have learned about Leeds and the university since I was a fresher”

“I want to work with people when I leave university, so thought it would be good on my CV”

“I had a peer mentor when I started university and found it very useful so I thought I would do the same to help others feel welcome”

“The training was excellent, really informative and eliminated any fears from the start”

“I think the scheme is a good thing, especially for overseas students to make them feel welcome”
International Student Mentees

If a member or member(s) of your group are international students you may find the following information helpful:

As a mentor you are using your experiences of living and studying in Leeds to help new students. International students, who are trying to adjust to living and studying in a new country and culture, may need help with:

- language and communication
- UK study methods (e.g. independent study)
- the rules of academic conduct (e.g. plagiarism)
- where to find information on University rules and regulations
- the degree of formality between academic staff and students
- students’ union matters
- student societies
- where and how to socialise
- how to make UK friends
- how to find their way around Leeds
- UK social rules and behaviour
- British food, climate and dress

Discussing ‘what is usual’ and ‘how things work’ in the UK and in your mentee’s country and culture is a great way of helping your mentee recognise, understand and cope with adjusting to these differences. Why not go through the International Student Handbook with your mentee to find out which questions they have about living and studying in Leeds. The guide is available on-line at www.leeds.ac.uk/international and from the International Student Office.

You should NOT provide information or advice on:

- immigration
- UK regulations
- university procedures
- students’ entitlements

If your mentee needs help which you cannot or should not provide, and you are not sure where to refer them, please encourage them to visit the International Student Office.

Support for mentors:

The International Student Office also provides support to those working with international students. So if you have an international mentee and would like to talk to someone about how best to help them, please visit the International Student Office to speak to one of the team. The office is located at 18 Blenheim Terrace (across the road from the Parkinson Building and near Blackwell’s Bookshop) and is open Monday to Friday 10.00 to 15.30.