



Career mentoring

Connect to a world of expertise

Alumni mentee handbook

Welcome to Career mentoring at Cranfield

Thank you for your interest in joining Cranfield's Career mentoring programme. We know that after you have completed your studies, navigating the job market and deciding on your next steps in your career can be difficult. That is why we have launched the Career mentoring programme for alumni. Whether you are looking for a job, trying to understand how to move up the career ladder, or change your career path - working with a mentor can help you to achieve your ambitions.

Taking part in the programme has many benefits and working with an alumni mentor can help you to:

- Explore career paths in particular industries or professions.
- Develop your work-related and career management skills.
- Connect with fellow alumni and build an effective professional network.

Cranfield's Career mentoring programme is led by the Alumni Relations and Development team and the Career Development Service, and we are here to support you. If you have any questions that are not answered in this handbook, please visit our [mentoring web pages](#) on the alumni website or [email us](#).

You can access the mentoring programme through the Cranfield Careers portal, [Simplicity](#). Once you are registered and logged in you will be able to review the profiles of alumni mentors to gather insight into their careers and how they may be able to support you.

How can a mentor help you?

Taking part in the Career mentoring programme will allow you to explore a particular profession or employment area, develop work-related skills and confidence, and connect with relevant professionals to build effective networks to help you progress in your career. There are a variety of ways in which mentors can support you, below is a list of potential topics.

Building confidence	Interview preparation	Organisational skills
Career change	Job hunting methods	Resilience
Career pathways	Making new contacts	Role knowledge
CV reviews	Negotiation - including remuneration packages	Sector knowledge
Employability	Networking	Setting goals
Industry knowledge	Organisational knowledge and culture	Time management

Please note, a mentor will provide you with guidance and advice relating to their own expertise and experience - it is not their role or responsibility to find you a job.

Why should I take part in the programme?

The career mentoring programme is an opportunity to learn from a Cranfield graduate who has 'been there and done that' and benefit from their insight and experience.

The programme could help you to:

- Develop your career management skills.
- Gain insights on the skills and qualities required for specific careers.
- Enhance your employability skills.
- Expand your personal networks.
- Increase your self-confidence and resilience.

How does the Career mentoring programme work?

There is no set time commitment for a mentoring relationship – each is unique and depends on the requirements of the mentee and the relationship with the mentor. You might be looking for advice on a specific issue, where you would like regular advice over a short time frame. Or, you might be looking for somebody to provide you with advice over a longer period – such as six months to a year. As a result, it is important to set the expectations on both sides during the first communications.

Should you wish to continue the relationship after you have completed your initial objectives please discuss this with your mentor - it is up to the mentor and mentee to jointly decide if they want to continue the relationship.



How to get started



Choosing a mentor

It is important that you consider what advice you are looking for when choosing a mentor - just because somebody is a CEO doesn't mean they are the right person to be your mentor. Think about the sector, industry, or job role you are looking for - either now or in the future - and review the mentor profiles to see who closely matches your learning requirements.

Once you have selected a mentor, contact your potential mentor explaining why you have chosen to approach them as a mentor. This will help the mentor reflect on how they can advise you and if they are the right person to be your mentor.

If the mentor doesn't feel they can support or advise you in the area you need, please approach another mentor in the programme. If you would like some advice on how to phrase your request to a mentor please contact the **Career Development Service**.

If a mentor decides to support you it is your responsibility to:

- Drive the mentoring processes by arranging meetings, communicating with them, and agreeing your objectives with them.
- Keep your own notes on the meetings.
- Be open to ideas and feedback.
- Create an action plan and implement ideas to improve your employability and career prospects.

Top tips for getting the most out of mentoring

Each mentoring relationship is different, and when you first contact a mentor it is important to share information and set expectations from the beginning.

If you are new to mentoring, below are some points that you may wish to consider.

- **Be transparent in your communications** - Be clear about the advice and guidance you are asking for, and give your mentor some background information about yourself.
- **Share how you want to communicate** – Would you like to communicate by phone, email, video call, or another method? Let your mentor know how often you would like to be in contact with them.

Once the mentoring relationship has begun:

- **Keep lines of communication open** – Ensure you communicate clearly with each other. If a life event or work deadline impacts your ability to complete your agreed actions or attend a meeting, let them know.
- **Be professional** – Be professional and responsible in both your actions and communications. Prepare for meetings and keep commitments. Your mentoring relationship should have clear boundaries regarding responsibilities and commitments.
- **Ensure you complete any agreed actions** – Carry out your agreed actions within the timescales you and your mentor have set out. If you are struggling or finding something difficult then let them know, they are there to help you!
- **Understand that the role of a mentor is not to have every answer** – Your mentor will be able to offer advice and support on a range of issues as well as signpost you to appropriate resources, but they are not expected to solve your problems.
- **Consider your long term objectives** – A mentor is offering a long term commitment of guidance and advice. Don't view the relationship as transactional for one thing or to get you a job (which mentors will not do) as you won't benefit from the real value of having a mentor.
- **Stay safe** – If anything about the mentoring relationship makes you feel uncomfortable please report this to the Career Development Service.

Ending the mentoring relationship

- **If the chemistry doesn't work.**
It may be that after your first meeting you don't feel like your mentor is the right fit, and you would like to approach another mentor. This is fine, we understand that not everybody will find the perfect mentor straight away. Your mentor will also be using the first meeting to get a better understanding of what you need and how they can help you.

However, if you do feel your mentor isn't the right fit for you please communicate this to the mentor in a respectful and courteous way. This ensures they are not chasing you and waiting for a response, and it also means they are free to meet with other mentees who would be a good match for a mentoring relationship.

- **If you have achieved your objective.**
When you first meet with your mentor you will discuss areas that you would like their advice and guidance on, and set objectives based on this discussion. Once your objectives have been met, you can discuss next steps with your mentor. You may both decide that you would like to stay in touch, or you may feel the relationship has come to a natural end. If you feel the mentoring relationship has come to its natural end, please be honest with your mentor and thank them for their support in helping you to achieve your aims. This will free up the mentor's time and enable them to decide if they wish to begin working with a new mentee.

Confidentiality

Anything you discuss with your mentor is confidential. Your mentor will only disclose information to others when agreed in writing with you, or if they believe there is a serious danger to yourself or others if the information is withheld.

The University asks all mentors and mentees to sign up to a Code of Conduct before commencing the programme. The details of these Codes of Conduct can be found below:

[Mentor Code of Conduct](#)

[Alumni mentee Code of Conduct](#)

By participating in the mentoring programme, you agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

Feedback

We will periodically send you surveys to help us improve and develop the programme. We encourage you to complete this and share your experience so we can provide the best possible service. You can also provide feedback to the Career Development Service team at any time throughout the mentoring experience.

If you would like to discuss any of the services and resources available to you, please contact the [Alumni Relations and Development team](#).

Career Development Service



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