



Career mentoring

Connect to a world of expertise

Alumni mentor handbook

Welcome to Career mentoring at Cranfield

Thank you for your interest in mentoring Cranfield University students. This handbook is designed to give you all of the information you need about our Career mentoring programme.

Whatever your career stage, becoming a mentor can help you with your professional development and personal growth. 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.

Through the Cranfield Careers portal, Symplicity, Cranfield students (mentees) are able to contact alumni mentors to gather insight into working, developing their career, or starting a business after they complete their studies.

If you have any questions that are not answered in this handbook, please [visit our mentoring pages](#) on the alumni website or [email us](#).

Ways you can help

Alumni mentors are from all walks of life and can support our students in a variety of ways.

Recent graduates

If you have recently completed your studies, you could share your experience of looking for a job, interviewing and starting to build a professional network. You could also share advice on how mentees can make the most of their time at University and how best to transition to the world of work.

Mid or senior career

Your experience, knowledge and sector insight will be invaluable to those students looking to develop a long-term career plan. Helping a student to understand how to build a career and what they can do to make their ambition a reality.

Entrepreneur

Cranfield students have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and many are interested in building their own business. If you run your own business then you can provide unique advice on the highs and lows of starting a business and what you felt helped or hindered your success.

Post-graduate researcher/academic

Many students are interested in moving into research and academic roles. Helping students understand how they can make this transition and early guidance on what they should focus on whilst studying can give them an instant boost on how to follow this career path.

Could you advise students on any of the following topics? If you answer 'Yes', then you have what it takes to become a Cranfield Career mentor.

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

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but to provide you with an idea of the topics mentees are interested in.



Why become a mentor?

Benefits for mentors

- Develop communication and leadership skills.
- Demonstrate skills in developing people.
- Increased recognition from peers.
- Gain new insights and fresh perspectives.
- Extend personal and professional networks.

Benefits for mentors' organisations

- Provide self-development opportunities for the mentor.
- Develop high potential employees.
- Identify potential future leaders.
- Motivate staff.
- Bring new ideas and insights into the organisation.

How does the Career mentoring programme work?

There is no set time commitment for a mentoring relationship. Each one is unique and depends on both the requirements of the mentee and the ability and ongoing desire of the mentor to provide guidance. Some mentees will look for advice on a specific issue where they need regular advice over a short time frame. Others will be looking for somebody to provide them with advice over a longer period, which may span the academic year. As a result it is important to set and agree the expectations and objectives on both sides during the first communications.

We expect most mentors and mentees will be in touch over the course of an academic year. It is up to you to decide if you want to continue the mentoring relationship once the mentee has reached their objectives.

Our mentoring programme is run through a platform called Symplicity. When you register we will send you instructions about how to log in and set up your profile. The students are then able to review the profiles and approach you as a mentor. Mentors can then choose whether to accept or decline the request. Once you have accepted a mentee you continue your communications outside of Symplicity through the method you agree e.g. email.



Getting the most out of mentoring

Each mentoring relationship is different, so when you are first contacted by a potential mentee it is important to share information and set expectations at the outset. This can include:

- Provide as much information as you can on your profile, including career history, transitions you have made, and areas you feel you can provide specific guidance.
- Confirming how much time you have – if it is a particularly busy time, let them know.
- Sharing how you want to communicate – online, phone, email and how often.
- Tell them about yourself - share your story so the mentee can understand how you may advise them.
- Asking for more information - the mentees are advised to come with an idea in mind for help. If they haven't provided enough information please let them know, and don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify their requirements.
- Taking time to consider the ways in which you may be able to help the mentee, and ensuring you complete the actions you've agreed.
- Sometimes you may not hear from your mentee, and often this is because they are finding something difficult, may be intimidated or don't want to be a burden. If you haven't heard from them for a while get in touch with them.
- Understand that the role of a mentor is not to have every answer but to advise and signpost to appropriate resources – such as the [Career Development Service](#).
- If at any stage anything about the contact makes you uncomfortable please report this to the [Alumni Relations and Development team](#) as soon as possible.

Feedback

We will send you a survey at the end of the academic year 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 [Alumni Relations and Development team](#) at any time throughout the mentoring experience.

Confidentiality

Mentoring is confidential. As a mentor you should only disclose information to others when agreed in writing with the mentee or if you believe there is a serious danger to the mentee, or others, if the information is withheld.

We're here to support you

Both the Alumni Relations and Development team and the Career Development Service here to support you. If your mentee needs career advice or personal development assistance outside of your area of expertise, you can refer them to the Career Development Service.

If you are concerned about the emotional wellbeing of a student they can be referred to the [Student Advice Centre](#). You can also contact the Alumni Relations and Development team if you have any concerns.

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 here:

[Mentor Code of Conduct](#)

[Mentee Code of Conduct](#)

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