

MANCHESTER GOLD

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Mentee Handbook 2016-2017

WELCOME

We would like to welcome you to The Manchester Gold mentoring programme 2016-17. We hope the programme will help you to better understand what career paths you wish to explore after your degree and that you are looking forward to taking part.

We want you to make the most of this opportunity because we know how valuable having a mentor can be, but we also realise that it can be difficult to know how to ensure your mentoring partnership works successfully.

This handbook should help you in easing some of these difficulties and to get the most out of the partnership with your Manchester Gold mentor. It includes information on the mentoring process, what to expect and answers to some frequently asked questions.

This handbook should help you but the Manchester Gold team is available to support you at any stage throughout your involvement in the scheme. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at: mentoring@manchester.ac.uk or ring us at 0161 275 2828.

Additional resources, including our Manchester Network Guide, Mentoring Diary and Mentoring Checklist, can be found online at <http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/downloads/>.

As the Manchester Gold mentoring programme is aimed at helping to successfully equip you with career guidance and the benefit of our alumni's hindsight, your mentor and the Manchester Gold team are keen to know the outcome. So do let us know what happens, and good luck with the programme!

Thank you again for participating in the Manchester Gold Programme.

The Manchester Gold Team at the Careers Service

ABOUT MANCHESTER GOLD

The Careers Service has been running mentoring programmes since 1998. Manchester Gold incorporates the collective experience we have acquired during this time and has been running successfully for over 15 years. It is an award winning programme and is highly regarded by both mentors and students.

The six months you will spend in contact with your mentor will be a great opportunity for you to access the advice and support of someone who has experience, insights and hindsight. However, it is important to note that Manchester Gold is fundamentally a mentoring program tailored to give you an insight into professional life. There is no guarantee that your relationship with your mentor will result in either work experience or a job opportunity after graduation.

How are mentoring matches made?

All mentoring requests and matches are made through our new online portal – the Manchester Network.

Our mentors are drawn from a wide range of sources. Many are graduates from the University of Manchester, some are representatives from companies who target students from this university. They are all volunteers – they receive no incentives or payment for their participation. Many will mentor in their own time. They all sign up to become mentors because they want to help, share their experiences and offer their advice.

Mentors have many different motivations for mentoring, including:

- As graduates, they feel able to empathise with current students and the decisions they face and recognise that a mentor would have been helpful to them.
- They want to spot future talent for their organisations.
- They were previously mentees on the scheme who benefitted from their participation.

ABOUT MANCHESTER GOLD

What happens now?

Now that you have been accepted onto the programme, you will set up your mentee profile on the Manchester Network, and then search and request a mentor that best matches your career needs. **Manchester Gold staff do not match students with mentors.**

Full details of how to set up a mentee profile and how to search and request a mentor are available in the Manchester Network Guide on the following webpage:

<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/downloads/>

The Manchester Network can be accessed on the following link: www.network.manchester.ac.uk. You can log in to the portal using your University username and password.

Your mentor will respond to your mentoring request through the Manchester Network. Mentors will use the information that you have provided on your profile and in the initial message to them to decide whether the match is suitable.

If the mentor does not respond to your request within 7 days, or you have been declined, you can cancel the request and return to the Manchester Network portal to search for another mentor that matches your career needs.

If you are accepted, YOU must make the first contact with your mentor to establish the mentoring relationship via email or message through Manchester Network. This is your opportunity to introduce yourself and remind your mentor why you've signed up to the programme and why you have chosen them as a mentor. Please ensure you do this as soon as your mentor has agreed to be matched with you.

Once you are in touch with your mentor, it is for you and your mentor to decide how you wish to proceed with and manage the relationship. The information provided over the next few pages will help you understand how to do this.

We don't monitor your communications and we leave it up to mentees to maintain contact with their mentors. We will stay in touch regularly but you can however contact us at any point during the programme if you need any support.

MENTEE & MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Mentors and mentees join the programme for a wide variety of reasons and have their own specific expectations. We try our best to manage expectations throughout to ensure that mentoring is an enjoyable and valuable experience for all.

What should mentees expect from mentors?

By agreeing to become a Manchester Gold mentor, mentors are committing to:

- Sharing advice and experience relating to career planning and future options
- Providing honest insights and constructive support
- Treating the relationship as confidential and offering an impartial perspective

Some mentors might be able to offer additional benefits to their mentees, including work shadowing or work experience but this is not a pre-requisite.

What can mentors expect from mentees?

All mentees will sign a **Statement of Commitment** which asks them to agree to the following:

- Taking the lead in contacting their mentor and ensuring that communication is maintained regularly throughout
- Responding to communications in a timely manner
- Agreeing levels of contact and confidentiality and observing these arrangements
- Ensuring that the focus of the mentoring is careers related

What can my Mentor help me with?

This is your opportunity to explore your options, discover what you might enjoy doing and where your strengths are in a safe environment. Remember you are not being assessed or interviewed and should feel able to be honest and open with your mentor. Try to get as much support as you can and take your mentor up on any offers of help they give you.

Here are some activities your mentor could help you with:

- Critique your CV
- Look at job descriptions, application processes and identify subsequent skills gaps
- Conduct a mock interview and provide feedback
- Create a career plan and job search strategy
- Introduce you to colleagues in and outside of their organisation
- Invite you to relevant sector based events

There is no guarantee that your mentor may be able to offer you work shadowing or experience, or help you to secure a job after graduation.

MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

When our mentoring programmes began, they were predominantly based on face to face meetings. Now most of our partnerships combine, where possible, face to face meetings with email and telephone communication. Some partnerships are conducted entirely at distance.

Initial Contact

Once a match is confirmed, YOU must make the first contact with your mentor, by email or message through The Manchester Network. Please introduce yourself and arrange a good time for your first meeting. At this point you should discuss the following:

- The best way to communicate – can you meet face to face, or will skype/telephone be more practical?
- General availability – days and times which work well for you both
- A specific date, time and location for your first meeting or call

This is your opportunity to introduce yourself and remind your mentor why you've signed up to Manchester Gold. You do not have to go into too much detail at this stage, just summarise. Please ensure you contact them as soon as possible.

Once you are in touch with your mentor, it is for you both to decide how you wish to proceed with and manage the relationship. The information provided over the next few pages will help you understand how to do this.

We leave it up to you to maintain contact with your mentor. We will stay in touch regularly and provide monthly tips and advice over email and social media, but you can contact us at any point during the programme if you need any support.

Face to face meetings

If you are matched with a mentor who is based in Manchester or perhaps elsewhere in the UK where you can travel to easily, we would recommend trying to meet face to face at least once. Please note that, unfortunately, we cannot cover travel expenses for either mentors or mentees.

If they are based elsewhere in the UK, it might be worth considering if you could plan a meeting in vacation time.

We suggest meeting in quiet yet neutral environment, such as a café, at least for the first meeting. It helps to put you and your mentor at ease.

We have rooms available within the Careers Service which can be booked for mentoring meetings if necessary. E-mail: mentoring@manchester.ac.uk

Email and Online Communications

Email, messages through the Manchester Network, Facebook and LinkedIn can be flexible ways to communicate, but should not be relied on as it is much more difficult to have a proper conversation. We suggest they are primarily used for:

- Arranging meetings/calls
- Providing updates of any progress you may have made.

Your mentor may be unavailable to respond quickly to emails and messages due to work commitments, so try to give them sufficient notice if you need a response to a question before a certain date, or if it's urgent, try the telephone.

Telephone and Skype

Both telephone and Skype are useful in providing support if you are not in Manchester. Skype has the added advantages of providing a video link, which can help you develop a better rapport with your mentor; and the facility to share documents/files and website links while you are speaking, which can aid the discussion.

Setting Expectations

It is important to set down expectations from the first meeting/communication. Both mentees and mentors need to be clear about what they can hope to achieve/offer through the partnership. Agreeing ultimate outcomes early on will provide a framework and keep the relationship focused, helping you to identify possible tasks, activities, timescales and deadlines. We recommend that mentees and mentors discuss both their expectations at the first meeting, whether face-to-face or through Skype.

You should consider that there will be times when you will have more capacity to focus on things outside of your studies (ie after your exams). It would be advisable to arrange to communicate more regularly during these times. You may also want to inform your mentor of times when you might not be able to be in contact (ie during exams).

Appreciating the value of mentoring

There may be times when your commitment to the programme may seem to conflict with other interests. We do hope however that you can appreciate this opportunity and maintain contact with your mentor.

This is your chance to gain realistic insights, learn from the advice and experiences of someone who's already made the transition into the world of work after University, demonstrate that you are committed to your future and hopefully gain more confidence, make informed decisions and kick-start your career plans.

There is always a high demand for mentors from students and we cannot always guarantee a mentor for each mentee. Therefore, we take steps to ensure that we are selecting mentees who are dedicated and feel that they can fulfil their commitment to the programme. If you feel that you cannot take full advantage of this opportunity, you must let us know.

THE FIRST MEETING OR COMMUNICATION

At the first meeting it is important to tell your mentor about your current situation and what kinds of support you might find most helpful. These things might have changed since you applied for the programme, so summarising again helps bring your mentor up to speed on what you have done already. Bring along your CV (or send it electronically) as it will be useful in the discussion.

Your mentor will ask some questions to better understand you, what experience and skills you already have and your ambitions or what career directions you might be thinking about.

Other things to cover in your first meeting or call:

- Frequency and methods of contact
- Number and length of meetings/calls
- Identify any times when contact might be interrupted (due to holidays, etc.)
- Agreeing confidentiality

You will find it helpful to make notes as you go along so you remember any key points or actions you want to take after the meeting. You can use our Mentoring Diary to record what you have discussed. This may be useful to collect examples of how the mentoring has benefitted you, should you need it for future job applications etc. This is also available via the webpages:

www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/downloads.

You may also wish to form a written agreement with your mentor in order to clarify what you have discussed and what you have both committed to. You can download a template from the website if you need it.

At the end of your first meeting your mentor will encourage you to create some action points, which you should work on after the meeting, and which you can review next time. These should stem naturally from your discussion. These could be:

- to research your mentors company or the largest companies within their industry
- to redraft your CV using the Careers Service 'CV Guide'
- to register on LinkedIn, develop a profile and start making industry contacts

Ideally action points should be SMART:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**ttainable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-bound

It might seem daunting how much you have to do and how unfamiliar the job market is, so break these action points down into small steps which you can more easily achieve.

Aim to set a date for your next meeting, to maintain momentum.

SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS OR COMMUNICATIONS

During further meetings you could follow up on points raised in your first meeting, or you might explore some new ideas. Try to keep in mind a goal, whether that is a job, course of further study or something else, so that you can work toward it.

It might be helpful to spend the first few minutes of each meeting reminding yourselves of what was covered the last time you met and if you have actions, outcomes or new points to discuss. It's easy to feel discouraged by setbacks, or when exploring options you can lose sight of what you need to do next. Try to:

- Take **active** steps, rather than research options continuously. Finding *something* to get experience, then moving on from there is always a better strategy than waiting for the elusive perfect opportunity to come along
- Correct things that aren't working for you (e.g. do you need to revise your CV?)
- Have a career plan B if it looks unlikely that your first choice is possible
- Stay positive!

The programme runs until April 2017, and your mentor will continue to meet with you until then, so schedule regular meetings/calls to make maximum use of your mentor's help.

What are the most common topics discussed with our mentors?

Please note that the Manchester Gold team will be sending monthly communications to all participants with themes and prompts for discussions, however here are some of the most common topics our mentees discuss with their mentors:

What is working life really like? What is the culture of their organisation? What do they like about their job and what do they dislike? What are their longer term career plans?

What has their career journey been since graduating? What would they have done differently? Have they undertaken any additional training or qualifications?

Tips for making good applications, CVs and getting through interviews/assessment centres.

What could you be doing whilst still at University to improve your chances of securing a job? What does their organisation look for in candidates?

Can they help you identify if you have any skills gaps or weaknesses? How can you improve these?

Where should you look for vacancies in their sector?

DISTANCE MENTORING

Distance mentoring has enabled us to expand the programme - forming matches with mentors based outside of Manchester and even overseas. It can be a more flexible way for mentors to take part, as communication can be conducted at convenient times.

In all our literature, we estimate that Manchester Gold will involve around 15-20 hours commitment but this is largely based on a partnership involving face to face meetings. Translating this time commitment to an e-mentoring relationship can be tricky. However e-mentoring or distance mentoring partnerships equally need structure and direction in order for them to be manageable and effective.

You need to work with your mentor early on to decide the following: How often will you contact each other? Once a month? Twice? On average, our e-mentoring partnerships have exchanged emails 10 – 12 times during the course of the match. How quickly should you each be expected to respond to one another?

It is important to consider what can be successfully conducted by email and equally what cannot. Depending on your objectives, you may decide that you will need to include some telephone or Skype communication too.

Other things you might wish to think about are whether you want to set up a separate email address specifically for your mentoring exchanges? Have you got a LinkedIn profile that you can invite your mentor to see?

Pay attention to the tone your mentor uses in their email correspondence – is it formal or informal? You should echo this tone in your own responses.

Points to consider

When communicating, try to ask open questions and respond in an open way (ie not just yes/no). This will facilitate a dialogue and keep the relationship interactive.

If you find you haven't got time to respond fully to a mentor's email, drop them a quick note to say you will be in touch soon. E-mentoring relationships can easily fail if either party assumes that the other has lost interest due to delayed responses.

If you have difficulty contacting your mentor, please contact the Manchester Gold team: mentoring@manchester.ac.uk

MENTEE FAQs

I am really nervous about contacting my mentor. Any tips?

There's no need to be intimidated by the thoughts of meeting with someone who has more professional experience than you. Remember that, once upon a time, they were first-time job hunters and know how overwhelming it can feel. This is exactly why they have volunteered and are looking forward to receiving a call or an email. Plan and practice what you're going to say, and make a list of your key objectives. If you feel like a shot of confidence, don't hesitate to contact the Manchester Gold team by telephone: 0161 275 2828 or mentoring@manchester.ac.uk.

What if my mentor does not like me or I don't get on with my mentor?

Mentoring is very much based on the individuals involved. All mentors are volunteers and take part because they want to. They are interested in helping you to achieve your career aspirations. We have had very few experiences of mentors and mentees not getting on. It is also useful to note that learning how to work towards a common goal with someone who isn't the kind of person you might choose to mix socially with is actually what working life is all about. The most frequent problem we encounter is a breakdown in communication. It is the responsibility of mentees to lead in communication. If you encounter difficulties in contacting your mentor, please let the Manchester Gold team know immediately.

What if my mentor is not doing the actual job I want to do?

The match may not always be perfect – your mentor may work in the industry you want to enter, but not doing the job you want to do. In these cases you simply need to be flexible - your mentor can support you in your job search and provide you with much of the advice and help you need. The fact you have been selected onto Manchester Gold and have a mentor to help you focus on writing CVs, preparing for interviews etc is an opportunity you should make the most of.

What if I decide that I don't want a career in my mentor's work area, should I end the relationship?

Firstly, don't worry. Helping you to clarify your career goals is one of the main objectives of Manchester Gold and you have saved yourself a lot of time in the long run by deciding what you don't want to do! Be honest with your mentor, let them know you no longer want to enter their industry and then think about the relationship more broadly. It may be that your mentor can introduce you to other contacts, and they will certainly be able to help you with preparing for interviews, networking and applying for jobs. All that we ask is that you don't suddenly stop contacting your mentor or us; if you do decide you would prefer to end the relationship, you need to let us all know.

Remember, getting in contact with your mentor can be difficult as they are busy people but they are waiting for you to get in touch and want to help. Get in contact with your mentor as soon as possible after he/she has agreed to mentor you to maximise the available time.

MENTEE FAQs

If I am experiencing problems contacting my mentor, what should I do?

If your mentor is not responding to your emails, try and telephone them. If that does not work, contact the main office of your mentor's organisation; it may be that they are on holiday or involved in a project. If you still cannot get in touch, contact the Manchester Gold team.

I am a final year student and when I started the programme I didn't think I would be so busy but now I have lots of exams and coursework. I am struggling to find the time.

Time management is a skill you need to perfect in order to be successful in the work place, as you may be involved in several projects and prioritising is crucial. Now is the perfect time to develop that skill, and a solid example you can talk about at interview. The time commitment for Manchester Gold is approximately 15 hours so it should not detract from your studies at all. In fact, past mentees have cited that having a mentor helped them focus on getting a job whilst their friends concentrated purely on academic work and left job hunting until summer.

The semesters will fly by so we suggest you arrange meetings upfront. We **STRONGLY** recommend that you arrange **AT LEAST** two meetings before the busy exam period in January. The subsequent meetings can take place between February and April.

My mentor is not based in Manchester, when will I see him/her?

Although it would be ideal to have a mentor based in the North West, unfortunately this is not always the case, especially with specific industries such as investment banking, law and advertising. Equally we have many mentors based overseas which enables us to provide mentoring opportunities to International students looking to return home. We have conducted research into how mentors and mentees communicate. Whilst face to face contact is important, most mentoring relationships are conducted primarily over email with additional telephone and Skype contact. It should therefore not be detrimental to the value of your relationship if you are unable to meet your mentor in person.

Some mentors, although not based in Manchester, will have occasion to visit - whether through work connections, friends or family. Therefore you may be able to meet with them at some point during your relationship. Please note that we are unable to fund travel expenses through Manchester Gold.

I don't know what to talk about with my mentor?

University life, career aspirations, your mentor's career to date, organisational and industry changes, skills and competencies needed, further qualifications, company culture, prospects, day-to-day working life, your skills portfolio, CVs, interview techniques, assessment centres, the transition from being a student to professional life... You have lots to talk about really.

MENTEE FAQs

I don't want to apply to the organisation my mentor works for – is that a problem?

The simple answer is NO. Do show an interest in your mentor's organisation and try to find out about their career path, but if you don't want to work for their organisation that is fine. It may be that your mentor is working in the industry you want to work in and has contacts in other organisations they can introduce you to.

Just be honest with your mentor – this is key to establishing rapport and trust. Your mentor is there to support you through your career choices – they have been through the very same process you are now going through and just want to help.

I have already applied to the organisation my mentor works for, is this ok?

Of course. Your mentor can help you prepare for interviews and assessment centres and provide you with lots of insider knowledge about the company, which will give you a competitive edge above other candidates. If you are not successful at getting to the interview stage, your mentor can provide you with feedback and help you to develop your techniques and employability.

What should I wear?

It's not a job interview but you want to make a good impression. The exact attire will obviously depend on whether you're going for investment banking or graphic design, but in general try to look smart or at least smart/causal. However, the meetings are informal so use your judgement. If in doubt ask your mentor – it shows initiative.

What if I decide I don't want to continue with the programme?

Let the Manchester Gold team know ASAP. Before you sign the statement of commitment, please think carefully and ensure you will commit to the programme. Your mentor has allocated time to commit to you. If you want to drop out, please contact us immediately so we can offer another student the opportunity to benefit from having a mentor.

Can I ask my mentor for work experience or a job?

Your mentors are under no obligation to offer you work experience and this is made clear to them before they register to Manchester Gold. However, if your mentor is in the position to arrange some opportunities, most will be willing to do so. In the past, mentees have secured graduate positions, internships, work shadowing and part-time work via their mentors. It may not be through your mentor's organisation directly but may be through tapping into their networks. By showing your initiative and drive, you could gain some invaluable experience.

I am a student with a disability; can I get the information in alternative formats?

If you need alternative formats, please get in touch with one of the Manchester Gold Team with your request.

MENTEE FEEDBACK

Access to work experience, placements and job opportunities

'I had a number of opportunities to complete work shadowing and an amazing volunteer opportunity.'

'From my interactions with my mentor, I was able to obtain a graduate job in the field I wanted when I leave Uni.'

Improving their ability to succeed with applications and interviews

'My mentor helped me structure my CV so that it is professional and stands out, as well as giving advice about applying for their grad scheme and preparing for their interview process.'

'My mentor gave me lots of practical advice with regard to applications. I had a mock interview and the feedback I received was very helpful. It made me feel more confident in attending interviews.'

Enabling mentees to identify their skills in terms of strengths and weaknesses

'I have discovered that I need to improve my networking skills and confidence.'

'I am now more confident in unfamiliar situations and I can talk to senior professionals without feeling nervous or anxious.'

Helping mentees assess their suitability for particular sectors and broaden their options

'I now have the motivation to succeed and I can go for more jobs that I thought with my degree.'

'I realised that I didn't want to do what my mentor does but found myself interested in another department that my mentor connected me with.'

Developing commercial awareness and a better understanding of the world of work

'I now understand the reality of the profession I am entering and the hard work it will entail.'

'I know now that my idealised view of consultancy was not completely accurate – it is rewarding but also very demanding.'

Improving confidence and supporting career planning

'I have discovered that I am actually more prepared for the job market than I thought. Manchester Gold has really helped me be confident in my employability.'

'I didn't really know which direction to take and my mentor has helped me explore my options.'

SUPPORT & USEFUL RESOURCES

Additional Manchester Gold Resources

- **The Manchester Network Guide**
An information guide that provides you with all the essential information about how to set up your mentee profile on the Manchester Network, and how to search and request a mentor.
<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/downloads/>
- **The Mentoring Checklist;**
A downloadable checklist for mentees containing necessary steps, key objectives and suggestions you and your mentor should or could be doing as part of your mentoring programme.
<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/downloads/>
- **The Mentoring Diary;**
A log which can be downloaded at the end of each session with your mentor in which you can record the main themes covered in each session, what issues you need to return to in subsequent sessions and the main learning and action points for both you and your mentor.
<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/mentoring/downloads/>

The Team

The Manchester Gold team are here to help with any queries, issues and concerns you may have relating to your mentoring. You must feel free to contact them anytime via e-mail or phone.

Tel: 0161 275 2828

E-mail: mentoring@manchester.ac.uk

They are particularly keen for you to get in touch if things are not going well, as they can help to resolve failing partnerships. However they are also delighted to hear success stories too.

Facebook group for Manchester Gold

Please feel free to join our **Manchester Gold** Facebook group that we have created to share useful mentoring and career-related posts and articles. You can also post any questions you might have about the mentoring programme.

Additional Support from the Careers Service

We are an award winning Careers Service which offers a very wide range of services to our students.

- 1 to 1 guidance appointments and shorter CV and Applications Advice clinics
- Mock interviews and video interviews
- Skills workshops and practice psychometric tests
- Recruiter events – including fairs, presentations, workshops and business games

You can also access support online at www.careers.manchester.ac.uk.