

# Mentoring Programme Guide for Mentees

**“I am delighted to introduce the RREF mentoring programme guidance and structure. One of the very best ways we, as practitioners, can help students is to offer them an insight into our experiences and here they have the opportunity to have a one to one connection with an alumnus.**

**This is a great opportunity for us all to give something back to Reading and to share the benefit of our experiences with some of the brightest and keenest students in the country who will soon be entering our industry.”**

Bryan Laxton, RREF Trustee

## Introduction

We have developed a structure to ensure consistency in practice and understanding of the mentoring process. This is a work in progress, but we hope it will allow effective access to mentors and ensure this valuable support for students is efficient and trouble-free for both parties.

As a mentee, this framework should help you to understand both the benefits and the responsibilities of the mentoring relationship, however for the mentoring partnership to be a success you must be proactive.

## Aims

1. Help your understanding and aid learning about the industry whilst still at University
2. Encourage you to find work experience
3. Help you understand which area they may want to specialise in and what type of company may suit you
4. Help to make you more employable
5. Offer better graduates to industry

## How it will work

It is proposed that mentors should mentor a student throughout their Reading studies in order to allow the mentee to gain the maximum from the relationship and to ensure the advice and guidance given is consistent as your needs change during their study period. We hope that mentors who have been paired with a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student will continue this relationship until the end of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

In the eighth year of the mentoring programme, beginning in October 2017, new mentors will initially be offered to the new 2<sup>nd</sup> year Undergraduate students and Masters students.

## Partnerships

Partnerships are made based on the mentor's area of primary focus and sectors of experience and the mentee's focus area and chosen areas of interest. If we are able to we shall base the partnerships on the mentor's sector of experience and your chosen sector of interest. If you do not share the exact area of interest with your mentor, they will still be able to provide great insight and experience of the wider industry you plan to join and no doubt be able to provide other useful contacts for you. If you do encounter any specific problems, please let us know sooner rather than later.

## Mentoring Activity

The ongoing mentoring activity is between you and your mentor. You jointly determine the content and style of the sessions. However, setting some form of objectives based on this guide will help the relationship be more effective.

We have made some suggestions below for how often you should aim to meet your mentor and the kinds of topics you may want to discuss. Please be aware that these are purely an example of how a partnership could work and mentors and mentees are encouraged to set an agenda which relates specifically to their needs. It is also up to the discretion of both parties as to the number of meetings and phone calls that are deemed necessary to maintain a successful mentoring relationship.

## Timeline

- **End October 2017:** Mentors and mentees are paired up. You shall receive an email with your Mentors' details. It is your responsibility to make immediate contact with your Mentor to introduce yourself and thank them for volunteering for the programme.
- **November 2017:** The first meeting should take place; both parties discuss what they want to get out of the relationship, parts of the industry they are specifically interested in and set a general agenda for future contact. This may include:
  - What will be the purpose of the mentoring relationship?
  - What objectives do we want to work with?
  - How do we want to run the relationship and future sessions?
- **February 2018:** A second meeting to have taken place. More specific career advice could be given e.g. plans for work experience, job applications, CV, etc.
- **March 2018:** RREF Mentoring reception held in London- a chance for you and your mentee to network with other partnerships
- **April 2018:** A third meeting to have taken place

## Be Aware...

There is no obligation for your Mentor to guarantee you work experience, an internship or future employment. This programme is aimed at developing your personal skills and learning about the industry that you wish to join.

## Some etiquette for mentoring

Entering into a mentoring relationship is significant and carries a certain amount of responsibility for both parties. For you as the mentee please bear in mind the following:

### Do

- Take time to identify your goals and gain a clear idea of what you want to achieve from mentoring
- Respect your Mentor's time, be professional and respond promptly to communications

- Be open and seriously consider all advice you receive
- Show evidence that you have utilised input; even if you have chosen another alternative, show how it has helped to evaluate options
- Demonstrate the value you place on assistance provided
- Share any issues or concerns over your mentoring relationship if possible

## Don't

- Depend on your Mentor to identify your goals for you
- Forget to feedback your progress and insight or share outcomes arising from your Mentor's input
- Respond with "Yes, but ...."
- Digress, ignoring clues that you are talking too much
- React defensively or explain yourself, in the face of your Mentor's observations
- Talk negatively about your Mentor behind his/her back

Being involved in a mentoring relationship is a privilege for both parties and should be highly rewarding for both Mentor and Mentee. We trust this simple guidance and framework will help you to enjoy and benefit from an effective and valuable mentoring experience.

## If you wish to cease the relationship

You should discuss the situation with the RREF team by contacting [info@rref.reading.ac.uk](mailto:info@rref.reading.ac.uk) or calling 0118 379 4192.

## Feedback

Please feel free to contact RREF with feedback at any time during the year. If problems arise within the partnership please do not wait until the end of the year to let us know. We will aim to find a solution to problems to ensure both parties get the most out of the relationship.

## Further information

If you would like further information on the programme, please contact us on [info@rref.reading.ac.uk](mailto:info@rref.reading.ac.uk).