

# STAR MENTORS

## STaR Mentoring Programme 2015/16: FAQs

### Can anyone be a mentor?

Any current undergraduate student who will be at the university in 2015/16 can apply to be a mentor. We are looking for mentors in all subject areas.

There are a number of subjects that are running their own independent schemes (Henley Business School, Pharmacy, Systems Engineering, Film Theatre and Television). If you are studying one of these subjects but would like to be a mentor we will pass your application onto them for you.

### What am I expected to do as a mentor?

Mentoring works best as an informal arrangement with minimal rules and regulations, but for the sake of clarity, as a minimum you will be expected to:

- Make email contact with your mentees in early-mid September before they arrive in Reading
- Meet with mentees early in Welcome Week
- Answer quick questions by email (or other virtual methods) before and after arrival
- Get together with your group of mentees once a week throughout the autumn term
- Direct mentees to extra-curricular opportunities of interest
- Direct mentees to relevant services in the university when they need specialist advice or support
- Give them the insight of your own experience

You will get lots more guidance on the sorts of things that you might do as a mentor at the training workshops (see below)

### Do I need to know everything about the University to be a good mentor?

No, you are not expected to be an expert in everything to do with the university. However, because you have been here for a least year and you will get some top up training you will be a lot more knowledgeable than a new student. It's about passing on useful tips and nuggets of info that you wish someone would have passed onto you as a new student. It's also about pointing them in the right direction so that they can find out what they need to know, not necessarily supplying all the answers yourself. That would be too much to ask of anyone!

### Will there be any training or support for mentors?

Yes, when you submit your application you will be asked to sign up to a training session. Also the University is appointing a Mentoring Co-ordinator who will be able to provide ongoing support for when you are actually doing the mentoring

### **How much time will mentoring take out of my week?**

We estimate that you will spend on average between one and two hours per week. It is likely that you will devote more time at the beginning of the term and that it will reduce as time goes on. The mentoring programme will run for the 11 weeks of the autumn term.

### **How many new students will I mentor?**

Because all new students will be given a mentor it is likely that you will officially have somewhere between six and 10 mentees, but it is extremely unlikely that all of them will feel they need your support, so you will actually be interacting with a much smaller number.

### **Are there circumstances when you would recommend someone should not take on mentoring?**

Almost everyone will have something to contribute as a mentor, whether you found adjusting to University life in Reading easy or difficult. However, there are a number of circumstances in which it would be better not to take up mentoring at this time:

- If you will be on placement or studying abroad at the beginning of next year you will not be around to mentor new students so should not apply at this point. You will however be able to apply this time next year for when you will be back at Reading in 2016/17
- If you will be unable to access your university email in September, because you will be abroad or for some other reason. Without your email you will be unable to communicate with your mentees in that crucial period in the run up to moving to Reading. It would therefore be unwise to take up the role of mentor
- If you are currently finding it difficult to cope with the demands of university life it might be better to concentrate on yourself for now and consider mentoring at some point in the future. Your experience in getting yourself back on track will be invaluable to mentoring in the longer term

### **What will I get out of being a mentor?**

There is so much to be gained from being a mentor, for example

- You can make the world a better place for someone
- You learn a lot about people and what makes them tick
- You gain an insight into other people's perspectives on the world
- You learn a lot about yourself in the process
- It is a powerful addition to your CV - showing people skills, empathy, responsibility etc. and a distinctive talking point at job interviews
- It counts towards the RED Award

People become mentors for many different reasons. Some have themselves been helped by a mentor. Some struggled to settle into university and would have benefited from having a mentor. Mentoring is one of those win-win activities in life; mentees benefit but so too do mentors.

### **Does STaR mentoring count towards the RED Award?**

Yes, being an active mentor will contribute 20 hours to your RED Award. This will cover the required 10 hours of volunteering and give you 10 more towards the 'core activity'.

[www.reading.ac.uk/redaward](http://www.reading.ac.uk/redaward)