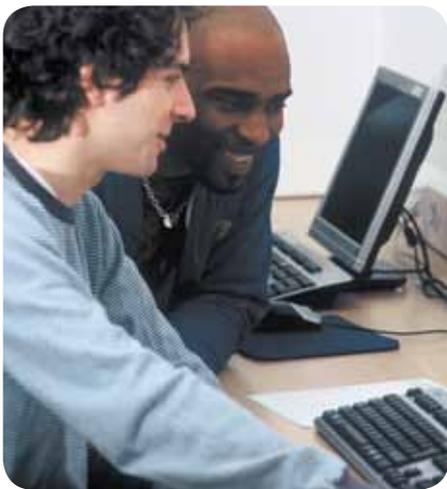


Transition mentoring 2012

Mentor's Manual





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Why do we need mentors?

Birkbeck is a unique institution allowing people to study part time whilst fulfilling other commitments, such as work, family and social life.

As a result, many students find it difficult to adjust to part time study. Students are at most risk of dropping out of their course during their first year. Many students find it particularly hard to successfully navigate the first few weeks of their course, familiarising themselves with the different learning and teaching approaches, getting used to new people and generally feeling comfortable in the university environment.

Mentors are there to help new undergraduate students ease the transition into the HE environment, allowing them to address their concerns with a fellow student who has progressed into the second year and whose experiences they can learn from.

Mentors are often perceived by new students as a less intimidating, friendly source of information. Do you remember what it was like when you first started at university? The students that you will be working with will have similar fears and misconceptions about life in higher education which relate to some, if not all, of the issues below.

Academic

- » Some students may have been out of education for a long time and therefore feel unfamiliar in the university setting.
- » Students may not know what is expected of them, e.g. essays and exams.
- » Much of university life is now 'virtual' e.g. course information and readings are available online.

For less IT literate students this can be particularly daunting.

- » New students may have difficulty learning independently. Their last education experience may have been at school or sixth form. Studying for a degree is a big transition from this.
- » Many new students will need advice on organisation and time management skills. This is particularly the case when trying to meet the first deadline of the year.

Personal

Due to the nature of studying in the evenings, there are a number of barriers that can affect people's ability to learn:

- » Worries about spending time away from families or children and/or dealing with the simultaneous demands of family and friends
- » Work life may get in the way e.g. an unsupportive employer, shift work or getting time off to study.
- » Financial worries. Fees, study materials and other university related costs can mount, leading to concerns about whether they can carry on.
- » Some students will have physical, mental or learning disabilities. They will need to receive additional support from the disability office.
- » Stress in students' personal life will affect their ability to study.
- » Adjusting to studying having not studied for a long period of time.
- » Worries about not 'belonging'; this is especially true if they are the first in the family, group of friends or community to go to university



- » Disorientation – physical orientation can take some students longer than others.
- » Students may also struggle to get used to the library and IT resources – which are likely to be different to what they have experienced before.

Administrative

- » Learning how to use various systems and getting used to College processes may take a while.
- » Universities rely on students being pro-active for example using email to communicate and to ask questions. Students whose IT skills are not very strong may struggle to begin with.

Benefits of mentoring

For mentors

- » Further develop their communication and interpersonal skills.
- » Improve their own learning and reflect on achievements.
- » Gain personal satisfaction in the knowledge that they have helped a fellow student.
- » Gain insight into alternative perspectives.
- » Share their insights and experiences in a productive way and to benefit others.
- » Further develop their professional network.
- » Impress future employers with taking on extra-curricular responsibilities.

For mentees

- » Getting reassurance that others have struggled at the beginning too but managed to successfully move on.
- » Having an opportunity to ask questions in an informal setting – feeling less exposed when asking ‘minor’ questions.
- » Getting practical and relevant help.
- » Having a contact already in a new (and possibly daunting) environment.
- » Gaining a sense of belonging in the new institution.
- » Gaining a sense of the kind of skills that they will need in order to succeed.
- » Gaining confidence as students.



What will be expected of you as a mentor?

We see the role of the transition mentor as:

- » Listening
- » Encouraging mentee(s)
- » Sharing experiences
- » Giving information and advice as appropriate
- » Referring to other sources of help.

You will not be expected to have all of the answers to all of the questions above; however you can give them advice as to who the mentee should speak to.

Essentially, we would hope that mentors would be able to support new students to Birkbeck by sharing their own experiences in an honest and pragmatic way.

You will be matched to your mentee based on the completed application forms to ensure that the opportunities and challenges faced by both are similar. For example, you may both have caring responsibilities or have similar employment demands. Ideally, you will be studying the same subject but please be assured there is no expectation that you will be providing academic support, instead, it will be about providing some 'insider' knowledge which can help alleviate initial fears and apprehensions.

We would want you to be honest with your students about the realities of university life. Mentors have a 'buddying' role, rather than teaching

or lecturing the students, you will be perceived as a supportive and encouraging 'role model' who can offer knowledge and advice based on first-hand experience.

In terms of commitment, we would expect mentors to meet their mentees face to face in the first instance at a time most convenient to you both. We will not be prescriptive about this as we realise as part time students you already have many demands on your time. After the initial meeting, we would expect you to keep in contact via email or telephone but if you wanted to continue to meet face to face, that would be fine.

Use your first meeting to find out more about the concerns of the student(s) you are mentoring; you can work together to devise a plan to overcome these obstacles. We suggest that you may find the tutorials on the Get Ahead: Stay Ahead website (www.bbk.ac.uk/ahead) helpful as a framework. Mentees can work through the tutorials to get a sense of areas that they are concerned about.

To help you feel comfortable and confident in your role as mentor we will provide you with a **half-day training session** where we will provide you with an overview of the Transition Mentoring project and help you to clarify your role as a mentor. We would want you to attend this session.



What qualities do mentors need?

- » **Enthusiasm** – Your mentee(s) will be guided by you. If you lack enthusiasm they may also lose interest.
- » **Reflection** – It helps if you are aware how you dealt successfully with problems that you encountered as a student. Be open and willing to share your experiences where appropriate, e.g. if you experienced a similar difficulty in your first year.
- » **Reliability** – This means turning up on time for meetings and being in touch regularly.
- » **Good communication skills** – Particularly being able to listen will enable both you and the mentee(s) to stay focused on the mentee(s)' concerns.
- » **Empathy** – Remember what it was like for you to start new on your course. Even if your transition was very smooth be open to the possibility that it may not be for others.
- » **Being non judgemental** – Everybody has a different way of dealing with things. This may be different to your approach but may work well for your mentee(s).
- » **Knowledge about support services** – As you won't be able to address all of the concerns of your mentee(s) it helps if you know where to signpost them to for further help.
- » **Cultural awareness** – Your mentee(s) are likely to come from a range of different backgrounds which calls for sensitivity and openness to difference.

Mentors need to be able to listen effectively and give the mentee(s) the time and space to talk about how things are going for them. The important thing is to keep your focus on the mentee(s). You may have had similar experiences and issues when you were in your first year, you are in a great position to offer advice and share your experience. However, make sure the context is relevant to the mentee(s).

Getting started

The mentoring will take place during the first term only to help new students settle into HE study.

Our mentors will allow new students to voice their expectations, hopes and concerns to help them start at Birkbeck with as much confidence as possible. We anticipate that mentoring will take place mainly by email, with one face-to-face meeting.

Your department will liaise with you to ensure the best possible match between you and your mentee(s). You will be given the name and contact details of your mentee(s) and you will be expected to meet with them ideally as soon as possible.

We would expect you to meet at least twice face-to-face with your mentee(s) and thereafter be in touch at least once a week via email or telephone.



Meeting your mentee(s)

We strongly advise that the first time you meet, you meet in a public place somewhere on campus, for example the coffee shop or the Fifth Floor Eatery in the main Birkbeck building.

Generally speaking, all of your meetings should be held in public places; however, after the first meeting you may wish to stay in touch by email or telephone only. If you decide to meet your mentee(s) face to face again then agree to meet at a mutually convenient place. It would not be appropriate to meet your mentee in either of your homes, or a venue that you or they are not comfortable with.

Although there are no fixed rules about what you should discuss during your first meeting, you can use the as general guidelines below:

- » Introductions
- » Getting to know one another
- » Getting an idea of how things are going so far for your mentee
- » Why you signed up as a mentor/why they signed up as a mentee
- » Objectives for both the mentor and the mentee – you may want to use the Get Ahead: Stay Ahead (www.bbk.ac.uk/ahead) tutorials as a framework
- » Arrangements for the next contact (e.g. agreement for one of you to call, email or text to confirm it once the mentee(s) get into their new routine
- » Swapping contact details and discussing how best to get in touch with each other. (you do not need to exchange home addresses and home phone numbers if you would rather keep this private).

During the initial meeting you will be getting to know your mentee(s), so you will want to focus on the things that they are coping with and the things that they are finding more challenging.

The initial meeting is about exploration, you can use this meeting to identify what you both would like to get out of the relationship. You would also use this meeting to set objectives. Example objectives are:

- » Ensuring that the mentee(s) have their most urgent questions addressed – either by answering them or by referring to the relevant experts
- » Ensuring that the mentee(s) are organised at the beginning of term, including time management
- » Discussing how best to address issues that arose as part of working through the Get Ahead: Stay Ahead tutorials (www.bbk.ac.uk/ahead).

It is also worth remembering that although you may feel that you have lots of valuable advice and tips to offer your mentee(s), you don't want to overload them with advice and information in the first meeting. For a mentee this can be counterproductive and overwhelming. It is also important to consider that what worked for you might not work for your mentee, so listening to exactly what it is that concerns them is very important.



What we wouldn't want you to do

As a mentor your role is not to act as a tutor or in a professional support role. As such we would not want you to:

- » Deal with detailed academic enquiries. This will need to be the role of the academic tutor.
- » Take on responsibility for mentee(s) personal problems. This is particularly pertinent if you feel that you are dealing with a mentee who could benefit from talking to a counsellor, e.g. when you are concerned about a student's wellbeing.
- » Do the work for your mentees including handing out essays or other pieces of coursework that you have written during your first year. Students are helped by talking about their struggles with course work but not by copying. Students can practise their academic skills further by either talking to their Learning Support Officer in their School or in the Study Skills team.
- » Report to mentee(s) tutors about their progress.

Building the mentor/mentee relationship

It is important that mentors and mentees are mutually committed to reaching the agreed objectives.

Much of what happens in the mentoring relationship is a natural process of conversation and friendship.

What makes mentoring different is that the conversations usually have a focus and are part of a process that is intended to support the development of the mentee over a period of time. Remember that it takes time and effort to build trust and develop a relationship. Here are some guidelines for building a successful mentoring relationship:

- » Make sure that you and your mentee have exchanged phone numbers and email addresses at an early stage so that you can keep in touch with each other.
- » Be reliable. As with all meetings, if you need to cancel, or are running late, remember to let your mentee know.
- » If you can't reach your mentee or they don't seem to respond to messages, or they are failing to turn up for arranged meetings, you should contact your department for assistance. There may be any number of reasons for this, and it does not necessarily mean that the mentee does not want a mentor.
- » As with any personal or professional relationship, you should treat your mentee(s) with consideration and respect and you can expect the same from them. You should find that you have some things in common with your mentee(s), but do also be sensitive to any differences. Diversity in age, background and experience can be very positive aspects of the mentoring relationship, and whatever your differences, you will find some common ground in



- the shared “student experience”.
- » As a mentor, you may need to take the lead on maintaining contact (at least initially). Make sure that you establish a schedule for being in touch regularly. The actual mentoring period is not very long so please aim to be in touch at least once a week.
 - » Be open and willing to share your own experiences where appropriate but ensure that you make it relevant to the topics being discussed.
 - » If you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, say so! You are not expected to know everything but if you have said you will find out the answer and feedback to the student, ensure that you do.
 - » Remember to signpost students to other support that is available across the College. Learning Support Officers in your School, the Disability Office, the Library – make sure your mentee(s) know they can sign up to this throughout the duration of their course.
 - » If your mentee(s) seem unsure initially about what they want from the meetings, don't be discouraged. Focus on getting to know each other and building trust. Use your skills in effective communication to ask probing questions that will help your mentee reflect on their experiences at Birkbeck so far.
 - » Be aware of terminology you use when discussing university. Don't assume that new students will have the confidence to ask if they don't understand.
 - » Be spontaneous now and then. Beyond your planned meetings call or email “out of the blue” to say hello, check their progress, or to offer some words of encouragement.
 - » Remember to be positive, motivated and encouraging. Realistic doesn't mean pessimistic! If you are focusing on a particularly challenging aspect of university life, i.e. working to deadlines – remember to say how great it feels when you hand the work in and the sense of achievement that comes with it.
 - » Be yourself! Being a mentor isn't about being the ‘perfect student’ indeed sometimes learning ‘what not to do’ from a current student is just as valuable.
 - » **Enjoy your mentoring!** Know that your efforts will have a positive impact on your mentee's experience and progress, and on your own development.

Ending the relationship

To get the most out of the mentor/mentee experience it would be beneficial if you commit to the whole mentoring period. However, you may find that you and the mentee mutually decide that the mentoring has run its natural course. If this is the case, aim to achieve a mutually agreed closure to the formal mentoring process, even if you intend to continue to keep in touch,

or if you are becoming friends. Please let your mentoring coordinator know if you have mutually agreed to end the mentoring process before the end of the transition mentoring period. When the mentoring relationship comes to an end at the end of October it is advisable to offer mentee(s) an opportunity to review their progress and to reflect on their experience of



being mentored. If you had a small group of mentees you may also wish to encourage them to continue supporting each other in a peer support group.

Ending the relationship early

If for any reason you no longer wish to mentor, please contact your mentoring coordinator to discuss this further. Your mentee will be expected to follow the same procedure if they decide to withdraw from the project.

Trust and confidentiality

When you are with your mentee it is important that they feel free to talk about themselves and the things that affect them. They have the right to privacy. As a mentor you should not talk about your mentee(s) personally with people outside of the mentoring project.

Remember that this right to privacy also applies to mentors. If you share information about yourself and your experiences as a new student with your mentee(s), they should also respect your privacy and treat that information in the same confidential way.

There may, however, be very rare circumstances when a mentor becomes concerned for the wellbeing or safety of their mentee and feels the need to break their mentee's confidence. Therefore, as mentor you should not get into a situation where you have promised to keep everything your mentee says confidential. If your mentee does disclose information or does behaves in a way that causes you to worry about their safety or the safety of yourself or others, you should discuss your concerns with your mentoring coordinator and the College will provide support and help to resolve the situation.

New mentees get a mentee handbook, similar to this one, when they join the project. Their mentee handbook also covers this issue of privacy and confidentiality. The handbook highlights that there could be rare occasions when a mentor would feel a need to discuss something that had been discussed within their mentoring partnership with your mentoring coordinator and hence that a mentor will never be able to promise to keep everything that is discussed confidential.

Generally though, you will not be asked for details of your mentoring conversations and will only be interested in hearing broadly about the types of issues being discussed (e.g. study skills, time management strategies, chat about life as a mature student etc), and checking that you feel adequately prepared and supported.



Study mentoring and boundaries

The mentoring role can include supporting and encouraging your mentee with their academic work. If this becomes an aspect of your mentoring partnership, it is important to be clear about the potential for plagiarism, intended or otherwise, that exists in this situation, and to discuss this with your mentee. It is wise to stick to the following ground rules for study mentoring:

- » If you decide to recommend some reading on a particular topic, limit the number of books or articles you suggest to one or two. Your mentee(s) must be responsible for their own research and reading.
- » If your mentee(s) ask you to look at any work they have written, think carefully before agreeing and limit yourself to commenting on general aspects such as structure, style or referencing. It can be helpful to mention other sources of support for this (see overleaf).
- » It is not advisable for you to give feedback on the content of your mentee(s)'s work. Limit yourself to general discussion about the topic
- » Never be tempted to write, correct or re-draft any part of your mentee's work.
- » It can be reassuring for a new student to briefly look at a "typical" student essay and your mentee(s) may ask you to show them some of your written work. You do not have to do this if you prefer not to, but if you are comfortable to do this you should keep within the following guidelines.
- » When choosing an essay to show to your mentee(s), make sure it is not the same title that s/he is about to write. Select an essay on a different

topic and explain why you are doing this.

- » Be clear about the purpose of sharing your essay. It might be to give an example of a clear structure, referencing, or simply to show what a 2,000 word essay looks like.
- » Never just hand over an essay and let your mentee browse through it. Always have a focus for discussion, or ask your mentee(s) which aspect they are interested in looking at.
- » It is never a good idea to let your mentee(s) take an essay away for a closer look – it is then out of your control, and any resulting plagiarism could put you both in a difficult position.

Be clear that it is easy to plagiarise accidentally, and best therefore to avoid any situation where a mentee might "pick up" a phrase or sentence that is not their own work.

Plagiarism is a subject that often causes confusion, not only amongst students. There is guidance on how to avoid plagiarism on the Birkbeck Law School website: www.bbk.ac.uk/law/current/qld/avoidingplagiarism. There is also a referencing tutorial on the Get Ahead: Stay Ahead website (www.bbk.ac.uk/ahead) that you can refer students to.

It can be useful to be "up-front" with your mentee(s) about the boundaries of your role in study mentoring. No matter how comfortable you may feel discussing study techniques with your mentee(s), always bear in mind that your role is limited. It is important to emphasise to your mentee(s) that confidence in academic research and



writing develops over time and with practice – and that looking too closely at someone else's work, or relying too heavily on someone else's advice, can interfere with this process.

If you find that study/academic matters become a persistent issue that your mentee(s) seeks help with, consider whether you may want to point them towards more formal sources of support, for example, the Study Skills

team. Remember that it is in your mentee(s)'s interest to receive the most appropriate support as early as possible, so don't feel you are letting them down if you suggest they make use of formal academic support services.

If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of study mentoring, do raise these with your mentoring coordinator.

Evaluation

Three weeks into the project we will send an email to mentors and mentees checking to see that you are both getting on ok and as a reminder that both your mentor trainers are available should you have any concerns.

At the end of the project we would appreciate feedback from both mentors and mentees to get a sense of what

you both gained from the mentoring relationship. We won't ask for details about the mentoring relationship, but would like to know broadly what kind of issues you talked about. We will send you a questionnaire and would invite you to tell us honestly about your experiences as a Transition Mentor.



Communication skills

To be an effective mentor you have to be an excellent communicator. It is important that when discussing fears and anxieties that you take the concerns of your students seriously.

This section will hopefully give you a useful introduction to effective communication skills and their role in the mentoring process.

Active listening

There is a difference between hearing and listening; listening is:

- » Being attentive and showing it (eye contact, responsive gestures etc)
- » Listening to how as well as what
- » Absorbing and interpreting non-verbal messages (body language)
- » Understanding what is being said
- » Reflecting back and summarising.

Not listening can lead to:

- » Feeling rejected/poor self image
- » Lack of rapport (the essential ingredient that often makes the difference between a successful partnership and a non-successful one)
- » Frustration.

It is also worth thinking about whether there are any barriers to your being able to listen well. Barriers can include:

- » Noise distractions
- » Waiting to have your say... so you miss the vital point of what they are saying
- » Interrupting the other person while they are speaking
- » Never checking what you have heard

- » Wanting to tell them what to do
- » Jumping to conclusions
- » Your own feelings
- » Thinking about something else while you should be listening
- » Time constraints
- » Making judgements about their behaviour.

To reduce the impact of any of the above think about:

- » Where you are meeting
- » Try to have a clear mind and to concentrate
- » Allow enough time
- » Be open-minded, don't assume things.

There are some techniques you can use when listening which may help to develop the relationship.

Summarising

"So, what you have been saying is..."

- » Can help if your discussion loses direction.
- » Helps to show you understand what has been said.
- » Reassures the person that you are listening.
- » You can check if your summary was accurate.

Clarifying

"Can I just check what you mean?"

- » Others may use terms or words that you are not familiar with or not understand; ask them to explain it.
- » It will also help the other person focus.
- » It shows you are listening.



Reflection

“So you are feeling...”

- » Shows you have been listening and understand how they feel.
- » Can help to sustain a conversation.
- » Can be used to avoid giving advice or opinions.

Silence

- » Don't try to fill all silences; they give you and your mentee time to think about what to say next and to find the right words.
- » If you jump into every pause, it may seem that you are rushing them.

You can have a look at our Working with others tutorial on the Get Ahead: Stay Ahead website (www.bbk.ac.uk/ahead) which summarises effective listening and other skills needed for effective working with groups.

Effective Questioning

The types of questions you use during your mentoring conversations can have quite a big impact on the progress of these conversations and on the progress of your relationship more generally. Below is a summary of the different styles of questions.

Helpful questioning style

Open questions

These often begin with ‘how’, ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘tell me about’. Open questions can be helpful for building rapport and establishing a relationship. The respondent is in control of what and how much they say, but is actively encouraged not to give a brief one-word answer. For example: “Tell me about how things have been during your first few weeks here?” or “What’s it been like so far?”

Probing Questions

Useful for when you are trying to gather more detailed information on a particular aspect of what has already

been said. For example:

“What exactly did he say to you?”

“Tell me in detail about the problem.”

Less helpful questioning style

Leading questions

Often in a mentoring conversation these are best avoided. Leading questions can send a signal to the listener that you are expecting a particular response and can therefore make it harder for the respondent to feel ok about giving a different response. For example:

“So things are going ok then?”

(mentee may then feel awkward about saying well actually no!)

“Are you finding adjusting to the academic work difficult?” (implies you are assuming that they will find it hard)

Multiple questions

We do all have a tendency to use these at times, especially if we are not clear about what we are asking or think the respondent didn't understand what we meant, but this can cause confusion and may make it seem like an interrogation. For example:

“What did you do next, did you speak to your PAT, did anyone else feel the same?” or “Why did you sign up for a mentor, did you see it advertised over the summer, have you done anything like this before...?”

Closed questions

Used well these can help you check a detail or to help move a conversation along. However, used unwittingly they can mean that the respondent only gives you the briefest of information and can make it hard for you to strike up a conversation and to build rapport.

If you feel that your mentee isn't giving you a lot of feedback it may be because the question style you are using isn't encouraging them to open up. For example: “Are things going ok?” (likely response is yes or no) “Have we covered that enough?” or “Are you



finding our meetings helpful?" (again, likely you will receive a yes/no answer rather than more usual feedback such as that you might receive were you to ask "In what ways are our meetings helping?")

Remember, to be an effective mentor you don't need to be perfect!

Mentoring is a developmental opportunity for both mentors and mentees. What is important is that you are willing to reflect on your communication skills and to build on these where you can.

Goal setting

If both you and your mentee(s) think that it may be helpful to agree on some targets for the next contact you can draw up a list of short-term targets. The agreed targets should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited) so that you can measure progress. Further suggestions on working with goals can be found in the 'Your Goals' tutorial of the Get Ahead: Stay Ahead web pages

(www.bbk.ac.uk/ahead). For the next contact mentee(s) can be asked to draw a simple action plan that looks as follows:

- » **Goal**
- » **Action**
- » **Date for completion**
- » **Progress update.**

Giving feedback

Giving constructive feedback involves:

- » Being as precise as possible
- » Starting with positives but also being honest
- » Suggesting rather than prescribing; evaluating rather than judging
- » Owning your comments – therefore use 'I' statements
- » Being open to criticism yourself.

Troubleshooting for small groups

There may be instances where you find mentoring some students quite challenging.

The student is not participating in group discussions

Quiet group members may just need more time to think about an idea or they may not want to say anything because they are worried about saying

something unimportant. It helps to listen carefully and give positive (but sincere) feedback.

Take turns in talking - allowing shy students to contribute if they want to. Pay attention to their body language which may tell you when a quiet student would like to come into the discussion. However, also accept that they may not want to talk but maybe want to



contribute in other ways, e.g. by taking notes for the group.

The student is very talkative and domineering

Students who are very enthusiastic can be a great asset to a group unless they are taking up too much time and don't allow other group members to contribute. As previously suggested for shy students it may help to have a system where you are taking turns in your talking so that everybody has a chance to speak. Or you assign a task to this student which does not involve talking.

However, you may all experience this behaviour as positive as it might take the pressure off others and enthuse the group.

The student is a bit of a know-it-all

While it may at first be great to have somebody in the group who has a wide grasp of the material you are working with it may stop some group members from expressing their ideas and opinions. As a group you may want to have an agreement about contributions, ie making sure that all members get an opportunity to share their ideas.

You can also gently challenge this group member by pointing out that there is always more than one perspective.

The student is quite argumentative

There may be some good reasons why a student is being overly challenging and argumentative in a group. It is possible to validate the student's objections and gently move the discussion on by inviting comments from the rest of the group. It may be more appropriate to raise this with the student one-to-one to see whether there are underlying issues that may need addressing with an expert. You may also want to raise this with your transition mentor trainers.

The student is not responsive

As all mentees actively decide to enter into the mentor/mentee relationship it's unlikely that students will be unresponsive. However, there may be instances where a mentee is consistently late or doesn't respond to any other form of contact, e.g. email or phone. In the first instance raise this with the mentee as there may be a very good reason for this behaviour. However, if persistent please raise this with the transition mentor trainers who will make separate contact with the mentee.

Scheduling meetings

Getting a small group of very busy people together can be near on impossible at times. You may find that using Doodle – free scheduling software – is helpful in establishing available time slots.



Further resources and information

Get Ahead: Stay Ahead

These web pages on the My Birkbeck website are specifically designed to help new students prepare for their degree programme, help them improve their study skills and to offer support during the first term. With numerous interactive tutorials and information, you may find it helpful to direct your mentee(s) to these web pages: www.bbk.ac.uk/ahead

Remember that you are not expected to be the source of all knowledge or to have all the answers.

Your role is to listen and to help your mentee(s) find ways to address any concerns or problems they may be experiencing. If you feel unable to help your mentee(s) with a particular issue you may want to suggest that they get in touch with someone else.

Depending on the issue involved, possible sources of help include:

- » My Birkbeck Helpdesk:
www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/helpdesk
- » Student Finance:
www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/studentfinance
- » Disability Support:
www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability
- » Library: www.bbk.ac.uk/lib
- » School of Law: www.bbk.ac.uk/law
- » Study Skills Support:
www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support
- » Advice Centre and Counselling:
www.birkbeckunion.org/welfare
- » Computing and IT Support:
www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/computing

Contact details

If you need any help or advice during the mentoring period or if you experience any problems, please do contact your mentoring coordinator.



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