

**Mentoring FE-based HE students in the
Creative Industries: summative report
of a first-year pilot project**
End of project evaluative report

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March 2020

Mentoring FE based HE students in the Creative Industries: summative report of a first-year pilot project

This report focuses on an Industry Mentoring Scheme aimed at students studying Higher Education courses at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College in the academic year 2018/19. The report explores the design and delivery of the scheme and the impact that it had on participating students. The report will be useful for widening participation practitioners and those looking to emulate a similar programme within the context of Higher Education in Further Education settings.

Executive Summary

This report explores the impact of an Industry Mentoring Scheme on widening participation students studying creative industries courses in Higher Education at a Further Education college, drawing particularly on Bourdieu's theories of *social capital* and *habitus* and Wenger's *communities of practice* to support analysis offered. Specifically, the report examines the importance of social capital in gaining graduate employment and the impact that a student's habitus has on their ability to circumnavigate the labour market. It looks at how mentors in industry can act as 'brokers' to enable students from widening participation backgrounds to gain knowledge and experience of new communities of practice that may otherwise have remained elusive.

The report outlines an Industry Mentoring Scheme at an FE college which connected HE students with a mentor in industry for six months. During the scheme students met with their mentor once a month with the aim of gaining insight into industry practices. The students were matched to a mentor in a relevant industry and given suggested discussion topics; however, the scheme was designed to be led by the students so that they could tailor it to their individual priorities and specific industry needs. The scheme was relatively inexpensive to run; setting up the programme, identifying and approaching mentors was initially time consuming, although once students and mentors had been trained, minimal administration was required from the college.

Students were required to fill in a pre-scheme questionnaire outlining their knowledge of industry, their sense of belonging in Higher Education and their motivations for signing up to the programme. They were asked the same set of questions at the end of the scheme in a post-scheme questionnaire. Students also participated in a focus group approximately midway through the scheme and an informal discussion session with mentors at the conclusion of the programme. Additionally, mentors were asked to complete a post-scheme questionnaire. The main activities students engaged in were: help with their portfolios and university projects; CV writing and interview advice; shadowing; introductions to new industry networks; discussions of how to market themselves as creative professionals; and working on live briefs.

The results of the questionnaires, focus groups and discussion session were analysed and several common themes emerged. Students reported:

- *an increase in their social capital and professional networks as a result of participating on the programme;*
- *greater knowledge of different communities of practice;*
- *increased confidence in their career choices.*

In addition, several students subsequently gained work experience directly from their mentor and from other connections that they had made on the scheme.

The ***recommendations*** arising from the evaluation analysis include:

- **To develop further a robust training programme for mentors and students.**
- **To build links with the careers team at the institution, so students are aware of where to go for graduate careers advice.**
- **To contact participants six months to a year after completing the scheme to ascertain whether it has had any lasting impact.**
- **To capitalise on the new links between the education institution and industry professionals (e.g. utilise the industry mentors for talks, plenaries, industry days where appropriate).**

Industry Mentoring Report

This report focuses on an Industry Mentoring Scheme aimed at students studying Higher Education courses at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College in the academic year 2018/19. The report explores the design and delivery of the scheme and the impact that it had on participating students. The report will be useful for widening participation practitioners and those looking to emulate a similar programme within the context of Higher Education in Further Education settings.

1. Introduction

With the inception of the new Office for Students, the emphasis upon access to university-level study has shifted somewhat and there is now a renewed focus within Widening Participation (WP) practice upon the retention, success and progression of students from non-traditional backgrounds in Higher Education.¹ There is still a much needed requirement to support students with Widening Participation characteristics to enter Higher Education, but Higher Education providers also have a responsibility to ensure that students are assisted in their transition into employment once they have completed their studies.

Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (GB MET) has a higher than average number of Higher Education students from WP backgrounds, most of whom are studying courses in the creative industries.² Whilst outreach work at the College has been ongoing and, in some cases, embedded into the curriculum, it was identified that more focus was needed to improve the outcomes for graduating students. Studying HE in an FE setting often provides students with a supportive learning environment, with smaller class sizes and more tutor contact time, it does however also come with challenges. The resources available in an FE college are frequently less than those at a traditional university, especially in terms of extracurricular activities and dedicated careers teams.³ Moreover, many students have chosen to study at a local institution because of other commitments such as caring for children or parents.⁴ It was therefore necessary to implement a programme that would benefit graduate career outcomes whilst also ensuring that it was flexible to fit with students' existing commitments, and was low cost, and therefore sustainable, for the College.

The Industry Mentoring Scheme was piloted in 2018/19 with students studying Higher Education courses at GB MET College. The aims of the scheme were to increase employability among students; widen their professional networks and cultural capital; and furnish them with better understanding and

¹ For the Office for Students definition of 'non-traditional' backgrounds and 'Widening Participation characteristics' please see Office for Students (2018), *Regulatory Advice 6: Good practice advice on the preparation of access and participation plans for 2019-20*, pp. 7-19

² See Greater Brighton Metropolitan College Access and Participation Plan 2019-20

³ McTaggart, B. (2016), 'Modern higher education students with a non-traditional higher education space: not fitting in, often falling out', *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 21:1-2, pp.93-94

⁴ Bathmaker, A (2016), 'Higher education in further education: the challenges of providing a distinctive contribution that contributes to widening participation', *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 21:2, pp. 24-25

experience of industry. The scheme was open to all HE students, however, those from Widening Participation backgrounds were given priority. Research of other mentoring programmes and graduate employment outcomes for WP students was undertaken before setting up the scheme; this alluded to the fact the WP students were less likely to have large professional networks to draw upon after completing their studies and could not afford to work for free to build up their contacts and experience. With the proliferation of unpaid internships, these students were disadvantaged in a labour market that frequently relies upon existing contacts to get a foot in the door. This is especially prevalent in the creative industries where accessing jobs can be challenging and many industry professionals operate on a freelance basis.

This paper will first examine the literature surrounding mentoring schemes for Higher Education students, with particular emphasis on Bourdieu's concept of 'belonging' and social and cultural capital and an analysis of how the literature reviewed will assist in framing a mentoring scheme; I will then describe, evaluate and analyse the Industry Mentoring Scheme run at GB MET as part of the Widening Participation Strategy; finally I will explore the impact the mentoring scheme has had and suggest recommendations to enhance it in the future.

2. Literature Review

This section will examine literature relating to undergraduate mentoring schemes using Bourdieu's theories of habitus and social and cultural capital⁵ to provide a broader understanding of how these theories helped shape the Industry Mentoring project at GB MET. Initially, I researched existing HEI mentoring schemes in the UK to ascertain their methodology and objectives,⁶ before examining literature around the impact mentoring has at university-level.⁷ I took this approach so that I could gain a clear understanding of the mentoring initiatives that were currently underway in HEIs and the benefits that these had to students. Within my initial research, studies highlighted how the lack of social networks for students from widening participation backgrounds negatively impacted these students' ability to successfully enter the labour market,⁸ and so I decided to frame my literature review within Bourdieusian theory. Within the literature review I focus upon habitus and social and cultural capital in

⁵ Grenfell, M. & James, D. (2005), *Bourdieu and Education: Acts of Practical Theory*

⁶ University of Brighton Momentum Programme: <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/careers/mentoring/momentum-programme/index.aspx> accessed 25.05.18; University of Brunel Professional Mentoring Programme: <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/widening-access/our-mentoring-programmes> accessed 25.05.18; University of Essex Career Mentoring Programme: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/careers/planning/mentoring.aspx> accessed 25.05.18

⁷ See for instance Minocha, S., Hristov, D. & Reynolds, M. (2017), 'From graduate employability to employment: policy and practice in UK higher education', *International Journal of Training and Development* 21:3, pp. 235-248; Reed, R., King, A. & Whiteford, G. (2015), 'Reconceptualising sustainable widening participation: evaluation, collaboration and evolution', *Higher Education Research and Development*, 34:2, pp. 383-396

⁸ Budd, R. (2017), 'Disadvantaged by degrees? How widening participation students are not only hindered in accessing HE, but also during - and after - university', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 21:2-3, pp. 113-114

relation to students with Widening Participation characteristics entering the labour market; the idea of student 'belonging' both in Higher Education and in employment, with reference to Wenger's communities of practice;⁹ whether mentoring schemes can positively affect graduate outcomes; the employer role in aiding cultural capital among students; and finally, how the literature around cultural capital and Communities of Practice informed my own Industry Mentoring Scheme at GB MET College.

2.1 Bourdieu: Habitus, Cultural and Social Capital

One of Bourdieu's most fundamental theories for understanding the structure of society and individuals' space within it, is habitus. Habitus has been described as: 'an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted'¹⁰; meaning therefore, that people's social habits, skills and dispositions are an inherent part of them due to their familial life experiences. This extends to their place in society, thus an individual will feel most comfortable when they are inhabiting the social world into which they grew up.¹¹

Additionally, people possess what is known as 'cultural capital'. Bourdieu theorised that cultural capital is a resource that positively contributes to individuals' educational success, comprising of knowledge and practical skills in circumnavigating social systems to maintain, or promote oneself within, hierarchical social structures. According to Bourdieu cultural capital is built up over generations and passed down through the familial line.¹² However, it is possible to attain more capital, for instance, people who achieve academic qualifications build up their cultural capital through education and access to jobs with higher salaries. Access to such education however is not universal; Bourdieu reasons that capital attracts capital, and therefore the status quo within society is frequently maintained. Moreover, people do not enter the educational field on an equal footing. Grenfell and James note: 'some [people] have inherited wealth, cultural distinctions from upbringing and family connections. Some individuals therefore, already possess quantities of relevant cultural capital bestowed upon them... which makes them better players than others'.¹³

Additionally, it is not only cultural capital that can affect life outcomes, people also possess varying degrees of social capital. Bourdieu describes social capital as: 'contacts and group memberships which, through the accumulation of exchanges, obligations and shared identities, provide actual or potential support and access to valued resources'.¹⁴ Therefore, people are able to access different resources depending upon who they interact with socially; in other words, *it's not what you know, it's who you know*. This assertion is particularly relevant when examining the experiences of students with Widening Participation characteristics. Typically, these students do not enter Higher Education with the same

⁹ Wenger, E. (2000), 'Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems', *Organisation*, 7:2

¹⁰ Grenfell, M. & James, D. (2005), *Bourdieu and Education*, p.15

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 15

¹² Jæger, M. (2011), 'Does Cultural Capital Really Affect Academic Achievement? New Evidence from Combined Sibling and Panel Data', *Sociology of Education*, 84:4, pp. 281-283

¹³ Grenfell, M. & James, D. (2005), *Bourdieu and Education*, p.21

¹⁴ Bourdieu, P. (1993), *Sociology in Question*, p.143

social and cultural capital as other students for whom Higher Education has often been a presumed route, taken by other family members and social contacts and embedded within their habitus.

Bourdieu has been criticised for having a reductionist view of society, one that fails to consider the revolutionary potential of individuals and their ability to intervene in their own destinies. Bourdieu's theory supposes that societal structures continually reproduce, and people are not able to transpose their allotted places in the hierarchy¹⁵. In her study into girls' educational choices, Bowers-Brown highlighted: 'the accepting of the familiar, or making choices because of their familiarity, is linked with Bourdieu's concept of habitus'; the girls in Bowers-Brown's study were reliant upon family and friends to make educational choices, meaning that certain pathways were automatically excluded by the participants.¹⁶ This suggests that students who do not have access to a range of educational and labour pathways through familial connections, are limited in their knowledge of, and exposure to, different industries, and where they do have knowledge of these industries, without the required social capital, entering them can prove challenging. Further to this, it has been found that typically middle-class students have higher levels of cultural capital and can therefore navigate different educational and employment trajectories more effectively than many students with Widening Participation characteristics.¹⁷ On her study of middle class students making university choices, Irene Kleanthous found: '[the students] often benefit from expensive private tutorials... and may access their parents' workplace or work colleagues' expertise before making their career choice'.¹⁸ However, utilising the Bourdeusian model does not mean that it is necessary to take a fixed view of society, as critics have claimed. Moreover, it is possible to use Bourdieu's theory to identify capital, and then, in the instance of Widening Participation students, provide increased access and ways in which to secure the cultural and social capital needed to successfully enter both Higher Education and the labour market.

It should be noted that capital itself is a fluid concept; the notion of what is considered 'capital' varies greatly between differing social contexts. Individuals are therefore frequently able to identify social and cultural capital within their own societies and use the structural norms of the habitus that is familiar to them to gain capital from within. This provides an alternative form of capital and attributes recognition and power to cultural resources that non-dominant groups can access, thereby critiquing the notion that people from less advantaged backgrounds are somehow deficient in cultural capital and aspiration.¹⁹ The fluidity of cultural capital can, however, be problematic for Widening Participation students

¹⁵ Mills, C. (2008), 'Reproduction and Transformation of Inequalities in Schooling: The Transformative Potential of the Theoretical Constructs of Bourdieu', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29:1, p. 81

¹⁶ Bowers-Brown, T. (2016), "'It's like if you don't go to uni you fail in life": The relationship between girls' educational choices, habitus and the forms of capital', Thatcher, J., Ingram, N., Burke, C. & Abrahams, J., *Bourdieu: The Next Generation: The Development of Bourdieu's Intellectual Heritage in Contemporary UK Society*, p. 61

¹⁷ Kleanthous, I. (2013), 'Bourdieu applied: exploring perceived parental influence on adolescent students' educational choices for studies in higher education', Murphy, M., *Social Theory and Education: Understanding Foucault, Habermas, Bourdieu and Derrida*, pp.156-159

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp.156-159

¹⁹ Wallace, D. (2016), 'Reinterpreting Bourdieu, belonging and Black identities: Exploring "Black" cultural capital among Black Caribbean youth in London', Thatcher, J., Ingram, N., Burke, C. & Abrahams, J., *Bourdieu: The Next Generation: The Development of Bourdieu's Intellectual Heritage in Contemporary UK Society*, p. 39

entering Higher Education and employment as there are no static ‘rules’ that can be learned. Moreover, habitus has been described as a ‘habit’ and ‘unthinkingness in actions’;²⁰ along with cultural capital, it is not a concept that can be easily measured, weighed up, and emulated, rather it is a ‘belonging’. This is where HEIs have a role to play in ensuring that students from non-traditional backgrounds feel that they belong in their chosen institutions, and as a result can successfully access the capital that Higher Education can provide.

2.2 Communities of Practice

Increasing the sense of ‘belonging’, of being accepted, valued and included, among students has been shown to increase retention and engagement in Higher Education.²¹ In his social theory of learning, Wenger asserts the need for a ‘Community of Practice’ to exist for learning to successfully occur. Wenger theorises that learning can only take place when participants are active within a community; this consists of understanding a community’s priorities, actively engaging with, and contributing to it, and producing a repertoire of resources, such as specific routines, language or tangible tools, that can be shared and used within it.²² Learning is therefore an essentially social experience, which is entwined with identity development. When applied to the context of Higher Education, Masika and Jones found that developing a robust community of practice for first year students in HEIs whereby students actively participated in their learning through discussion, collaboration and extensive communication, increased their confidence, engagement and sense of belonging.²³ Wenger argues that: ‘participating in these “communities of practice” is essential to our learning. It is at the very core of what makes us human beings capable of meaningful knowing’.²⁴ Atkinson found that Higher Education Institutions with a greater number of students from non-traditional backgrounds tend to have higher withdrawal rates compared to other HEIs. Atkinson attributes this to a lack of provision and support for Widening Participation students once they start their studies.²⁵ Therefore, for HEIs to increase student success, retention and progression, as the Office for Students has outlined is a priority, it is essential that they create communities of practice where students with Widening Participation characteristics are able to become active participants and feel accepted and valued.

2.3 Mentoring Schemes and Boundary Spanners

One way in which many HEIs are seeking to create accessible communities of practice is via mentoring schemes. Mentoring schemes have been shown not only to provide invaluable workplace experience,

²⁰ Grenfell, M. & James, D. (2005), *Bourdieu and Education*, p.15

²¹ Masika, R. & Jones, J. (2016), ‘Building student belonging and engagement: insights into higher education students’ experiences of participating and learning together’, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 21:2, p. 138

²² Wenger, E. (2000), ‘Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems’, *Organisation*, 7:2, p. 229

²³ Masika, R. & Jones, J. (2016), ‘Building student belonging and engagement’, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 21:2, p. 147

²⁴ Wenger, E. (2000), ‘Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems’, *Organisation*, 7:2, p. 229

²⁵ Atkinson, W. (2012), ‘*Reproduction* revisited: comprehending complex educational trajectories’, *The Sociological Review*, 60, p. 744

and aid progression onto graduate level employment, but also to increase Widening Participation students' sense of belonging when they are in Higher Education and to equip them with increased cultural capital. In a mentoring scheme in the Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were linked with mentors in industry. In the university's evaluation of the scheme, four broad immediate outcomes were identified: an increased sense of belonging; an increased motivation to complete their studies, (the retention rate for students on the programme was one hundred percent); an increased social capital; and an increased capacity to succeed on their course.²⁶ Further to this, Jenkinson and Benson state that reported outcomes in mentoring schemes for both mentors and mentees, have included: 'increases in satisfaction, fulfilment, productivity, recognition from others, respect, emotional support, behaviour and classroom management skills, interpersonal skills, critical reflection and leadership capacity'.²⁷ The mentoring relationship is therefore not just a conduit to different communities of practice, or an aid in procuring employment, it can also furnish mentees with new skills and an increased cultural capital which they can utilise during their Higher Education experience.

Wenger notes that people can act as brokers between communities which enable boundaries to be broken down; this often takes the form of a defined personal relationship between two people from different communities.²⁸ Mentoring therefore, enables 'brokering' to be successfully achieved between the mentor and the mentee, both of whom bring valuable knowledge and insight to the relationship. Within the brokering relationship, both mentors and mentees act as 'boundary spanners'; Williams characterises boundary spanners by: 'their ability to engage with others and deploy effective relational and interpersonal competencies... to acknowledge and value difference in terms of culture, mind-set, profession, role and "gaze"'.²⁹ Boundary spanners are people who operate between traditional spaces and groups, they transpose the norm and uncover collaborative knowledge across societal structures to improve practice, functionality and increase access to resource.³⁰ In their study into refugee children's assimilation in US schools, Koyama and Ghosh found that boundary spanners were able to act as 'cultural brokers' between the school staff and refugee children to create a more inclusive, positive learning environment, encourage collaboration and built beneficial relationships with internal and external partners.³¹ Boundary spanners' ability to transcend different communities of practice and encourage collaboration can be clearly identified in mentoring relationship, with both mentor and mentee acting as a boundary spanner: one with experience into industry and the other offering insight into current education practice and expectations of new graduate employees.

²⁶ Reed, R., King, A. & Whiteford, G. (2015), 'Reconceptualising sustainable widening participation', *Higher Education Research and Development*, 34:2, p. 386

²⁷ Jenkinson, K. & Benson, A. (2016), 'Designing Higher Education curriculum to increase graduate outcomes and work readiness: The assessment and mentoring programme (AMP)', *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 24:5, p. 457

²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 235-236

²⁹ Williams, P. (Mar 2002), 'The Competent Boundary Spanner', *Public Administration*, 80:1, p. 110

³⁰ Haas, A. (2015), 'Crowding at the Frontier: boundary spanners, gatekeepers and knowledge brokers', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 19:5, pp. 1029-1030

³¹ Koyama, J. P. & Ghosh, S. (2018), 'Spanning Boundaries by Building Relationships', *Global Education Review*, 5(4), pp. 98-111

Mentoring is not a passive exchange, whereby the mentee simply listens, rather, they are expected to engage and participate in discussion. Mentors are very rarely conceived as 'teachers', they instead are there to facilitate the mentee's learning and engage in shared exchanges, they too are therefore able to access a different community which may have previously been alien to them. This can aid employer expectations of graduate abilities; employers who have been engaged in projects with students will have a better understanding of their learning and therefore form realistic expectations of their skill sets. It can also assist students in their understanding of employer requirements so that, where possible, they can adjust their learning and extracurricular activities accordingly. Research highlights that students with Widening Participation characteristics tend to have fewer accessible social networks that can be utilised in career formation and so have a lesser awareness of employer expectation.³² Conversely, those from more privileged backgrounds often have access to resources that will facilitate their career progression through familial and social links.³³ For less advantaged students, mentoring can furnish them with the boundary spanner role and provide that 'broker' relationship.³⁴ In his examination of an online industry mentoring programme, Figueroa found that not only were mentors able to provide students with career advice, but that they also leveraged their own social capital to grow the mentees' networks and assist in their desired career pathways. In his analysis of this outcome, Figueroa invokes the expression: 'it takes a village to raise a child'; this notion supports the idea that collaborative approaches are fundamental to learning and development.³⁵

2.4 Networking

The use of networks to increase belonging amongst students is a collaborative approach that can prove essential to students' employment trajectories. The importance of networks and networking has been raised extensively in conjunction with mentoring schemes; it links intractably with Wenger's Community of Practice and furnishes students with access to social networks which provide an opportunity to increase their social and cultural capital. Batistic and Tymon assert that networking helps shape social capital by increasing access to resources in the form of people and information. They found that when students were able to access career-related resources and displayed 'high networking behaviour', their personal perceived employability rose. This may be because access to career resources, such as networking, enables students and graduates to identify the needs of their chosen industry, or employer, and adjust the way in which they present their strengths accordingly.³⁶ Utilising mentoring schemes to grow students' networks also alleviates the need for them to have extensive economic capital. This is particularly important as financial barriers frequently prevent Widening Participation students from

³² Kleanthous, I. (2013), 'Bourdieu applied', Murphy, M., *Social Theory and Education: Understanding Foucault, Habermas, Bourdieu and Derrida*, pp.156-159

³³ *Ibid*, pp.156-159

³⁴ Figueroa, O. (2017), 'Virtual Mentoring: Practitioner strategies for students underrepresented in industry', *Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 7: 2, p. 144

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 147

³⁶ Batistic, S. & Tymon, A. (2017), 'Networking behaviour, graduate employability: a social capital perspective', *Education & Training*, 59:4, pp. 376-382

participating in other opportunities which may provide access to industry networks, such as unpaid internships. Unpaid internships are becoming an increasingly common phenomenon, and one that graduates are regularly required to engage in to successfully navigate competitive job markets and increase their social networks. As students from Widening Participation backgrounds are often unable to participate in unpaid internships, it has been acknowledged that they are commonly at a disadvantage when negotiating the labour market; these students typically earn significantly less than their more affluent counterparts.³⁷ Pitman et al argue that in order to ensure equity of graduate outcome across socio-economic groups, it is imperative to provide students with positive learning experiences, which will adequately support their transition into employment.³⁸ By offering students a glimpse into different communities of practice through mentoring and removing the financial burden, HEIs can equip them with knowledge and capital, which will assist students in their transition into industry and smooth the way for their integration into these new communities.

2.5 The role of industry

It is not only HEIs who are responsible for equalising graduate outcomes, in their research into creative students' employability, Bridgstock and Cunningham assert that industry must also play a part.³⁹ This is where mentoring again comes into play; not only are students able to gain insight into different career pathways, but industry professionals can form realistic expectations of student capabilities and adjust their recruitment processes accordingly. Minocha, Hristov and Reynolds highlight: 'employer recognition of collaborative initiatives among universities and employers are generally aimed at bridging the gap between institutional curriculum and employer expectations'.⁴⁰ There are often substantial differences between students' perceptions of what employability entails and employer expectations of new graduates.⁴¹ This is particularly true for Widening Participation students who often do not have the cultural capital to increase their awareness of employer expectations, or do not have access to work placements and internships secured directly through familial links, as more advantaged students frequently do. It is imperative therefore, that HEIs work directly with industry to more closely align curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, such as mentoring, to ensure that students' experiences at Higher Education will positively contribute towards their employment prospects after they have graduated.

2.6 Conclusions from literature

³⁷ Pitman, T., Roberts, L., Bennett, D. & Richardson, S. (2017), 'An Australian study of graduate outcomes for disadvantaged students', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43:1, p. 47

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 10

³⁹ Bridgstock, R. & Cunningham, S. (2016), 'Creative labour and graduate outcomes: Implications for Higher Education and cultural policy', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 22:1, p. 22

⁴⁰ Minocha, S., Hristov, D. & Reynolds, M. (2017), 'From graduate employability to employment', *International Journal of Training and Development*, 21:3, p.243

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 239

As discussed, cultural and social capital in relevant areas can fundamentally increase students' ability to successfully enter the labour market. This capital is generally more difficult to access for Widening Participation students who may not be exposed to the familial connections that more affluent students have. A way in which to combat this is through mentoring schemes which can help grow students' professional networks and provide an insight into communities of practice from which they may otherwise be excluded. Moreover, mentoring schemes have been shown to increase a sense of belonging among Widening Participation students, particularly in relation to their own experience of studying at HEIs, which do not always present an inclusive environment for students with little experience or knowledge of Higher Education. Additionally, in the examples outlined above, the mentoring schemes were conducted in universities; research into students studying Higher Education in Further Education settings is relatively scarce, and so this is a gap I hope to address further within this report.

3. Project Outline

The Industry Mentoring Scheme at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College ran from October 2018 to May 2019 and connected Higher Education students across curriculum areas in with a mentor in industry. Students were asked to apply to the scheme and, where possible, all students were provided with a mentor. In cases where it was not possible to link all students with a mentor, those with Widening Participation characteristics were given priority. Mentors were recruited prior to the scheme taking place, with the majority signing up to the programme over the summer of 2018. Training sessions for mentors and students were held in October 2018 and 1:1 mentoring meetings began in November 2018, running once a month until April 2019. All students and mentors were invited to a celebration event in May 2019 where qualitative evaluation was undertaken. In addition to this, pre and post scheme evaluation forms were issued to students, a focus group for students was held midway through the programme and mentors were asked to complete a post-scheme evaluation form.

3.1 Summary of project

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|--|---|
| Duration of project | Eight months, mentoring meetings ongoing for six months |
| Frequency of meetings | Once a month |
| Number of students | 22 |
| Number of mentors | 22 |
| Number of students from Widening Participation backgrounds | 20 (91%) |
| Students' degree subjects | Music Production, Fine Art, Games Design, Creative Media Production, Theatre Arts (Acting), Prop Making and Special Effects, Visual Arts Practice, Business |
| Project timeline | May 2018: Scheme advertised to students, application process for students opened |
| | May 2018-September 2018: Recruitment of mentors |
| | September 2018: Scheme re-advertised to students |

| | |
|--|---|
| | October 2018: Mentee and mentor training, pre-scheme evaluation |
| | November 2018 – April 2019: 1:1 mentee and mentor meetings |
| | January 2019: Mentee focus group |
| | May 2019: Celebration event and post-scheme feedback |

3.2 Mentor/student recruitment and matching

After researching mentoring schemes and speaking to industry professionals, the next step to in setting up the scheme was to recruit appropriate mentors. The scheme was designed to give students insight into an industry specific to their degree, however, as the scheme was voluntary, and open to all students studying HE, it was unclear at that stage which students would apply. After consultation with the then-head of Higher Education at the College, it was agreed that I should aim for six pairings initially. I endeavoured to recruit mentors from a range of industries so that I could offer a broad programme, rather than focusing on one particular course. This had mixed success; I initially recruited around 15 mentors, however, once students signed up there were gaps in subject areas, and so I continued to recruit mentors later than I had planned; this also vastly increased the number of students engaged on the scheme, from our initial aim of six to 22 pairings overall. 20 of the students on the scheme were from widening participation backgrounds (91%). Although I did advertise the scheme out to students before the summer break, the take-up was minimal, and I found that I had some mentors for whom there wasn't a student. I promoted it again at the beginning of the Autumn term and an additional number of students signed up, however, there were still some gaps in subject areas, for instance quite a few professionals working within IT expressed interest in being a mentor, however, despite targeting my recruit methods, no students from the HND IT course applied for the scheme. A full examination of students' reluctance to access support is unfortunately outside of the remit of this study, although it would be useful to determine their motivation.

One of the main challenges in setting up the mentoring scheme was that I did not know which industries I would need mentors from until the students had signed up; if I waited until all students had applied to the scheme, I would have very little time to recruit mentors. 91% of students that did sign up for the scheme were from courses in the Creative Industries. Bridgstock notes that Creative Industry careers are: 'largely individually navigated, often with minimal opportunity for stable employment' and that they are frequently 'dependent on informal contacts'.⁴² The students from the creative sectors may therefore have been further motivated to participate in the scheme as they were aware how imperative networks and contacts are to their future employment.

The mentors came from a range of backgrounds. I researched local professionals working in relevant industries and contacted them as appropriate, as well as drawing upon the Widening Participation

⁴² Bridgstock, R. (2011), 'Skills for creative industry graduate success', *Education and Training*, 53:1, p. 10

Team's existing networks. Most mentors signed up individually, although there were a number who joined after hearing about the scheme from a colleague. There was one notable exception to this; after I approached the director of a games company, nine members of staff signed up to be mentors. Due to having such a high volume of mentors and class sizes at the College being relatively small, I worked with the course leader from the Games Development course and all students in their final year, as well as one second year student, engaged in the programme. The course leader also advised on the matching process as she had a better knowledge of her students' subject specialisms. All other students were asked to fill out a short online application form indicating why they would like a mentor and what aspects of their course they were most interested in pursuing as a career; I then matched them to the most relevant mentor.

3.3 Mentor/student training

The mentors and students underwent separate training sessions; the sessions included information about the aims of the scheme; tactics for getting the most out of meetings; what was expected of them in their roles; potential topics of discussion and activities; safeguarding; and a pre-scheme evaluation for the students (see Appendix 1). Students and mentors were both given a handbook with useful information for use throughout the scheme (Appendices 2 and 3). During both training sessions it was highlighted that the mentoring meetings should be student-led; it was up to the students to set an agenda, with recommendations from their mentor where appropriate. I wanted to ensure that the meetings were not too prescriptive, and the students took the lead as it became clear in their applications that each student had a slightly different agenda in signing up for the scheme. For instance, one mature student was interested in starting their own business after graduating, while another wanted help in sourcing potential job roles and refining their CV.

3.4 Initial contact and meeting

After the student training session, the mentees were given details of their mentors, this included a paragraph written by the mentor about their own experiences and current job role, and a rough template email to use to introduce themselves, outlining why they signed up to the scheme, what they were studying and their availability (Appendix 4). Students were also asked if they had any additional needs they would like their mentor to be informed about; action was taken on this as appropriate. The students were required to copy me in to the first email, this was primarily to track that everyone had made contact. Subsequent emails were between the mentor and mentee only, unless there was a problem or query. Initially, students and mentors were asked to submit a short summary after meetings; for students this was a working document on the Google Drive that they would be able to access at any time. This proved unpopular with the majority of the mentoring pairs, many saw it as another piece of paperwork to add to their already busy schedule, and most people only completed a couple of summaries. I met with the mentees in January and it was agreed that the documents would remain on the Google Drive for those that found them useful but filling them out would no longer be a requirement.

3.5 On-going mentoring practice

Following the initial email contact, the students and mentors arranged meetings once a month; when these occurred was up to the mentoring pair; if there was any difficulty in arranging meetings both the student and the mentor could ask me to intervene. This happened in a few cases where the student had been unresponsive, where this was due to personal circumstances, with the students' permission, we were able to inform their mentors. In a few cases the students were uncommunicative with their mentor and three students did not complete the scheme. All of these students were in their first year of study, of the students that completed 18 were in their second or third year and one was in their first year.

Several of the pairings maintained contact via email between meetings; for instance, if the mentor came across anything they thought would interest their mentee, such as industry talks or job opportunities, or if the mentee had specific questions about something they had discussed at their meetings, or wanted to share elements of their course work. It was clear that the mentors were not 'teachers' in any capacity and so the students should not bring their work to their mentor to 'mark', however, a lot of students did discuss their ideas for college work to gain an industry opinion; this was especially valuable for students developing their final year portfolios. Where possible, the students were encouraged to meet their mentor at the mentor's workplace, and as a result many of them were able to interact with other professionals and colleagues, further increasing their professional networks and gaining insight into a variety of industry specialisms. Many students shadowed their mentors at work and as a result, a proportion of them undertook additional paid work for their mentor's company. There was a small budget to accommodate student travel costs if needed; most mentors worked locally and so the costs involved were minimal, but some students did draw upon the funding to attend networking events and meetings with their mentor.

Midway through the programme, I met with the students to gather feedback and ascertain how valuable everyone was finding the mentoring process. This was also a good opportunity for students to speak to each other and gain ideas on potential discussion points for mentoring meetings. Some of the mentees did not know anyone else on the scheme, so the January meeting proved a useful conduit to share experiences and glean information. It was also positive to touch base with the students and ensure they felt fully supported by both the college and their mentor.

3.6 Celebration and feedback

We held a celebration event at the completion of the programme; all participants were invited to the event as well as key stakeholders in the college. Students and mentors celebrated their contribution and group discussions were held about the benefit of the scheme and any improvements that could be made. This enabled me to collect rich, qualitative data on outcomes and recommendations that could directly feed into the next intake. All the mentors expressed an interest in continuing with their role in

subsequent years so by having a larger group discussion they were able to gain ideas from other professionals about activities that they could include their student in, particularly in terms of shadowing and networking. The feedback from this session was positive, with all attendees noting that it was very beneficial to come together and meet in a larger group. Evaluation forms were issued to students and mentors via email after the celebration event (see Appendices 5 and 6).

4. Project Evaluation

In evaluating the Industry Mentoring Scheme, I aim to ascertain whether the programme has provided students with increased social capital both in relation to Higher Education and industry, as well as evaluating their perceived access to the new communities of practice to which they will have been exposed. In the mentoring scheme at the Macquarie University in Sydney, evaluation consisted of formal focus groups, participants observation, attitudinal surveys and life history interviews. The researchers found that the interviews with students enabled them to contextualise the narrative evidence provided by the students within the broader landscape of the students' identity and life experiences. These forms of evaluation enabled the practitioners to reflect on the scheme in a broader sense in relation to student identity, as well as to identify the positive impact the programme had and any areas for improvement. Moreover, the practitioners were able to share their findings with the industry mentors which reinforced their stake in the programme.⁴³ By emulating some of these evaluation techniques in the Industry Mentoring Scheme at GB MET and predominantly focusing qualitative methods, I hope to address issues of student engagement and identify areas where further support may be required. Furthermore, I will share the results of the evaluation with employers to boost interest in the scheme and encourage further engagement between students and industry professionals.

4.1 Evaluation Strategy

It was vital to build a robust evaluation strategy to assess to effectiveness of the Industry Mentoring Scheme. Having reviewed the literature above, as well as similar mentoring schemes at HEIs, I identified key areas to assess prior to the start of the scheme: students' attitudes towards their course, their chosen industry and higher education; students' knowledge of industry and their career options; students' motivation in signing up to the scheme. I then looked to revisit these at the conclusion of the programme to ascertain whether the scheme had an impact upon these areas.

A questionnaire was designed for students to complete, prior to taking part in the scheme (see Appendix 1); the aim of this was to gain a greater understanding of students' current attitudes towards their studies and future career paths, their knowledge of industries linked to their chosen course and their personal motivations for signing up to the mentoring scheme. The first and second sections of the questionnaire (attitude and decision making; knowledge and skills) prompted students to answer on a Likert scale and the final section (the mentoring scheme) was comprised of 'free text' boxes. The pre-

⁴³ Reed, R., King, A. & Whiteford, G. (2015), 'Reconceptualising sustainable widening participation', p. 386

scheme evaluation forms were distributed at the training session and the response rate was 100% (22 students overall).

Aside from paper evaluation forms, I also held a focus group with the students in January 2019: the session was an opportunity to gather qualitative feedback from mentees and for them to gain ideas for their sessions from each other. It also provided a space for me to check that everything was going well on the scheme and for them to bring any concerns or queries in an informal learning environment. I had initially asked students and mentors to fill out an online summary form after each meeting; however, this proved very unpopular and at the January meeting students highlighted how it was a task that frequently fell off the bottom of their to-do list. The face-to-face focus group therefore presented a good opportunity to gain feedback from the students and to iron out any problems. I also wanted to ensure that students felt that they were part of a scheme and so I felt it important to bring them together in the middle of process as well as at the beginning and the end.

At the end of the mentoring programme, during the celebration event, the mentors and students worked together to qualitatively evaluate the programme: as a group they were asked to discuss the what worked well/what they particularly enjoyed and areas for development/what they would do differently next time. Post-scheme evaluation forms were also sent via email to mentors and students (see Appendices 5 and 6). The students were given an evaluation form which included a set of 10 identical questions to the pre-scheme form issued at the beginning to ascertain whether there had been any change in their attitude and decision making in relation to their career and in their knowledge of industry. The response rate for the post-scheme evaluation form was 27% (six students); it is important to take this into consideration during the qualitative analysis.

4.2 Summary of findings

4.2.1 Pre-Scheme Project Evaluation

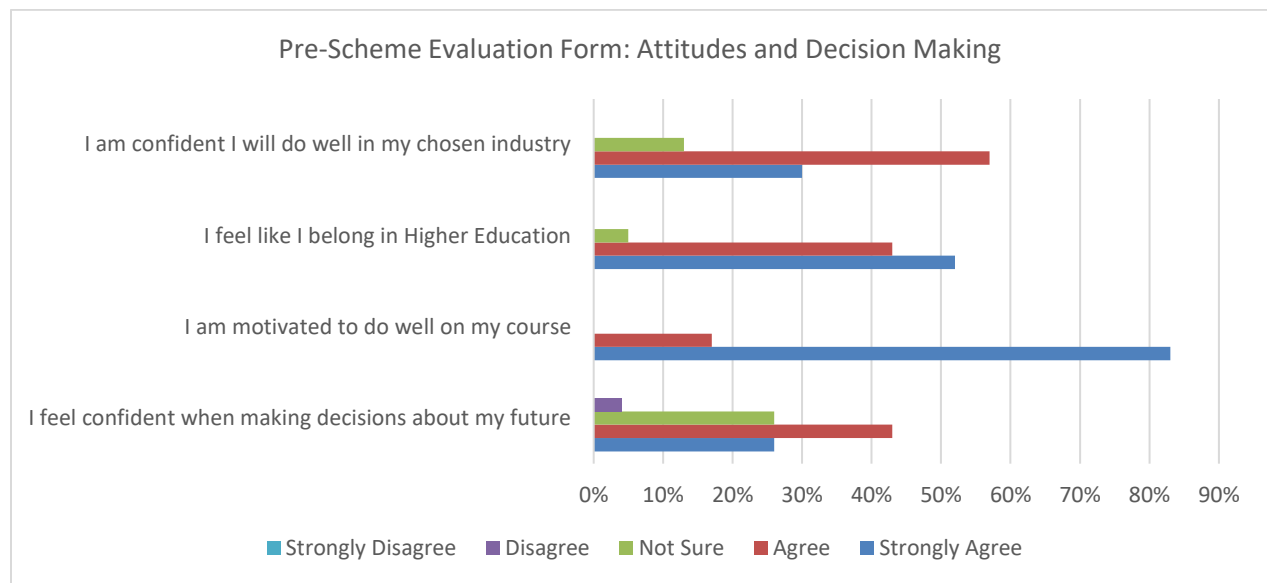
Table 1 highlights that students believe they have the knowledge and skills required to be successful in their future industries: 87% of students either agree or strongly agree that they will do well in their chosen industry, with only 13% answering 'not sure' and no one disagreeing. This is further supported by the question in Table 2: 'I have the skills to progress in my career' (83% agree or strongly agree). It is interesting to compare these figures with the answers to questions in table 2: 'I know a lot about the industry I want to go into' (70% agree or strongly agree, 13% disagree) and 'I know what is required for my industry' (74% agree or strongly agree, 22% not sure, 4% disagree). The disparity in these numbers highlights that the students on the scheme have confidence in their abilities but do not necessarily have extensive knowledge of the industry they would like to go into.

One aspect that I intended to examine when designing the scheme, was whether it positively impacted upon students' sense of belonging in Higher Education, particularly in relation to students with widening participation characteristics. However, from the pre-scheme evaluation form it is apparent that mentees already had a strong sense of belonging (with 95% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they felt like they

belonged in Higher Education). This may be due to the nature of studying HE in an FE institution where class sizes tend to be smaller than traditional HEIs and students frequently have the same tutors for the duration of their course.⁴⁴

A characteristic of similar mentoring schemes in HEIs was an increase in students' motivation to succeed on their course after having taken part in mentoring,⁴⁵ and so this was something I was interested to assess. Conversely, students on the scheme at GB MET were already highly motivated (100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I am motivated to do well on my course'). This may be because the students had signed up voluntarily and so represented some of the more engaged members of the cohort. Promoting an academic HE community within the FE environment and providing students with opportunities for co-creation of the curriculum within their courses are key strategies for GB MET⁴⁶ and mentees' sense of belonging and motivation to succeed suggest that this strategy has been particularly effective within this cohort of students.

Table 1: Pre-Scheme Evaluation Form

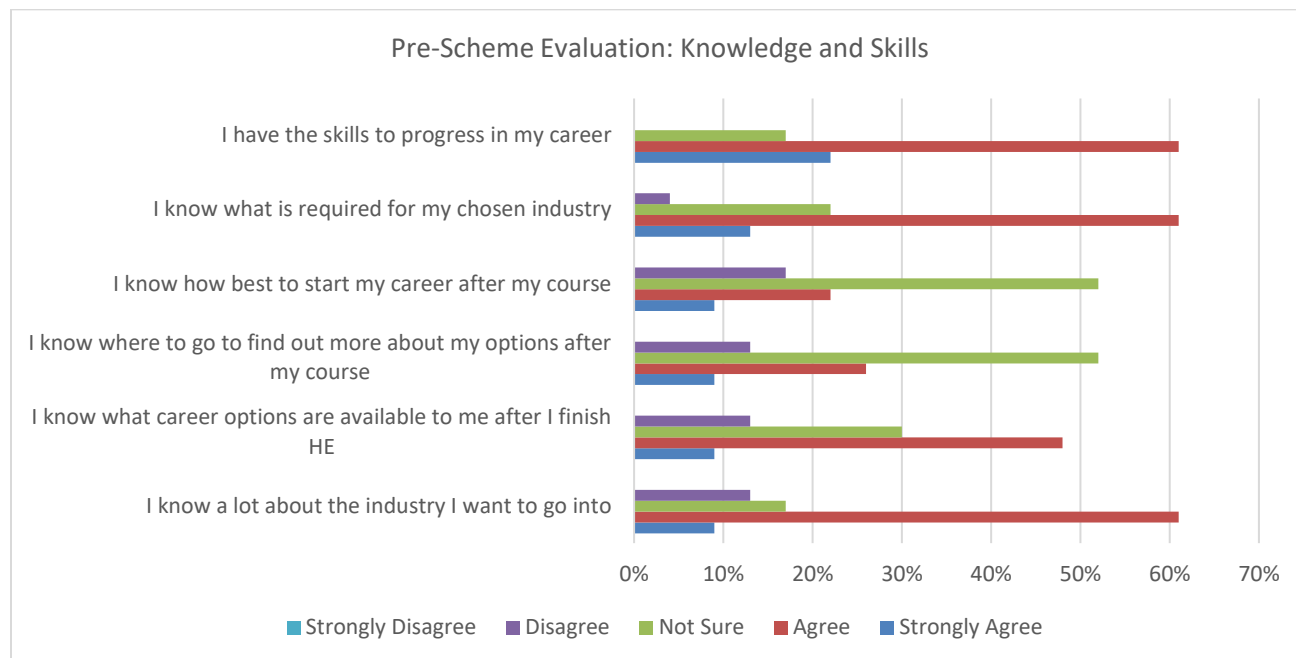


⁴⁴ Parry, G. (2012) 'Higher education in further education colleges', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 16:4, p. 120

⁴⁵ Minocha, S., Hristov, D. & Reynolds, M. (2017), 'From graduate employability to employment', *International Journal of Training and Development*, 21:3, 235-248

⁴⁶ Greater Brighton Metropolitan College HE Strategic Plan 2017-2022, p.4:
<https://www.gbmc.ac.uk/media/pdf/gbmet-he-strategy-1604.pdf> accessed 03.01.20

Table 2: Pre-Scheme Evaluation Form



As part of the pre-scheme evaluation form, participants were asked why they had signed up for the programme and whether there were any goals they wanted to achieve over the course of the 6 months (see Tables 3 and 4). In answer to the question ‘why did you apply for the mentoring scheme’, 50% of participants cited a desire to gain a greater insight into industry practice; 32% stated that they would like to gain networking opportunities and learn from experienced professionals. Only 9% stated a reason for signing up the scheme was to boost their confidence and only one student (5%) cited a reason as being helpful for their progression on their current course. This highlights how students were looking for an industry focus for the mentoring scheme: very few of them linked the programme with their current course, rather it was considered an additional resource that would be helpful for career progression rather than academic achievement. It is interesting that at the end of the programme, one student directly linked achieving a high grade in their dissertation with the discussions they had with their mentor, however, prior to the scheme, this was not much of a consideration. This may in part due to the way in which I marketed the mentoring scheme; its focus was primarily on increasing industry knowledge and networks and it was aimed at second- and third-year students. It is worth noting that of the 22 students who started the scheme, 19 completed and the three that did not were all in their first year, highlighting that perhaps the emphasis on industry was not as relevant for first year students who would only have been on the course for a couple of months before their first mentoring meeting.

Table 3: Pre-Scheme Evaluation Form

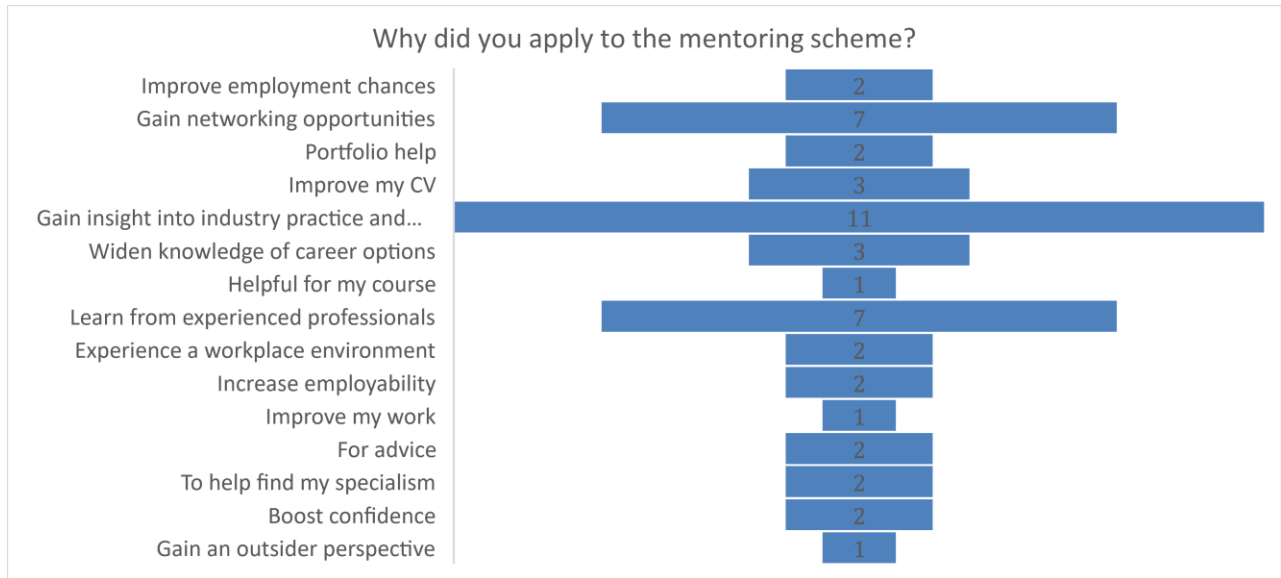
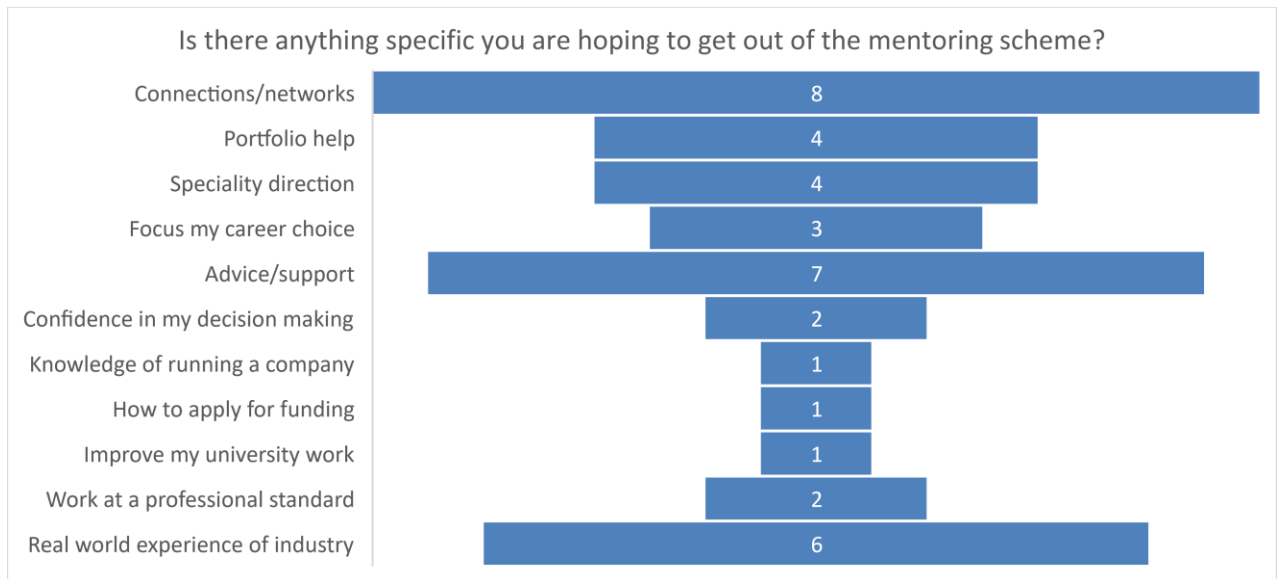


Table 4: Pre-Scheme Evaluation Form



4.2.2 January Focus Group

I met with the students in January to gain their perspective on the scheme so far and to provide a space where they could bring any questions or concerns. A positive outcome of the group was that students were able to learn from each other’s mentoring experiences; during the focus group they developed tips to get the most out of the programme based upon their experiences so far (Table 5). When asked about the matching process, most students were happy to be matched rather than choosing their mentor themselves, with four of them stating that they would not have applied to their mentor had they seen

their profile in advance but they were happy with the match as it had given them a different perspective on industry and knowledge of alternative career paths that may be relevant in the future.

The main theme that emerged from the January focus group was the value that the mentees were getting in experiencing their mentor's working environments and working on 'live' projects; this was the case for those that were freelance as well as those employed by a company. Students also noted how the scheme had led them to meet not just with their mentor, but with other professionals and companies within industry as well, as their mentors acted as boundary spanners between students and their own colleagues and contacts. Increasing students' networks and cultural capital was a key reason for setting up the scheme and so it was heartening to hear that they had had a positive experience in this regard.

Table 5: Student Tips

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prepare what you want to get out of meetings in advance2. Email a rough agenda to mentor before meeting3. At each meeting set goals to achieve ready for next meeting4. Talk through your and your mentor's expectations of mentoring – what are you hoping to get out of the scheme?5. Should be professional with mentor but honest about skill level – easier for them to help, make appropriate suggestions if they know where your skills are/what's lacking6. Be open with mentor |
|---|

4.2.3 End of programme evaluation

Evaluation forms were sent via email to mentors and students following the programme; however, only six of 22 students returned their forms (27%), the rate of return for mentors was slightly higher with 10 returning the forms (45%). Due to the differences in the number of mentees completing the pre-scheme evaluation form, it is problematic to make comparisons between the pre- and post-scheme forms, although the information is included in Tables 6, 7 and 8 below. Of the six that completed the form, all agreed or strongly agreed that their professional networks increased, and they had gained insight into industry as a result of the industry mentoring scheme, which highlights that the scheme was valuable for these six students at the least. However, two of the six students highlighted that they did not know where to go to find out more about their career options or how to best start their career after their course. This is something that needs to be addressed within the College and indicates that better links to the careers service should be made to ensure students have the required knowledge to successfully transition into graduate employment.

Table 6: Post-Scheme Evaluation Form

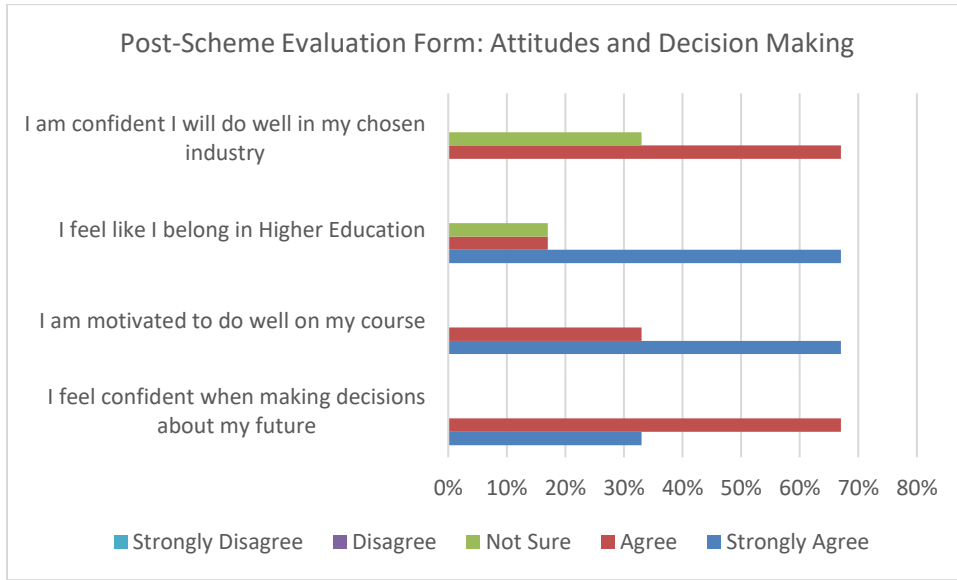


Table 7: Post-Scheme Evaluation Form

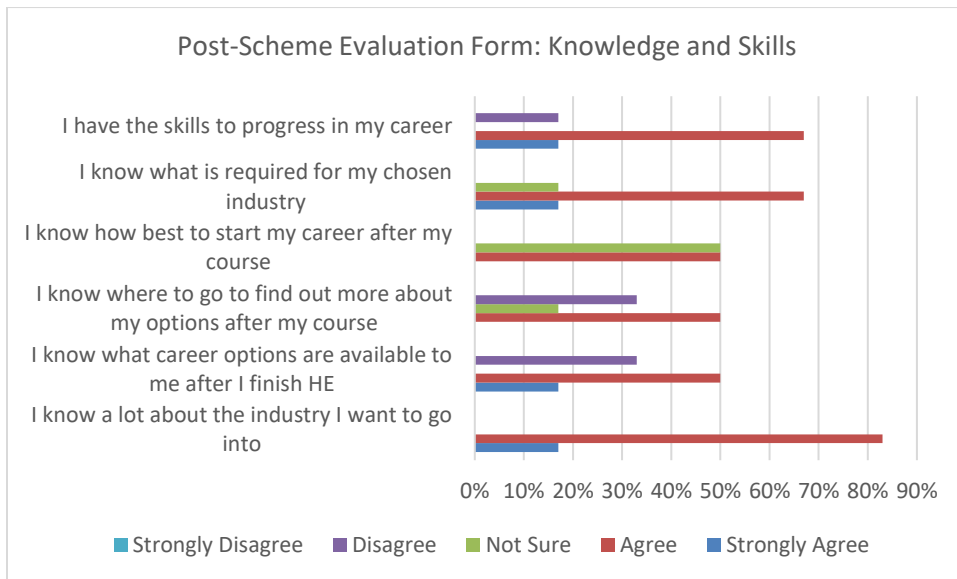
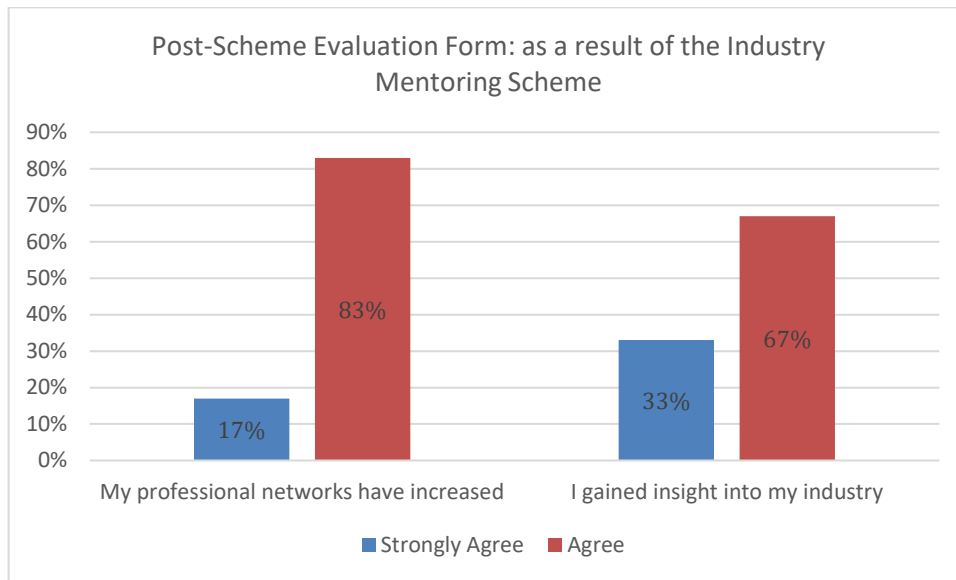


Table 8: Post-Scheme Evaluation Form



Within the evaluation forms students and mentors were asked to provide a summary of activities (see Table 9). Mentees engaged in a range of activities, with the subject of meetings varying enormously between each mentoring pair. To ascertain which areas the mentoring scheme may have impacted upon, I have categorised the activities undertaken into attitudes and decision making; industry knowledge and skills; and academic support.

Table 9: Summary of Activities

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Attitude and decision making | Ideas and suggestions for approaching challenges Goal setting |
| Industry knowledge and skills | CV help Shadowing and assisting with projects/productions Private view at mentor's workplace Visiting other departments in mentor's company Insight into working environment in industry Discussion of mentor's pathway to starting their business/getting into industry Careers advice How to market yourself as an artist Applying for funding Networking events Work experience Cover letter advice Industry review meetings with whole art team Discussion of a project lifecycle |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| | Specialism advice Day-to-day work of industry Interview advice Planning future collaboration between mentor and mentee |
| Academic support | Support with and feedback on academic work/assignments Portfolio help Links for further learning Advice on group projects Introduction to networks to help with specific assignment Review of mentee website |

As noted in the evaluation strategy, I initially aimed to assess students’ attitudes towards their course, their chosen industry and higher education; students’ knowledge of industry and their career options and students’ motivation in signing up to the scheme. The main motivation was to improve networking opportunities and knowledge of industry, so it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of activities undertaken fall under industry knowledge and skills. From the pre-scheme evaluation forms, it was highlighted that most students felt as though they belonged in Higher Education and were confident about succeeding in industry. This is further reflected in the activities undertaken; there was little emphasis on subjects that would be designed to increase students’ motivation and decision-making abilities, moreover, the focus was predominantly on gaining knowledge, understanding and networks to increase career prospects.

100% of students stated that they were motivated to do well on their university course, and again, the activities undertaken in support of their academic achievement support this statement. I did not anticipate that students’ academic work would be positively affected when designing the mentoring scheme, moreover, my main focus was on their cultural capital and access to new communities of practice, however, in retrospect it was inevitable that students would discuss their university work with their mentor and an unexpected positive outcome of the programme was a positive affect to their academic work, with mentors providing advice on group projects and marked portfolios amongst other activities.

On the evaluation forms, mentors and students were asked to outline the benefits of the programme to them, as well as any areas for development. All participants also worked in groups at the celebration to event to identify what worked well on the scheme and what they would change. The results of these discussions are in Tables 10, 11 and 12 below.

Table 10: Perceived benefits of the industry mentoring scheme

| Benefits to mentees | Benefits to mentors |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Developed professional relationship | Practice mentoring |
| Widen network | Contributing to the community |
| Achieved higher grade | Giving others’ opportunities I didn’t have |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Clearer career path Insight into industry Encouraging to know on the right path creatively Feedback on work and skill-set Learnt how existing skills in previous career fit into a different industry 'Real life' projects and experience of industry Reassurance Networking Useful materials Tips and advice, including on pitfalls of industry Visiting workplace and seeing what the environment is like Increased confidence Increased motivation on my course Reinforced my choice of career path</p> | <p>Insight into current student life and skills Someone with 'fresh eyes' to see our work and ask questions that we may not have considered Returning value and experience to a student Rewarding Sharing knowledge Seeing a student develop Reflecting on own practice and how much I've developed since entering industry Speaking to someone who is full of energy and enthusiasm Good people-skills practice Prepare future co-workers understand the industry and better work within in Interesting to hear students' perspective</p> |
|--|--|

Table 11: What worked well/did you particularly enjoy?

| |
|---|
| <p>Good communication/relationships Understanding how skills can translate into the creative industries Networking Meeting at the mentor's workplace – visiting workplace environment Monthly meetings Meetings lasting 1 hour Follow up email with past discussions, links, readings Shadowing Facilitating work experience Connecting mentee to other roles in company Meeting people you wouldn't otherwise have met (students and industry professionals) Insight on how education matches industry and how industry presents itself to students Gaining new perspectives Receiving motivation/direction Sharing knowledge and skills Reinforced knowledge Fluid basis of the way the scheme is run</p> |
|---|

From Tables 10 and 11 above, it is clear that particular strengths of the programme were the insights it provided students into current practice, the ability to shadow and work with their mentor, as well as a realisation of how their existing skills fit into industry. Having a clearer idea of their specific skills and how these relate to skills within the creative industries, is likely to have a positive effect on students'

confidence in their abilities to succeed in graduate employment. One student highlighted that knowing they were on the 'right path' creatively had been a massive motivating factor for them to continue on their course and their confidence in securing employment had grown as a result of the scheme.

Understanding industry practice, learning from experienced practitioners and growing their professional networks before entering the graduate employment market were major motivations for students to sign up to the industry mentoring scheme (see Tables 3 and 4), and all of these are cited as beneficial outcomes from the scheme. One student noted that the fluid way in which the programme was run meant that they were able to achieve exactly what they wanted, rather than having to engage in a proscribed curriculum. Around 59% of the HE cohort at GB MET are mature students, many of whom have come back to education to change career paths or achieve a specific goal within the creative industries. Their requirements therefore may be very different from a younger student embarking upon employment for the first time and so the mentoring scheme was designed to support this differentiation.

It is also interesting to note the benefits to the mentors, which was not something I had considered at length. By allowing industry professionals to form mentoring relationships with students, they were able to evaluate their own practice and better understand how far they themselves had developed. It was also heartening to see the appreciation the mentors had for their mentees' perspectives and the value that they placed upon the mentees' opinions of their own practice. This in turn could be used to build the students' confidence, not only were they able to access new communities of practice, but they were treated as valuable within those communities and their opinions were given weight and consideration. In informal discussions, many of the students stated that they would like to become mentors themselves following a couple of years in industry; their own experience on the scheme may therefore have a lasting effect upon future students' employability.

On the evaluation forms and at the celebration event, participants were asked to identify areas for development within the programme. Table 12 outlines the qualitative responses and is divided into two sections: development of the mentoring programme itself, and what the mentors and mentees would change if they were to take part in the scheme again.

Table 12: Areas for development/what would you do differently next time

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Development of programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors from a wider range of areas Gain access to mentor earlier Integrate programme with course More direction on what to do with mentees Meeting event with all mentors and students at start of programme Programme rolled out wider to engage more students across more levels Relevant mentor to career student wants to get into More techniques on how to mentor Experienced mentor to share knowledge with new mentors |
|--------------------------|---|

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| | More feedback for mentors |
| Developments for mentors and mentees | Better preparation for meetings – including making sure I have an appropriate space, e.g. wifi, quiet room Provide more written feedback to overseer/course leader Act upon mentor’s feedback Make meetings more hands on More efficient use of time – set an agenda, following up topics discussed on previous meetings, anticipate requirements to show work/portfolio (software/hardware) More structure to meetings/an agenda Agree a specific day to meet |

The main theme that emerged from programme developments was more training and support for the industry professionals, many of whom had never mentored before and so it would be beneficial to build a clear training package for mentors, including a framework that would allow them to bring in their own experience and fully understand the process. Some of the points raised were around the relevance of the mentors’ work to the students’ specialism; it will always be challenging to find an industry professional that matches exactly what the student wants to do, and, as noted previously, at times it can be useful for the student to be paired with someone whose career path they had not previously considered.

A topic that frequently arose within areas for mentees and mentors to develop was being prepared for meetings: setting agendas, organising appropriate equipment and adhering to set goals. This was important feedback for the students to think about how they would approach professional relationships in the future, particularly as new employees, and so will hopefully be useful food for thought.

None of the development areas raised were about the actual content of the meetings themselves which was positive reading! I was able to deduce therefore that, although there were structural issues and training needs that could be addressed, the essence of the scheme and the sessions worked well. Students reported an increase in their industry knowledge and having developed their networks as a result of the scheme which was a significant incentive for setting up the programme. At the commencement of the scheme I intended to examine whether there was an increase in ‘belonging’ among the student cohort, this proved challenging, and perhaps unnecessary in the context of this study as the majority of students stated that they felt as though they belonged in HE before the onset of the programme. This was also the case in terms of students’ motivation to do well on their course and in their chosen industry, unfortunately it was difficult to quantitatively measure the impact of the scheme on these areas as only six out of 22 students completed the post-scheme evaluation form, however, from qualitative feedback, students reported feeling more motivated about their career choices after gaining reassurance that they were ‘on the right track’.

4.2.4 Additional activities and outcomes

All students were given the option to continue the mentoring relationship officially, but no one decided to do so. Most of the mentoring pairs did however stay in touch in a more informal capacity, and the mentors encouraged students to get in touch with them in the future should the need arise.

Specific outcomes from the scheme included a student obtaining paid work at the Brighton Music Conference; a planned collaborative installation between the mentee and mentor to be displayed at a professional gallery and a potential job role for a student running a music studio. Further to this, after the scheme, one student met with their mentor's colleagues at the BBC and subsequently shadowed a show on BBC Radio 1xtra as well as meeting the publishing department, Head of BBC Radio 2 and 6 and an Executive Producer from a prominent UK production company.

5. Recommendations for further development

There are some 'easy wins' to further develop the mentoring scheme and ensure that it is successful in future years; following feedback outlined above, a more robust training provision needs to be designed to increase the mentors' confidence in their own ability to conduct meetings and to enable them to bring in their existing experience to best assist the students they are mentoring. Moreover, students need to be better prepared for the sessions, and this is something that can be emphasised during training and throughout the programme.

As some students reported still feeling unsure about their career paths, it would be useful to make greater links with the careers department. This can be challenging in an FE setting where the careers team is relatively small compared to a larger HEI, however, signposting students to the careers team at the close of the programme and bringing relevant staff members in to the celebration event would at the very least ensure students are aware of who to contact for future guidance.

Despite having some information about the outcomes for students after completing the scheme, these are very immediate. It would therefore be beneficial to contact students six months to a year after graduation to ascertain whether taking part in the programme has had any longer lasting effect and has impacted upon their ability to secure graduate employment.

The mentoring scheme has enabled the college to build new links with professionals in industry and this is something that should be capitalised upon, not only in terms of the continuation of industry mentoring, but for other initiatives within the college such as talks, plenaries, industry days, to ensure the maximum number of students are exposed to professionals in relevant industries.

6. Further reflections and connections back to literature

Overall, the Industry Mentoring Scheme at GB MET was successful in introducing students to networks and increasing their knowledge of industry. Through the scheme, students were able to gain social capital that can be utilised when seeking employment. The extent of the effectiveness of this is unknown at this stage, however, it is apparent that, certainly for some students, these networks have already begun to build and lead to job creation.

At the beginning of the report I examined how Bourdieu's theories of habitus and social and cultural capital could be used to frame mentoring schemes in Higher Education. Bourdieu's definition of habitus asserts that the actions of people are defined by their experiences and upbringing and are an inherent part of what they do, not something that is consciously considered.⁴⁷ By furnishing students with knowledge of workplaces they were able to experience the ways in which professionals interact and the expected behaviours in different environments. When the students enter graduate employment therefore, they may find it easier to unconsciously emulate this behaviour, having already experienced industry settings when working with their mentors. Bourdieu asserts that society continuously reproduces as people are not able to transcend the position in which they grew up.⁴⁸ However, by making industry links and building contacts outside of their usual networks, students on the Industry Mentoring Scheme may be able to expand their habitus to fit with different environments and increase their social capital through connections made via their mentor. Moreover, students highlighted the value of exposure to various events and practices when on the scheme, such as private views at a gallery and work experience in their industry. They also reported that their mentors introduced them to a range of people working in relevant fields throughout the scheme. From these activities we can ascertain that students' cultural and social capital further increased. Bourdieu's theories of habitus and cultural and social capital have been useful conduits to frame the Industry Mentoring Scheme, particularly when considering the outcomes for students who took part in the programme.

Through mentoring, students gained access to different communities of practice and developed a deeper understanding of the tools used within these communities which will in turn aid their transition into the workplace. Wenger states that learning may only occur when a person actively engages with a community,⁴⁹ and the mentoring scheme allowed this engagement to take place. It is also interesting to note that the mentors reported benefiting from understanding the students' communities to ensure they better recruit and train new graduates. This is supported by Minocha, Hristov and Reynolds' research which affirms how collaborations between employers and educational institutions act as a

⁴⁷ Collet, F. (2009) 'Does Habitus Matter? A Comparative Review of Bourdieu's Habitus and Simon's Bounded Rationality with some Implications for Economic Sociology', *Sociological Theory*, 27:4, p. 421

⁴⁸ Mills, C. (2008), 'Reproduction and Transformation of Inequalities in Schooling: The Transformative Potential of the Theoretical Constructs of Bourdieu', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29:1, p. 81

⁴⁹ Wenger, E. (2000), 'Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems', *Organisation*, 7:2, p. 229

bridge between employer expectation and graduate knowledge.⁵⁰ Both mentors and students were able to act as 'boundary spanners' to enable each other to connect with a different community of practice and gain access to knowledge that may otherwise have alluded them. The collaborative practice between industry professionals and students was a highlight, with some students going on to work on joint projects with their mentors.

The literature referenced the increase in belonging and motivation amongst students who had taken part in similar mentoring schemes.⁵¹ Conversely, this was not the case for the programme at GB MET; students reported high levels of motivation before starting the scheme and showed confidence in their abilities to succeed on their course, with the majority also stating that they already felt that they belonged in HE. This may be attributed to the nature of the provision at the college: studying HE in an FE environment may attract more students with widening participation characteristics into university-level study,⁵² and as the provision is smaller there are fewer tutors to get to know, or buildings to navigate. Moreover, as the mentoring scheme was voluntary, the students who applied may have already had higher levels of engagement with their course since they chose to engage in a college-based extracurricular activity.

The Industry Mentoring Scheme at GB MET enabled students to gain real insight of industry and furnished them with growing professional networks that they can continue to cultivate throughout their career. It is hoped that this project can assist other HE providers, particularly those operating in an FE setting, in enacting their own schemes to provide students with greater cultural and social capital and increased industry insight through mentoring.

⁵⁰ Minocha, S., Hristov, D. & Reynolds, M. (2017), 'From graduate employability to employment', *International Journal of Training and Development*, 21:3, p.243

⁵¹ Masika, R. & Jones, J. (2016), 'Building student belonging and engagement', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 21:2, 138-150; Reed, R., King, A. & Whiteford, G. (2015), 'Reconceptualising sustainable widening participation', *Higher Education Research and Development*, 34:2, 383-396

⁵² This is supported in the figures for students with widening participation characteristics at GB MET in comparison to national data; for a breakdown see Greater Brighton Metropolitan College Access and Participation Plan 2019-20, p 9,

https://apis.officeforstudents.org.uk/accessplansdownloads/1920/GreaterBrightonMetropolitanCollege_APP_2019-20_V1_10004736.pdf, accessed 20.01.20

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Appendix 1



Industry Mentoring

Pre-Scheme Evaluation Form

Name:

Course:

Date:

Before you start the scheme, please complete the evaluation form below, it should only take a couple of minutes and will help us understand your motivations for taking part. Please answer as honestly as possible!

Section One: Attitudes and Decision Making

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Not Sure | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I feel confident when making decisions about my future | | | | | |
| I am motivated to do well on my course | | | | | |
| I feel like I belong in Higher Education | | | | | |
| I am confident I will do well in my chosen industry | | | | | |

Section Two: Knowledge and Skills

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Not Sure | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I know a lot about the industry I want to go into | | | | | |
| I know what career options are available to me after I finish HE | | | | | |
| I know where to go to find out more about my options after my course | | | | | |
| I know how best to start my career after my course | | | | | |
| I know what is required for my chosen industry | | | | | |
| I have the skills to progress in my career | | | | | |

Section Three: About the Mentoring Scheme

Why did you apply to the mentoring scheme?

Is there anything specific you are hoping to get out of the scheme?

Do you have any other comments?

Many thanks for your time.

Industry Mentoring Scheme Handbook for Mentees



About the Scheme

The Industry Mentoring Scheme connects mentors from within industry and students studying Higher Education courses at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College. The scheme is designed to increase employability among students, encourage networking opportunities, enable students to develop key skills related to their chosen subjects and to gain insider knowledge of working in specific industries.

You might already know what you hope to get out of the scheme which is fantastic; this handbook can be used for to help you get the most out of your mentoring relationship and to get you thinking about what you hope to achieve.

Key Information and Contacts

Duration of the scheme

6 months

Frequency of meetings

Once a month. If you wish to meet with your mentor more often you can discuss this with them. All the mentors are industry professionals and currently working so this may not be possible.

Confidentiality

All of the meetings between you and your mentor will be confidential, however, if you reveal something to your mentor which may impact upon yours or others' safety, the mentor will have a duty to let us know.

The mentors will be asked to submit a short summary of any key points you have discussed in the meetings. This is just to ensure that the meetings are going ahead, and that you're getting what you want out of them. It is up to you to manage the relationship and shape it in whichever way suits you best.

Some industries require students to sign a confidentiality agreement, if this is the case for you and you feel uncomfortable doing this please let Rosie know.

Key Contacts

Your main point of contact throughout the scheme is Rosie Jones, Widening Participation Coordinator. Rosie is available to deal with any queries or concerns throughout the scheme.

Email: rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk

Phone: 01903 273463 / 07742 135654

Working Pattern: Monday-Friday, 9.00am -5.00pm

What to Expect from a Mentor

Mentors are a source of support for students and are there to help facilitate discussion and encourage your entry into industry.

The aim of the mentoring sessions is to explore opportunities with you, set goals, help build your confidence, and provide you with an insight into industry.

Before meetings, it might be useful to send your mentor an agenda, or an outline of what you would like to discuss so they have time to think about how best to advise you and do any research if needed.

You can expect your mentor to:

- Be interested in your aspirations, listen, question, challenge and support you.
- Be empathic and non-judgmental, and able to give constructive feedback and advice.
- Demonstrate integrity and trustworthiness through professional conduct.
- Where possible, help to increase your networking opportunities. This may include an introduction to key individuals, or offering you shadowing opportunities with themselves or others that they work with. We have encouraged mentors to do this, however, it is not always possible depending upon the nature of their work.
- Offer a different perspective and challenge your point of view. The aim is to help you to stand back and assess and explore alternative options.
- Offer direct advice and guidance where necessary.

A mentor is NOT there to:

- Mark your assignments. Mentors are not teachers and do not know the exact requirements of your assignments. If you need help with an assignment you should go to your tutor.
- Tell you what to do. Mentors are there to facilitate discussion and get you thinking, not to make decisions for you.
- Get you a job. Your mentor might be able to signpost you to available jobs in their company if any arise, but this is not a requirement for the scheme, and they are not obliged to do so.
- Be at your beck and call. Your mentor is an industry professional and has volunteered their time to support you, so they may have limited availability.

What your mentor expects from you

- Polite, professional attitude always, and especially when visiting the mentor's workplace
- Timely responses to any communications
- Arriving on time to meetings
- Accept responsibility for managing and maintaining the relationship
- Set and stick to plans and goals
- Prepare an exit plan for the end of the mentoring relationship
- Enthusiasm!

Mentor Meetings

The first meeting between you and your mentor can be daunting, but remember, they are probably just as nervous as you! It is a good idea to start the relationship building rapport and getting to know each other before moving onto issues or topics you would like to work on. By being organised and having an idea of what you want to get out of the relationship, you will show your mentor that you are taking the relationship seriously. This will help them feel that they are making a wise investment of their time and help get things off to a good start!

What happens at the first meeting?

Mentoring relationships develop in different ways. The majority of mentoring partnerships tend to go through a series of phases. When forming any new relationship, it is necessary to establish rapport by getting to know each other better. This can often be achieved by setting out what each of you expect from the relationship at the outset and letting the mentor know what your priorities are.

Once you have been assigned a mentor, you should email them to introduce yourself and arrange an initial meeting. In the email it is a good idea to let them know what your main areas of interest are. You should copy in rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk to your initial email to your mentor. You may want to bring an agenda, or a plan, to each mentor meeting. This should be emailed to the mentor in advance in case they need to do any research on a certain topic.

At the end of each meeting you will need to fill out the meeting form on the google drive. This is so you can keep track of what was discussed and reflect on any progress you have made in your professional development. You will be sent a link to your individual form on the Google Drive.

We will have access to your forms; this is not to check up on you, but to make sure that you are getting the most out of the scheme. If you have any issues you can also report these on the form, or you can contact Rosie directly.

Topics to Consider

How you develop your mentor meetings is completely up to you, but you may want to think about some of the following discussion topics:

- Where would you like to progress onto in the future
- What are you aiming to get out of the scheme?
- Are there any particular industry skills you would like to learn?
- What are your goals? These might be short-term, immediate goals, or longer term ones
- The mentor's role: how did they get where they are today? What kind of career path have they had?
- CVs – how can you best build up your CV, what do recruiters in the industry look for?

- Portfolios – examples of work to put in, what do employers look for? Is there additional work you could do to boost your portfolio?
- Interviews - how best to approach an interview? What sort of things do employers look for? What would make you stand out? You could try practicing interview techniques
- Shadowing - is there an opportunity to shadow your mentor in their job? Do they have any other contacts you could shadow?
- Networking - how best to approach networking events, where to find relevant events for your industry, and the best ways to network within your profession.
- Confidentiality in industry
- Training – can they signpost you to any training opportunities?

When thinking about goals that you have for the scheme the following methods may be useful:

Set yourself SMART goals:

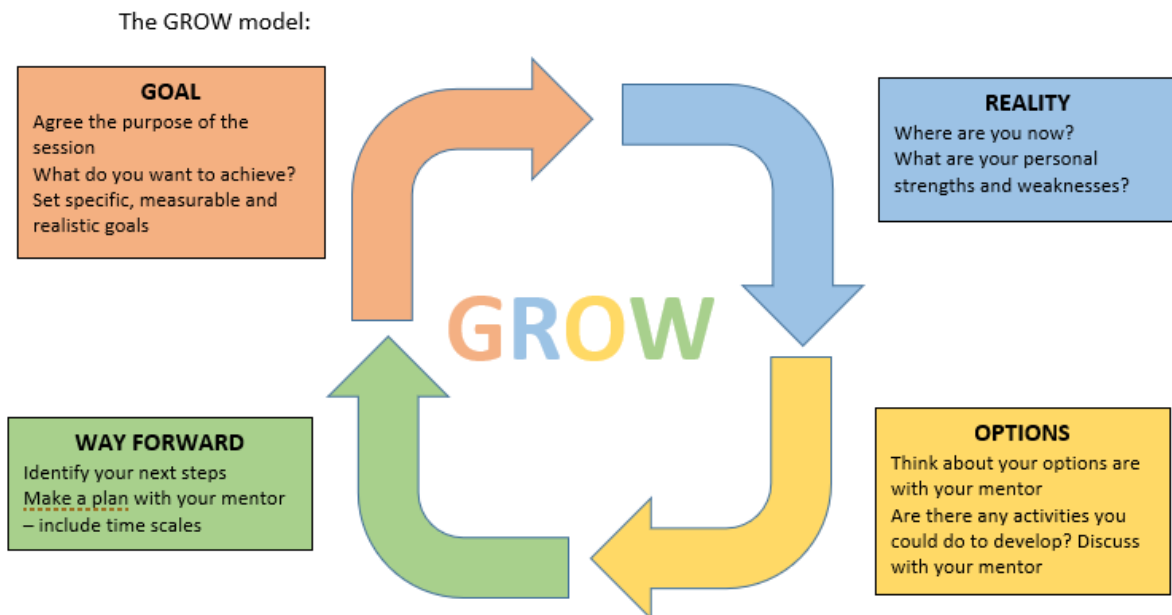
Specific: what do you want to achieve?

Measurable: how will you know if you have achieved it?

Achievable: what do you need to do it?

Realistic: can you achieve it? Why is it important?

Timeframe: when will you achieve it by?



What happens at the end of the mentoring relationship?

For most mentees, the end of formal mentoring signals the end of direct support from their mentor. The majority of mentors and mentees stay in touch by mutual consent, with many mentors assuming the role of a 'professional friend' in the industry.

The end of the mentoring relationship is a good time to reflect on what you have learnt and how you plan to develop your career after your course.

You and your mentor will be asked to evaluate the programme, and will be invited to a event at the College where we can celebrate everything that you have achieved!

What do I do if things are not working out well with my mentee?

The first step is to speak to your mentor about any difficulties. If you cannot resolve them in this way, contact Rosie to discuss your concerns.

Expectations and Boundaries

For an effective mentoring relationship to occur, the lines between mentor and mentee need to be clearly defined.

It is important to establish the level of contact you will have with your mentor; you will meet once a month but between meetings you should agree the best method of communication, whether this is via email, phone or skype, and make a commitment as to how often you will contact each other. Discuss with your mentor whether you'll just contact them to arrange a meeting, or whether it's ok for you to contact them in the interim if you have certain questions? If you do agree to contact each other between meetings, remember that your mentor may not have time to respond to you immediately.

You should decide with your mentor where you will be meeting. If it is at your mentor's workplace make sure you know exactly where to meet, i.e. should you go to reception and ask for your mentor, or should you go directly to their office?

If you are not meeting at your mentor's workplace, make sure you meet in a public place, ideally a café or the College, and not in a pub.

Remember that the mentor is there to support you professionally, and not a friend to go out drinking with.

Programme Outline

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Subject</u> |
|------------------------------|--|
| October 2018 | Mentor training Mentee training Pre scheme evaluation for mentees |
| Month 1: November 2018 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
| Month 2: December 2018 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
| Month 3: January 2019 | Mentor/mentee meeting WPC and mentee meeting: discussion of programme, reflections so far Brighton: Tuesday 22 nd January, 12-1pm West Durrington: Wednesday 23 rd January, 12-1pm |
| Month 4: February 2019 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
| Month 5: March 2019 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
| Month 6: April 2019 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
| May 2019 | Celebration Event: Wednesday 15th May 2019. All mentoring pairs invited to the College for a celebration event. Post scheme evaluation for mentees and mentors. Mentees to write a short summary of their experience on the programme to be submitted to the WPC. |



Industry Mentoring Scheme Handbook for Mentors



About the Scheme

The Industry Mentoring Scheme connects mentors from within industry and students studying Higher Education courses at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College. The scheme is designed to increase employability among students, encourage networking opportunities, enable students to develop key skills related to their chosen subjects and to gain insider knowledge of working in specific industries.

Overview

The scheme runs for 6 months from November to May, with mentor training in October.

Priority to participate in the scheme is given to students with Widening Participation characteristics as outlined in the GB Met Access Agreement, namely: students who are the first in their family to enter Higher Education, students with disabilities or learning difficulties, care experienced students, carers, BAME students and mature learners.

Mentors write a short paragraph about their role and specialism within industry, which are shared with the student to whom they are matched.

Mentors and mentees undergo separate training sessions in order to equip them with the skills to successfully engage in the programme.

Mentors complete a short form after they have met with their mentee each month detailing the date of the meeting, the location, and the general topics discussed. The form can be found at the back of this handbook. They should then email this to rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk by the end of each month.

For the duration of the programme, mentors and mentees will meet in person once a month; this can be at the mentor's workplace, at the College, or at a mutually agreed location. Although it is advised that the meeting occur at the mentor's workplace, the exact time and location of the meeting will be determined by the mentoring pair in order to ensure they are convenient to both parties.

The Widening Participation Coordinator, Rosie Jones, will be available throughout the scheme to support the mentoring pairs, resolve any issues that arise, and answer queries that mentors and mentees may have.

Key Information and Contacts

Duration of the scheme

6 months

Frequency of meetings

Once a month. If the mentor and mentee wish to meet more often this can be arranged between the mentoring pair. Preferred methods of communication between meetings are discussed and agreed between the mentor and mentee, according to what suits them best.

Confidentiality

If required for your industry, you may ask the student to sign a confidentiality agreement. Please let Rosie know if this is required.

It is assumed that all meetings held between the mentor and mentee will remain confidential, however, both mentor and mentee will be asked to send a summary of general topics discussed to rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk. If the mentee discloses anything that may be a safeguarding concern, please contact Rosie.

Key Contacts

Your main point of contact throughout the scheme is Rosie Jones, Widening Participation Coordinator. Rosie is available to deal with any queries or concerns throughout the scheme.

Email: rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk

Phone: 01903 273463 / 07742 135654

Working Pattern: Monday-Friday, 9.00am -5.00pm

You can also contact the general Widening Participation email address at: wp@gbmc.ac.uk

The Mentor Role

Mentors are a source of support for students, and are there to help facilitate discussion and encourage mentee's entry into industry.

Key attributes of an effective mentor:

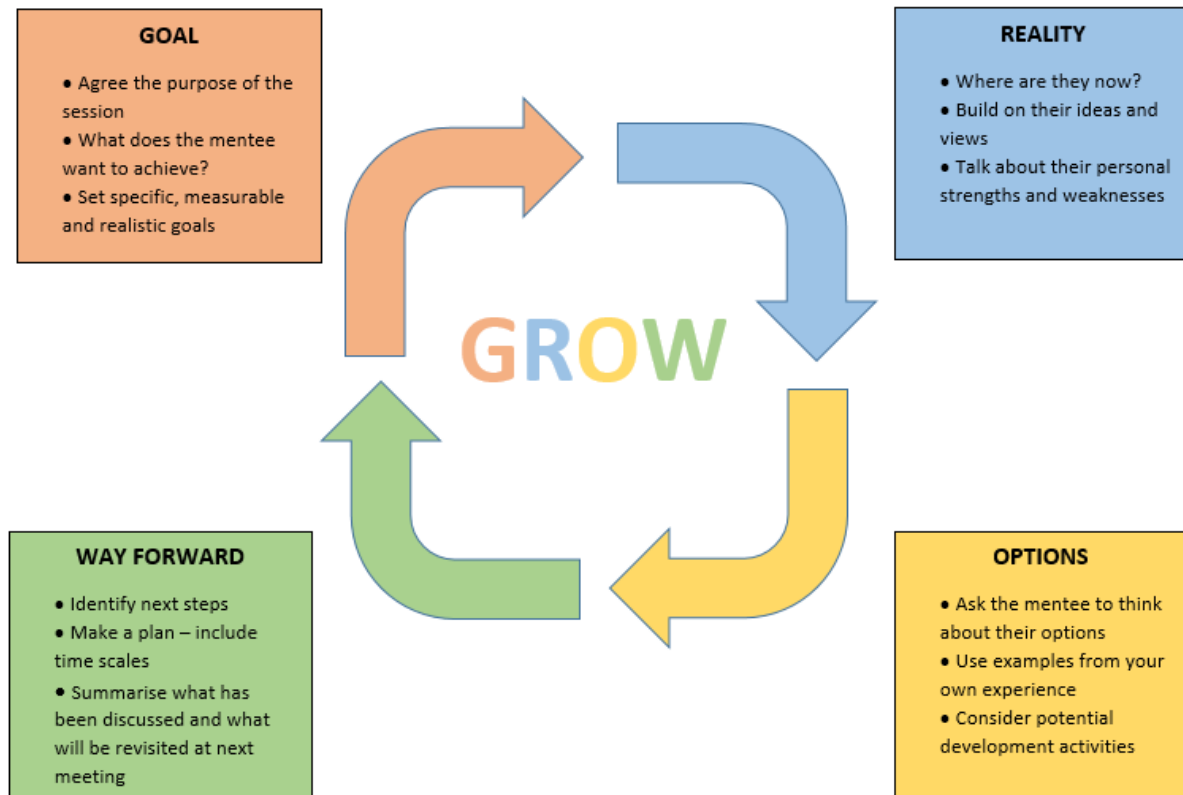
- Encouraging
- Non-judgemental
- Motivating
- Empathises
- Encourages self-reflection
- Actively listens
- Asks questions
- Gives effective feedback
- Shares insight
- Facilitates the development of industry skills

The aim of the mentoring sessions is to explore opportunities with the students, set goals, build their confidence, and provide them with an insight into industry.

Before meetings, the mentee may send you an agenda, or an outline of what they would like to discuss. The onus is on the mentee to come with ideas but you can help draw out themes and think about goals with them.



When thinking about goals, it can be useful to use the GROW model:



Expectations and Boundaries

For an effective mentoring relationship to occur, the lines between mentor and mentee need to be clearly defined.

It is important to establish the level of contact you will have with the mentee – the programme requires you to meet once a month, but it is up to you if you wish to meet more often.

You should agree the best method of communication, whether this is via email, phone or skype, and make a commitment as to how often you will contact each other. Will it just be to arrange a meeting, or can the mentee contact you in the interim if they have certain questions? Be clear with the mentee what the boundaries are.

It is important to let the mentee know when they can expect a response from you, so, if you are emailing to arrange a meeting you may commit to responding within 3 working days for example.

You should decide with the mentee where you will be meeting. If it is at your workplace let the mentee know exactly where to meet, i.e. should they go to reception and ask for you? If you are not meeting at your workplace, make sure you meet in a public place, ideally a café or the College, and not in a pub.

All the mentees are over 18 years old, however, while the mentoring scheme is ongoing, you should not consume alcohol with the mentees. There may be exceptions if the mentee is accompanying you to an industry networking event. If you are unsure, please contact rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk.

You should not enter into a sexual relationship with your mentee.

The mentoring conversations are confidential, however, if the mentee discloses something to you which could be a safeguarding concern, please contact rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk.

Programme Outline

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Subject</u> |
|------------------------------|--|
| October 2018 | Mentor training Mentee training Pre scheme evaluation for mentees |
| Month 1: November 2018 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
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| Month 5: March 2019 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
| Month 6: April 2019 | Mentor/mentee meeting |
| May 2019 | Celebration Event: Wednesday 15th May 2019. All mentoring pairs invited to the College for a celebration event. Post scheme evaluation for mentees and mentors. Mentees to write a short summary of their experience on the programme to be submitted to the WPC. |

Suggested Discussion Topics

These are suggested discussion topics only; sessions are adaptable depending upon industry requirements and mentee interests

- Discussing the mentee's interests, where they would like to progress onto in the future
- What would the mentee like to get out of the scheme?
- Mentee's goals
- Mentor's goals
- The mentor's role: how did they get where they are today? What kind of career path have they had?
- CVs – how can the mentor best build up their CV, what do recruiters in their industry look for?
- Portfolios – looking over the mentee's portfolio, examples of work to put in, what do employers look for? Is there additional work mentees could do to boost their portfolio?
- Interviews - how best to approach an interview? What sort of things do employers look for? What would make the mentee stand out? Practice interview techniques
- Shadowing - an opportunity to shadow their mentor in their job role
- Networking - how best to approach networking events, where to find relevant events for their industry, and the best ways in which to network within their profession. If the mentor has any networking opportunities, they can invite the mentee to attend this would be welcome
- Confidentiality in industry
- Training – discussion of training opportunities for the mentee
- Revisiting progression – what are the mentees next steps after they finish their course? How can they get where they want to go? Have their priorities changed?



Frequently Asked Questions

When do I meet my mentee?

You will meet your mentee once a month. The mentee will be in touch to arrange the initial meeting, after which you can agree together how subsequent meetings will be arranged.

How long is the programme?

Mentoring pairs agree to work together for 6 months.

What am I expected to do as an industry mentor?

Mentees expect their mentors to help them gain vital knowledge, develop skills and qualities to navigate their way through their desired industry. There are many different ways of providing help and support. The main characteristics of an effective mentor are:

- Meet or keep in touch with your mentee.
- Maintain contact by phone, skype and/or email between meetings. Agree a mutually acceptable level of contact. Using email as the main means of communication between face-to-face meetings allows you more time to consider what your mentee needs and how best to respond, but you should be clear about the level of contact you expect between yourself and your mentee.
- Help build your mentee's confidence in, and ability to, access industry.
- Use active listening techniques to question, challenge and support your mentee.
- Communicate your interest in their aspirations. Explore different ways in which they can attain their goals.
- Demonstrate integrity and trustworthiness through professional conduct.
- Help your mentee to increase their networking opportunities. This does not mean that you have to introduce them to everyone in your address book, however an introduction by you or a shadowing opportunity, can help open a few doors that would otherwise remain firmly closed.
- Offer a different perspective. Challenge your mentee's view of the situation. Help them to understand your perspective in relation to a problem or obstacle. Helping your mentee to stand back from an enduring difficulty to assess possible options can be more valuable in the mid to long-term than offering an instant solution.

What should I expect from my mentee?

- They are enthusiastic about being mentored by experienced professionals who are willing to give up their time to help shape their careers.
- Respond in a timely manner to all communications and arrive on time to meetings.
- Conduct themselves with professionalism, especially at your place of work.
- Adhere to appropriate boundaries between mentor and mentee.
- Accept responsibility for managing the mentoring relationship.

What are the potential difficulties?

Hopefully everything will go smoothly, but there might be times when you experience some difficulties. It may be that you are too busy to meet or speak to your mentee, or that your personal circumstances change, preventing you from maintaining the level of contact you would like. Mentees are made fully aware that mentors are very busy and your work plans may have an impact on your ability to meet or keep in touch. However, please discuss with your mentee any adjustments you may wish to make if your circumstances change. There is a degree of flexibility built into the programme to accommodate mentoring pairs experiencing difficulties.

What happens at the first meeting?

Mentoring relationships develop in different ways. The majority of mentoring partnerships tend to go through a series of phases. When forming any new relationship, it is necessary to establish rapport by getting to know each other better. This can often be achieved by setting out what each of you expect from the relationship at the outset and establish what the priorities are for your mentee.

What happens at the end of the mentoring relationship?

Managing the end of the 'formal' mentoring relationship sensitively helps consolidate achievements, reflect on learning and growth, while also further boosting a mentee's confidence as they exit the programme. It is important to recognise the mentee's achievements and reflect on what they have learnt throughout the programme.

For most mentees, the end of formal mentoring signals the end of direct support from their mentor. The majority of mentors and mentees stay in touch by mutual consent, with many mentors assuming the role of a 'professional friend' in the industry. If you have any employment opportunities which you think the mentee may be suitable for, or any networks which they can join, please do share these with them.

Both mentor and mentee will be asked to evaluate the programme, and will be invited to a event at the College where we can celebrate everything that the mentors and mentees have achieved!

What do I do if things are not working out well with my mentee?

The first step is to speak to your mentee about any difficulties. If you cannot resolve them in this way, contact Rosie to discuss your concerns.

Mentoring Meeting Proforma

| |
|----------------------------------|
| Mentee Name: |
| Mentor Name: |
| Date: |
| Location: |
| General Topics Discussed: |

Appendix 4

Introductory email

The introductory email is your first chance to introduce yourself to your mentor. Make sure you include the following information:

- What course you're studying
- What year you're in
- Link to course online
- Why you have signed up for the scheme
- Ask for potential dates to meet up - you may want to let your mentor know days that are better for you (e.g. days that you are at college/work)
- Copy in Rosie - rosie.jones@gbmc.ac.uk

The First Meeting

It might be useful to sort out some practicalities on your first meeting so you're clear about everything going forward. You may want to ask your mentor about:

- The best method of contact
- Frequency of contact - can you contact them between meetings, or just to arrange a meeting?
- Where you will generally meet
- Who will arrange the meetings - will you decide upon all of them now, or arrange them as you go?
- Will you send an agenda before each meeting? How much in advance should you send it over?
- Do you have any goals in mind for the scheme?

Appendix 5



Industry Mentoring
Post-Scheme Evaluation Form

Name:

Course:

Section One: Attitudes and Decision Making

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Not Sure | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I feel confident when making decisions about my future | | | | | |
| I am motivated to do well on my course | | | | | |
| I feel like I belong in Higher Education | | | | | |
| I am confident I will do well in my chosen industry | | | | | |

Section Two: Knowledge and Skills

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Not Sure | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I know a lot about the industry I want to go into | | | | | |
| I know what career options are available to me after I finish HE | | | | | |
| I know where to go to find out more about my options after my course | | | | | |
| I know how best to start my career after my course | | | | | |
| I know what is required for my chosen industry | | | | | |
| I have the skills to progress in my career | | | | | |

Appendix 6



Mentor Evaluation Form

Name:

Company:

Can you give a brief summary of activities undertaken on the mentoring scheme? E.g. shadowing, portfolio help, work experience

What were the benefits of the mentoring scheme for you?

Areas for development/suggested improvements

Any other comments or feedback for your mentee?

Would you be happy to take part in the mentoring scheme again?

Yes No

Do you know anyone else in your company that would be interested in being a mentor? (If yes please give details)