Mentoring at St Mary's

Practical Guidelines, Resources, & Support

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A Guide to these Materials & How to Use them

We hope these materials will save you a lot of time!

These materials have been compiled by the Mentoring at St Mary's working group. They have been designed to support anyone at the University looking to establish a new mentoring programme, or to enhance an existing mentoring initiative – and are in place to help ensure an equality of student experience across different mentoring initiatives. In these materials, you will find key information and practical advice based on the lived experiences and expertise of staff members involved in various mentoring initiatives at St Mary's.

In addition to the structured guidance, you will find a wealth of resources, including examples of training packs, booklets, and timelines for mentors and mentees, as well as impact evaluations – all of which can be used for your inspiration, or in some cases directly lifted/adapted for your purposes. We have also provided a list of key contacts to support you in specific areas.

Read through the contents below to find what you're looking for – and if you have any general questions about these materials, or would like specific feedback/advice on your mentoring work, please get in touch at: studentengagement@stmarys.ac.uk.

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Section 1: Introduction & Context

❖ Purpose statement

The Mentoring at St Mary's working group was formed in 2020 and is comprised of a broad membership of institution-wide academic and professional service staff, who are each involved in various mentoring initiatives across the University.[1]

Collectively, we form a community of best practice and have come together with the express intention of sharing our experiences and expertise with the broader University. We wish to support colleagues working on mentoring initiatives by sharing practical advice, step-by-step guidance, wider contexts, and ready-made resources – with the hopes of avoiding siloed working, as well as providing colleagues interested in starting mentoring work with a head start from the outset.

We have worked collaboratively to (i) create these materials and (ii) track the various mentoring initiatives already happening and those in the design stages at the University (full details of these can be found in Section 6).

It is our contention that an increasingly strategic approach to mentoring, ultimately led by the proposed new post of the Mentoring Co-ordinator, will aid our progress against our Access & Participation Plan targets, at all stages of the student lifecycle. Sharing of best practice, programme templates, and evaluation materials will enrich our mentoring provision and ultimately the student experience.

❖ What do we mean by mentoring?

'Mentoring is about supporting and encouraging people to manage their own learning in order for them to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be'.

--The National Mentoring Consortium

Mentoring programmes usually pair more experienced individuals (mentors) with 'greener' individuals (mentees). The idea is that mentors will valuably share their life experiences and expertise with mentees, supporting and enabling them to thrive.

There are several different types of student mentoring in place at St Mary's.[2] These include:

- Peer-to-peer programmes (university student→university student)

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[1] A full membership list can be found at the close of these materials.
[2] See Section 6 for full details.

- Outreach programmes (university student→potential future student)
- Career-focused programmes (independent professional→university student)

Within the university context, mentoring programmes are designed to provide student mentees with expert support, guidance, advice, and encouragement, while providing student mentors with valuable experiences that enhance their employability and empower them as student leaders. For both student mentees and student mentors alike, the broad aim is to increase confidence, a sense of connection, aspirations, ability, and independence. However, different mentoring schemes will importantly have different specific focuses and purposes.[3]

Mentoring generally **is**:

- Listening/being a sounding board
- Role-modelling
- Problem-solving
- Goal-setting
- Mutual learning and idea-sharing.

Mentoring generally **is not**:

- Counselling/therapy
- Teaching
- Coaching
- A one-way street

❖ Mentoring: The Benefits

Testimonials from St Mary's student mentees:

"My mentor really showed me that you can build yourself up. You can, you can step up, you can actually advance".

"My mentor was a great listener and very supportive of my path and helped me to find solutions to my problems".

"I have definitely gained from this project and now know how to make a plan for my time, which is where I always went wrong before".

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[3] See Section 3: 'Why Are You Doing This? Essential Questions to Ask Yourself'.

"Because of mentoring, I kind of know how to sell myself as a graduate now".

"They were so encouraging and helpful and I really needed the support".

Testimonials from mentors of St Mary's students:

"This has been such a positive experience."

"I have found working with my student so interesting and rewarding and I have learnt a good few things from her in the progress."

"I could see my mentor start to believe in himself more and more."

"There is not a single negative thing…"

"Just such an amazing experience".

There is considerable evidence to suggest that providing university students with mentoring and/or the opportunity to train as mentors themselves is extremely valuable to both the students involved and the institution overall (Andrews and Clark, 2011; Montacute, 2018; Arday, 2015). Mentoring programmes can be especially useful during periods of transition (Thomas, 2012), for students from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds (Montacute, 2018), and have also been shown on a more general level to foster a more inclusive Higher Education environment overall (Husband and Jacobs, 2009).

Mentoring programmes can include the following benefits[4]:

For student mentees:

- Support, guidance, and advice at key moments
- Networking and new professional opportunities
- Increased confidence and practical knowledge
- Opportunities to make friends with other mentees[5]
- Enhanced sense of 'belonging'

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[4] You can find more detailed information and further resources on the benefits of mentoring in Section 7.
[5] In various discussion groups with St Mary's students, the intra-mentee and intra-mentor relationships in terms of friend-making was very highly valued by students and is backed by research (Alvernann, Henderson, Kaste, & Peyton Marsh, 2004).

- Improved academic and time management skills

For student mentors:

- Transferrable leadership and employability skills
- Networking and new professional opportunities
- Enhanced sense of 'belonging' and representation
- A strong sense of altruism
- Opportunities to make friends with other mentors[6]

For independent mentors (alumni, industry experts, etc.):

- A useful stepping stone to middle leadership skills

For universities:

- Greater overall engagement, attainment, and retention

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[6] In various discussion groups with St Mary's students, the intra-mentee and intra-mentor relationships in terms of friend-making and support was very highly valued by students and is backed by research (Alvernann, Henderson, Kaste, & Peyton Marsh, 2004).

Section 2: *Why* Are You Doing This?

❖ Essential Questions to Ask Yourself

As you conceptualise your mentoring scheme, it is important to spend time thinking carefully about **why** you have chosen mentoring as your solution. The first question to consider is *if* in fact mentoring is definitely the most appropriate tool for your aims. It can be helpful to run focus groups and/or questionnaires with the target groups of students you wish to support in order to get a better sense of student voices and requirements, as the most successful mentoring initiatives are in answer and tailored to student needs.

If you decide mentoring *is* the right tool for your initiative, ensure that you are really clear on the following questions, during the planning and design stages of your scheme:

1. Who is your intended audience?
2. Why have they been targeted?
3. Why will they benefit from mentoring specifically?
4. Who will their mentors be and why?
5. How will you source your mentors & mentees?
6. What are you hoping to achieve/what difference are you hoping to see?
7. How will you know you have succeeded?
8. How will you design an effective and realistic timeline?
9. How will you resource your mentoring scheme? (Who will be responsible, who will be involved, will everything be managed in-house, or will you work with an external company?)
10. How will you incentivise your mentors & mentees throughout?

❖ A Handy Checklist: Minimum Requirements & Quality Assurance

Based on our collective experiences, we have compiled a checklist of key elements to include when designing your mentoring scheme, to ensure that it is high quality and effective:

To include	✔ / ✘
Embedded employability	

A clear mission statement	
Embedded impact evaluation	
Mentor training & handbook	
Mentee training & handbook	
Equality, diversity, and inclusion training for mentors & mentees	
A clear timeline, with established start & end point	
Incentives & rewards for mentors & mentees	

❖ Value from the Start: Embedding, Evaluating, and Measuring Impact

Please note 'Resource A' ('Types of Impact Evaluation') and 'Resource B' ('Guidance on Theory of Change'), which are referenced here, can be found in the appendix.

What is impact evaluation?

Impact evaluation aims to assess the contribution of an intervention to a particular outcome or set of outcomes. For example: the effect of a mentoring scheme (the intervention) on mentees' self-confidence (the outcome). These effects can be positive or negative, intended or unintended. There may also be no change/effect at all.

Why is it important to evaluate the impact of your mentoring scheme?

Evaluation helps us to understand what is and isn't working and where improvements need to be made. **It is therefore essential to evaluate your mentoring scheme.**

Things to consider:

- Think about evaluation at the design/planning stage of the mentoring initiative (not at the end!).

- Consider whether Ethical approval might be needed and the time this takes (particularly if you are working with vulnerable individuals/groups and/or you are planning to publish or present/disseminate your work/findings).[7] .

- Why are you doing the evaluation? (planning, managing, learning, developing the activity, developing shared knowledge, accountability). Who will see/use the outputs?

- **Impact evaluations need to be proportionate** to the type, scale and cost of the initiative/activity. How resource (time, cost) intensive is the mentoring scheme/activity?

  See Resource A for further guidance on which types of evaluation might be most appropriate for different types of activities**.** As a rule of thumb, the more resource-intensive an activity, the more extensive the evaluation method should be. This is because it would be risky to continue to devote the level of resource unless the activity can be shown to have the beneficial impact it is aiming for.

- Be clear about the **rationale** for the mentoring initiative.
  Why are you running this mentoring initiative? Is there a particular problem(s) or issue(s) you are trying to solve/address?

- Make sure you have **clear aims**: What do you hope to achieve/change/improve by running the mentoring initiative? Remember that you can look at the impact on the mentors as well as the mentees.

- **Clear objectives**: what steps and actions will be taken to achieve the desired aim(s).

- **How will you know if the intervention has worked** (or not)? What does success look like? How can this be measured (what data do you need to evidence this)?

- **Method of data collection**: How will you 'gather evidence' to evaluate the impact of the mentoring scheme/activity? Quantitative (numerical) or qualitative (non-numerical: text, video, audio data for example) methods, or both (mixed methods)! Some examples of data collection methods are: questionnaires (paper, online, telephone), live polling during sessions, interviews, focus groups, observations, diaries, a combination of methods, or other data collection methods of your choice.

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[7] For more guidance, see Ethical Review Process.

You may also have existing data/records (for example feedback sheets, demographic data for the mentors/mentees themselves: age, gender, ethnicity and so on) that you could use as part of the evaluation.

- Ideally **build data collection into your mentoring scheme/activity**, rather than relying on mentors/mentees doing this in their own time. Make it an expected (or even compulsory) part of the scheme/activity, incorporating data collection, where possible, into application forms and training/mentoring sessions. For example, you could gather data at the beginning of the first session and again at the end of the last session; just make it part of the sessions!

- Think about **when** you will collect your evaluation data. Do you need to gather data pre (before the intervention/in the first session) and post (in the last session/after the intervention) so that you can see if there is a difference between the 'pre' and 'post' data? (has there been a change?). For a more resource intensive mentoring scheme you may also want to collect data at a midpoint and/or have a comparison group (who didn't take part in the mentoring scheme/activity).

- The type of data needed will depend on how resource intensive the mentoring activity/intervention is (**see resource A** for the types of claims/conclusions that can be made from different types of evaluation).

- To help you structure your evaluation, you can use a theory of change approach **(see resource B)**.

- **See resource C** for more impact evaluation resources.

Section 3: *How* are you doing this?

❖ Establishing your timeline

It is important to have a clear and strategic timeline for your mentoring programme, with measurable milestones designed to monitor and increase engagement, for the benefit and motivation of all involved. You will need to think carefully about the reasons for the exact duration of the scheme and the key stages involved. Note that some initiatives, especially those bound to specific programme outcomes, may need to be term-time only, some may run only once, and some may have circular timelines throughout the year, which will need to carefully managed in order to ensure realistic resource. (In other words, if you are running a repeat event, one cohort may be finishing as another starts, meaning you will need to manage/avoid potential overlap).

It is also key to allow enough time for each stage. Note that administrative processes, such as processing DBS checks, setting individuals up on payroll, and ethical review and approval[8] (if you are looking to publish research on your initiative) can take considerable time.

Below is an example timeline from the work of Employability Services and Widening Participation:
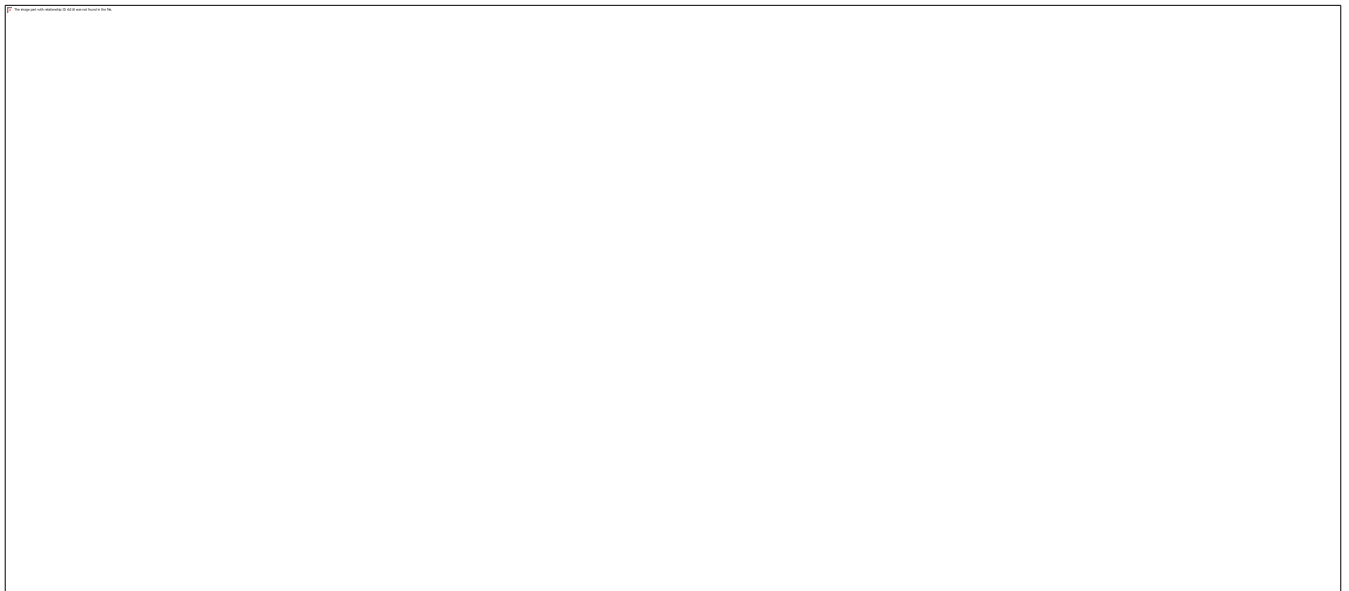
A note on beginnings and endings

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[8] You can find more information on the Ethical Review Process on StaffNet here.

It is important for mentoring initiatives to have clear beginnings and endings, so that engagement is maintained and the expectations for both mentors and mentees are finite. We therefore recommend building in explicit beginnings and endings to your initiatives.

Beginnings

Key in the early stages is a sense of excitement. Holding a launch event can be a great social and motivational experience. The Be SMART[9] programme, for instance, runs a 'Meet Your Mentor' event where mentees and mentors are welcomed to the programme together and provided with food and icebreaker activities. This creates a sense of buy-in early on and also provides a great networking opportunity from the outset.

Thorough training is an essential early part of the journey and is crucial in setting clear expectations for your mentors and mentees. This is the space in which you can ensure mentors and mentees have full guidance and clarity on their roles, the structure of the programme, and the resources available to them. Here mentors can be introduced from the outset to the equality, diversity, and inclusion training[10] and encouraged to discuss and explore these ideas – and it is also an opportunity to ensure mentors and mentees are aware of the support available to them (e.g. from programme facilitators and stakeholders and from each other) with structured check-ins and clear, named contacts available to them throughout if they should encounter any obstacles. Training also provides a window in which to conduct entry surveys and questionnaires for any subsequent evaluations.

See 'Training & Employability' below.

Endings

Clear and structured endings and goodbyes are important in terms of managing expectations. It should be understood that mentors are devoting their time and expertise for a finite period and final sessions should be devoted to empowering mentees in their next steps moving forward without their mentor. Providing structured topics and questions to cover here can be useful – for example, asking both mentors and mentees to reflect on their sessions, their key takeaways, what they have learnt from each other, and what they might do differently in future. Final sessions are a great opportunity to embed closing surveys and questionnaires for evaluation.[11]

Recruitment

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[9] See Section 6 for a breakdown of mentoring initiatives at St Mary's.
[10] Free EDI training is readily available and already purchased by the University. See Training & Employability below for more information.
[11] Some mentors and mentees may independently choose to stay in touch, but it should be clear that this is a bonus, not a given, and is at the individuals' discretion outside of the St Mary's programme.

Recruiting student mentees

There are two main options when recruiting your student mentees:

(1) An opt-out model

Here, you automatically register students from your target group/s (e.g. all first-year drama students) onto your mentoring programme, providing them with an opportunity early on to decline to participate, but otherwise pairing them with a mentor and support materials immediately.

The pros:

- Potential to reach a broader range of students
- Students do not need to be proactive
- Mentoring schemes are normalised within the university culture.

The cons:

- Engagement challenges/lack of buy-in from students
- Mentor disappointment/disengagement if their mentees do not engage
- Workload/resourcing issues, as enough mentors must be recruited and trained to support all mentees

(2) An opt-in model

Here, students have to apply to be a part of the mentoring programme, expressing an active interest in taking parts and in some cases writing a more formal application, outlining what they want from the initiative.
The pros:

- Higher mentee engagement, as students invest more in the programme from the outset
- Potentially greater impact in pairings, as with more information from individual students, the match can be tailored more effectively
- More manageable workload/resourcing as fewer mentors required for fewer students

The cons:
- Recruitment is more challenging and you potentially 'miss' students who may need the support the most.

Recruiting student mentors[12]

Student Mentors: Paid vs. Unpaid Models

A key conversation around the engagement, dedication, and impact of student mentors revolves around whether the mentors or paid for their time, or volunteer their services.

PAID

Paying student mentors for their time immediately professionalises the role, while at the same time ensuring a greater sense of inclusion as the opportunity does not exclude students who cannot afford to work on a voluntary basis.

Members of the Mentoring at St Mary's group have found that setting up new students on payroll can be a time consuming and complicated process, so this is worth bearing in mind. If you are looking for general, rather than subject-specific mentors, the established Student Ambassador scheme[13] provides paid work for current students and currently has just under 100 Student Ambassadors, covering a wide range of subjects and year groups, trained and set up on payroll.

Subject to capacity, the Student Ambassador Coordinator Sonia Hill (studentambassadors@stmarys.ac.uk) can help other departments at St Mary's book professional, trained Student Ambassadors for their own work, funded by their own budget codes. This work is most often brief and 'ad hoc' (e.g. a morning handing out fliers). The WP & Outreach team often uses the sub-cohort of 'WP Student Ambassadors' as mentors for specific programmes with young people - this includes the full training and supervision of the ambassadors.

Any queries about whether Ambassadors can support a mentoring project would need to be discussed early with Sonia Hill and Nancy Bentley (Outreach Manager) and though happy to provide suggestions or advice, these contacts would not be able to coordinate these programmes.

If your programme is designed specifically for students from widening participation backgrounds, you may be able to apply for WP funding. In these instances, see the WP Innovation Initiative Grants page, and contact the Head of WP, Nikki Anghileri – nikki.anghileri@stmarys.ac.uk.

UNPAID

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[12] Student mentors are recruited for peer mentoring schemes, but in some initiatives your mentors will not be current students and may be alumni or industry professionals – for these instances see 'recruiting professional and external mentors' below.

[13] More information on the Student Ambassador scheme can be found here.

Recruiting student mentors on a voluntary basis is likely to require more effort. In these instances, it is essential to work closely with Employability Services to ensure that the tangible benefits are immediately apparent to the prospective mentors.

Means of recruitment might include:

- Announcements on the student web pages (formerly SIMMSpace)
- Social media channels
- Student mailouts via communications & marketing
- Working with academic staff to recommend specific students for the role
- Delivering short pitches in lectures
- Embedding mentoring opportunities into workplace learning modules[14]
- Working with the Students' Union
- Announcements in induction weeks
- Promotion through student societies (E.g. ACS, Law Society, No Ordinary Society, etc.)
- Employability/recruitment fairs with mentoring opportunities advertised with a stand/contact to answer queries

It is important to think carefully about where you are recruiting your student mentors from. For instance, in the SAHPS Peer Assisted Learning programme, mentors are recruited from Level 5 to mentor new students in Level 4, with the express intention of increasing confidence in both groups of students. Some staff have reported that when recruiting voluntary mentors, there is less opportunity for careful selection, as by necessity the predominant focus becomes target numbers.

Recruiting professional/external mentors

If you are running a mentoring initiative with professional/external mentors, then central to the success of your mentoring initiative will be the recruitment of mentors reflective of the industry, professions, skills and experiences valuable to your mentees; and with limited or no budgets it is realistic (and highly likely) that your prospective mentors will be unpaid. As such, what is outlined below are simple tips that will help in securing buy-in and engagement from potential mentors for your project.

Prepare an elevator pitch:

To do this you will need to be able to articulate the key tenets of your initiative to potential mentors, and this will require you to really understand:

- the importance of your mentoring scheme and the needs it fulfils[15]

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[14] Maxine Edwards (Maxine.edwards@stmarys.ac.uk) is a key contact here.
[15] See Section 2: Why Are You Doing This? – especially 'essential questions to ask yourself' and 'embedding impact'.

- the impact and difference the mentoring journey and input of the mentors will make to both the issue(s) the initiative is trying to address, and to the mentees themselves
- what the level of commitment is expected of mentors, the support and value they will get from participating.

It is useful to create a master document which captures all the above, and from that create a secondary one-page (branded) document which further distils and outlines your mentoring initiative succinctly (with hyperlinks to an online page -preferably dedicated to the project where more information and/or how to register, can be found). You will send this one-page document to your perspective mentors after you have engaged with them.[16]

You will use your elevator pitch to reach out to your mentors to encourage them to take the next step in engaging with you.

Key things you will want to outline in your meeting with a potential mentor:

- Your mentoring initiative and why it is important
- Why you need mentors and are targeting specific types of mentors
- If they have any experience mentoring
- What mentors will be asked to do (commitment) and the support they will receive
- Any questions or concerns they might have
- An overview of the next steps, processes and timelines
- If they can reach out to their networks to promote the scheme

Follow up with the one page master document and an email summarising what was discussed, next steps and actions.

Meeting your potential mentors:

How you 'meet' your potential mentors matters – this is where knowing the ins and outs of your initiative really makes a difference. Ideally, you not only want potential mentors to be interested in your scheme, but to also sign up, commit and become your project advocates and champions.

Whenever possible try to have 'in person' meetings (telephone, face to face or video calls, as opposed to emails) with potential mentors to pitch your initiative. They help establish a rapport, and a connection between you, the potential mentor and the project – if you are passionate and enthusiastic about your project, chances are that your potential mentor will also be enthused. Creating an 'in person' space to engage with prospective mentors will also give them chance to ask questions and voice concerns, and for you the opportunity to respond to and address any issues to remove barriers.

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[16] You can find an example of this under the Be SMART resources in the Additional Resources section.

Depending on the size of your project and time commitments it might be unrealistic or unfeasible to engage every potential mentor 'in person'. However, adopting this as part of your approach will allow for the chance to meet and build relationships with mentors who buy into your project to the extent that they can become advocates and champions – personally advocating and championing your project within their own networks, and as a result recruit more mentors, and open other opportunities for collaborations.

With the above in mind, it is recommended that you adopt an 'in person' approach particularly when engaging potential mentors who are in a position of management or leadership team as they can leverage their position and influence to promote your project within their team, department, or organisation.

Always follow up with actions from the meeting and your one page master document; often the mentors will want to reflect on or send on the document to others they think might be interested.

Recruiting your mentors online and/or through an email campaign:

Utilising an online platform and an email campaign allows you to potentially reach a wide range of prospective mentors. However, work might still need to be done in some cases to make an 'in person' connection where interest has been generated in order to fully secure buy-in and participation.

Using LinkedIn and other online platforms and events:

LinkedIn and other online networking platforms and events provide great opportunities to access and engage with a wide range of professionals and organisations across diverse sectors and industries; they also offer free marketing and promotional opportunities for your project. Don't forget to tap into your own professional network to get them involved in your project or to share your project with their own networks.

If you work in a department that engages with external partners and clients, perhaps you might be able to access a database of potential project partners you can contact (in accordance with GDPR adherence). Even if your role or department isn't client facing, and you don't have access to a database of people to potentially contact, why not reach out to other colleagues and departments who are externally facing and might have a database – such as the employer engagement or placement teams and check if they can reach out to their network on your behalf.

Key things to remember when reaching out to potential partners online or via email: Keep your initial message short and concise; your aim should be to introduce yourself, your project, why you are doing it, the impact it will make and how people can participate or support; and most importantly, make sure there are clear instructions on how to sign up.

It can be helpful to include a link to a webpage/website for your project (if you have one) and/or attach the one-page master document so interested people can learn more about your project. This all helps create that professional impression of your

project. Also include a contact telephone number, if possible, as some interested people might prefer to speak to someone directly.

Make sure you have a system of tracking responses, as well as collating registrations. Acknowledge sign ups, this can be set up automatically with specific messaging on next steps and timelines. You want to make sure those that have registered know what is happening next and don't feel disconnected from the process. Mass mailing software such as Mailchimp, Mailerlite and Sendinblue make it easy to send out large volumes of emails as well as track responses.

Meeting potential mentors at events:

At events you never know who you might meet, so be prepared to take every opportunity to network and pitch your project. Adopt the same approach as you would for an 'in person' meeting, i.e. make sure you have your elevator pitch and a succinct way of talking about your project, that you connect with them (LinkedIn is best!), and that you don't forget to follow up and explore collaborative opportunities.

A note on alumni

Newsletters are frequently sent out from the alumni department to over 20,000 former St Mary's students. If you are looking for external mentors, this can be a very useful way to advertise these opportunities. See 'Section 5: Who Can Help You – Consultants at St Mary's'.

A note on interviews

If you have capacity, interviewing mentors is highly advisable in terms of ensuring buy-in and commitment. The advice of the group is to keep these interviews pretty informal and to create a space in which mentors can ask any questions they might not feel comfortable asking in a group. Similarly, interviewing mentees informally can foster that sense of real connection to the mentoring programme in students from the outset, as well as a greater feeling of accountability in terms of meeting and engaging with mentors.

❖ Training & Employability

Training: why it matters

We strongly recommend full training for both mentors and mentees, in order to achieve high levels of engagement and professionalism throughout, as well as a clear sense on both sides of expectations, responsibilities, and the benefits of participating fully in the programme. This is a key part of engendering both excitement and commitment from mentors and mentees. You may wish to run a facilitated social event in addition

to training – for instance, with the Be SMART mentoring programme, we held a 'Meet the Mentors' event with icebreakers, free pizza, and various prizes.

Training should be interactive and cover the following elements:

- Introduction to and aims of the project
- Accompanying mentor and mentee handbooks
- Realistic expectations
- Roles and responsibilities
- Practical support and guidance
- Case studies
- Signposting
- Timelines
- Beginnings and endings
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*

*St Mary's has bought in a student leaders e-module on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, which is available to be incorporated into all student mentor training. These materials can be found within the Moodle pages for Student Leaders here. To be registered for these, please contact studentengagement@stmarys.ac.uk.

You can find examples of training slides, plans, and booklets under 'training materials' in Section 6 which provide much more detailed information. Also: see 'Lessons Learnt' below for more information on top tips for training and engagement.

Embedding employability in training & throughout

When students assume the roles of mentors and mentees, there is immediately enormous potential for student employability – and awareness of this needs to be built into the training for both mentors and mentees from the outset.

Employability for mentees:

For mentees, they need to be guided and empowered to utilise their mentoring relationship to meaningfully develop their employability. This can be done in a number of ways:

1. Working with the mentor to reflect on their professional skills and experience to identify skills gaps and ways of addressing these
2. Developing self-awareness by having honest and open conversations about strengths and areas for development
3. Discussing the world of work or potential professional areas of interest to consider the mentee's suitability for these
4. Working with the mentor to expand the mentee's professional network to learn more about the world of work

5. Undertaking different activities during the course of the mentoring relationship to develop employability skills (e.g. observing meetings, working on a joint project, a mock interview with the mentor, undertaking induction activities for the organisation the mentor works for, work shadowing, introductions to other team members/people from different teams/other students or contacts, etc.)

Employability for mentors:

Both student mentors and professional mentors can undertake activities related to the five themes above, though of course the experiences and therefore activities in each case will vary. For instance, with peer mentoring, student mentors may well draw on their own experiences as students, e.g. juggling studies with career aspirations, while professional mentors working with students will likely have more scope to create activities to develop employability as well as an enhanced professional network.

For mentor training, the themes above need to be tailored so mentors are able to have these conversations with mentees and know to refer their mentees to St Mary's Careers Service for more in depth careers support. Student mentors also need to be trained to identify how their own employability is developing as a result of being a mentor. This could be through improving their communication, problem solving, and leadership skills. The best way to do this is by signposting student mentors to participate in the St Mary's Award, a structured pathway to enable student mentors to reflect on activities they undertake within mentoring and how it is developing their own skillset. For more information you can direct students to these pages on the St Mary's Award.

For more information on Employability content for mentoring training please email careers@stmarys.ac.uk and we can connect you to one of our Career Consultants.

Engagement

Incentives & maintaining engagement

A key part of a successful mentoring programme is maintaining a consistent overview of mentor and mentee engagement, as well as reception, in order to ensure high levels of commitment throughout. This is where having a clear and structured timeline, as well as a clear division of resourcing responsibilities, is imperative.[17] It is important to ensure there is an open dialogue throughout so that any issues can be raised and addressed directly if necessary.

In addition to advertising key contacts for any mentor/mentee queries, we recommend embedding check-ins into your scheme – for instance, having clear beginning, middle, and end conversations with your mentors and mentees respectively.[18] Your questionnaires[19] should cover the start and finish points, but adding an official mid-point review provides more you with insight, as well as the opportunity to respond live to any constructive feedback and suggestions (which they may not proactively approach you with via email). Importantly, too, this can be a key chance to re-inspire mentors and mentees, by bringing them all together to share experiences and stories. You may also wish to further incentivise with prizes at these points.

A key role of the programme co-ordinator will be to check and track engagement as it is common for individuals on these schemes to require a little chasing and reminding. If mentees are not responding to their mentors, it can be imperative for the co-ordinator to make contact and re-establish the connection, as when mentees disengage, mentors frequently follow suit. We recommend ensuring you have phone numbers as well as emails, as often a quick chat can get you back on track much more quickly than a string of email correspondence.

It is important to celebrate the achievements of both mentors and mentees and one effective way to do this is to hold an awards ceremony for all involved. Here, you can have categories such as 'Best Mentor' and 'Best Mentee' – and formally recognise the hard work, commitment, and growth of the students and all involved. You can find examples of online award ceremonies under 'Best Practice Materials'.

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[17] See above sections on timelines and expectations.
[18] See above sections on beginnings and endings.
[19] See above sections on embedding and evaluating impact.

Collaborations

Working with the faculty and institutes

Evidence suggests that mentoring programmes are most effective when they are fully embedded into academic programmes and departments, starting at a point of pre-entry, with overt social and academic purposes of developing peer networks and friendships while providing key academic information and support (Thomas, 2012). Indeed, group members have found that frequently it is the case that students buy into a mentoring initiative if it is supported by and ideally built into their degree programme. Timetabling mentoring sessions into allocated class time—either face to face or online—significantly increases engagement and sends a message to students as to the key value of these initiatives.

A key example of an embedded programme is the [Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme](#) running with Sport Science students in SAHPs. Here, learning development lecturers (LDLs) work closely with course leads to identify specific modules where extra support is most needed and then train up paid students—the 'PALs'—to support students in younger year groups. So, for instance, Level 5 & 6 students might work as PALs to the Level 4 students. The LDLs work closely with course leads to plan semester topics to cover in the PAL sessions and provide subject specific materials the PALs can then use in their support sessions. These sessions are timetabled for students from the start of the semester.

Key lessons learnt from running the PAL scheme with the faculty and institutes include:

- Ensure you have one specific contact for programmes and mentors
- Make sure there is a consistent team/programme academic representative (ideally a course lead where possible)
- Timetable/embed the sessions
- Ensure there is thorough training and ongoing support sessions for student mentors

Working with external partners

There are external companies that provide various mentoring platforms and resourcing options, which can prove a more sustainable model in terms of staffing. In Business for instance, the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) can provide accredited mentoring schemes. For some collaborations, please note there may well be costing implications.

Two giants on the mentoring scheme are Graduway and Brightside – companies that the Mentoring at St Mary's group has either considered or worked with directly. The group invited representatives to meetings to demonstrate what these companies can provide and these recordings can be found below.

You can see a demonstration from Brightside Mentoring [here](#).

You can see a demonstration from Graduway Mentoring [here](#).

❖ Has it Worked?: Impact and Evaluations

It is important to make time at the end of your initiative to reflect and evaluate the ways in which mentoring has or has not achieved the goals you set out in the design stage, in order to determine whether or not mentoring is the correct tool for your purposes. You will find detailed information on embedding impact in the earlier section 'Value from the Start: Embedding, Evaluating, and Measuring Impact', which is key to work with both in the design and evaluation of your initiative. In many cases, you will be drawing on pre- and post-surveys to track and analyse impact both quantitatively and qualitatively. Additional and often insightful qualitative data can also be sourced from recorded/transcribed focus groups and/or interviews you may wish to run with mentors and mentees (examples of this can be found in the Additional Resources section below).

Section 4: Lessons Learnt

Though these are to be found in the Mentoring Materials more broadly, here are some top tips from the group on key lessons learnt.

- ## Get excited!

  It's easy to focus on the work needed to get a mentoring initiative off the ground and forget the reasons you're doing it. Excitement is infectious and will spread to mentors and mentees! You can add to this by bringing in 'success stories' from previous years to speak at training and launch events.

- ## Work with others & don't start from scratch

  As these materials demonstrate, there is a lot of work already being undertaken on mentoring at St Mary's. Get a head start by learning from and working with others and building on the materials provided here.

- ## Embrace impact!

  The term 'impact' can cause a lot of us to feel nervous, but when you get into it it's less intimidating than you think. Talk to others who have done impact reports and/or look through the additional resources and contacts we have provided to help you with making sure impact is planned into your programme from the beginning…

- ## Remember mentoring is not resource neutral

  Do not underestimate the hours needed to effectively run a mentoring scheme and the admin involved. Work collaboratively, split the load, and factor this in from the planning stages. Allow more time for each stage than you think you need.

- ## Keep it realistic & sustainable

  Start small and build it up manageably to avoid overwhelm.

- ## People need chasing…

  Be prepared for the fact that mentors and mentees will likely need chasing and various nudges throughout the programme. Build in time for managing this and take telephone numbers as well as emails early on.

- ## Utilise interviews to build relationships early on

  It makes a big difference having a bit of a relationship before the scheme officially begins. One way of achieving this is to hold short, informal interviews for mentors and mentees early on to ensure you have buy-in (and your emails are less easy to ignore!)

- ## Sell it!

  Collect testimonials, get previous mentors and mentees to come in and talk about their experiences, and spread the word!

- Embed data collection into the early stages: ensure this is part of the application form/recruitment process as well as the training for both mentors and mentees. This will provide you with baseline data and is therefore essential.

- Get mentors and mentees to fill in questionnaires live in the room, to save you chasing!

    When running live sessions such as training, or awards at the close of a scheme, structure in time for all mentors/mentees to complete the survey in the allotted time, to avoid you having to chase everyone for their responses.

- Structure in a mid-point check-in for both mentors and mentees in any scheme.

    This allows for any issues and concerns which are not likely to be brought up over email to be addressed while the scheme is live, rather than being discovered in evaluations.

- When working with student mentors (e.g. PALs) encourage them to work in pairs

    This can be hugely useful not only in terms of increasing the confidence of your student mentors, but in meaning you have two contacts if one is not replying/is ill, etc.

- Timetable embedded sessions and work closely with timetabling to avoid clashes

    Timetabling sessions for students tends to significantly increase engagement and commitment from students. However, always check in with timetabling to ensure you do not timetable sessions which clash with students' other commitments and be mindful of joint honours students.

- Be ready for admin delays…

    There are processes that take significant time. For instance, if you need to carry out DBS checks, get ethics approval, or set up new mentors/mentees on payroll, be mindful that this can take several weeks.

- Build in peer support for mentors

    We have found that mentors really value keeping in touch with each other and having facilitated social sessions. This way, they can support each other, compare notes, and network.

- Build in expectations for goodbyes

    Ensure mentees *expect* to end communication at the end of the programme, so that if mentors do choose to stay in touch, it is a bonus rather than an expectation.

- Be collaborative

    Share your successes and your lessons learnt with others.

Section 5: Who Can Help You – Consultants at St Mary's

We have learnt a lot from our own and each other's experiences and we are keen to support you. Here is a list of helpful contacts and their mentoring specialisms.

Elizabeth Parker

studentengagement@stmarys.ac.uk

- General enquiries
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion e-learning training
- Student Focus Groups
- Incentives and awards

Nikki Anghileri

nikki.anghileri@stmarys.ac.uk

- Widening Participation projects
- Funding your project
- Embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Meeting APP projects and targets
- Processing WP payments

Yasmina Mallam-Hassam

Yasmina.mallam-hassam@stmarys.ac.uk

- Embedding employability

Obi Oputa

Obi.oputa@stmarys.ac.uk

- Recruiting voluntary professional mentors
- Specialist ERGs (Employee Resource Groups), e.g. disability-confident employers
- BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnicity) initiatives
- Publishing your work

Melina Healy

Melina.healy@stmarys.ac.uk

- PAL (Peer Assisted Learning) schemes
- BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnicity) initiatives

Nicola Smith-Wilson

nicola.smith-wilson@stmarys.ac.uk

- If you are planning a mentoring scheme/activity, which focuses upon or includes students from a widening participation (WP) background, Nicola may be able to assist you with designing and planning your evaluation.

Nancy Bentley

nancy.bentley@stmarys.ac.uk

- Outreach initiatives
- Linking mentoring to the 'Access' targets of our Access & Participation Plan
- Engagement with schools, colleges and community organisations
- Processing payments

Kristen Pilbrow

Kristen.pilbrow@stmarys.ac.uk

- International student queries/mentoring initiatives

Maxine Edwards

placements@stmarys.ac.uk

- Work placements

Georgia Boatman

alumni@stmarys.ac.uk

- Working with alumni

Section 6: Existing Mentoring Schemes at St Mary's

The Mentoring at St Mary's group has been working to track different existing and prospective mentoring schemes at St Mary's. If you are aware of mentoring schemes that we have not captured, please contact us at studentengagement@stmarys.ac.uk.

You can find the live file of the existing initiatives on the Teams site, which can be found here.

Current mentoring initiatives (as of November 2021):

Title	Target	Format	Staff/department	Notes
Get Set for Success Brightside Mentoring	New L4 WP students	Peer-to-peer Online (Brightside)	Elizabeth Parker Widening Participation	*Third cohort running from 16/08/21.*
Be SMART	L4-6 students from BAME backgrounds	Professional-student F-2-f and online Embedded within wider Be SMART programme	Yasmina Mallam-Hassam, Oby Oputa, Gemma Garrett, Nikki Anghileri, Elizabeth Parker Employability and Widening Participation	*Second cohort just completed.*
Employability Confident	L4-6 students with registered disabilities	Professional-student F-2-f and online Embedded within wider Employability Confident programme	Yasmina Mallam-Hassam, Oby Oputa, Gemma Garrett, Nikki Anghileri, Elizabeth Parker Employability and Widening Participation	*First cohort just completed.*
International Global Peer Mentoring	Study Abroad students	Peer-to-peer F-2-f	Kristen Pilbrow International	*Paused during Covid.*

PAL (Peer Assessment Leaders)	Pilot with Sport Science students (20-21, now in phase 2)	Peer-to-peer Student mentors work with programme teams Weekly sessions	Mel Healy SAHPS	*Second cohort starting end September '21 – Phase 2. Rehab, Psychology, Sport Science. (Last year, Phase 1 – Sport Science only).*
Study Buddy Scheme (SAHPS)	L4 students just finished FY will support current FY students	1 hour a week – quite informal. 1-2-1. (Whereas PAL is in groups). Study buddies go on to become PALs.	Jane Maw	*On pause, awaiting funding for 2022.*
Unibuddy	Prospective students	Ambassador > prospective student Unibuddy	Meg Griessel Recruitment	*Second cohort running now. Works with Steps for Success programme.*
Brightside Post-16	Outreach: post-16 students at FE colleges	Ambassador > school student Brightside	Mandip Birk Widening Participation	*This year not paying for mentoring subscription, but possibly through Linking London. Due to happen again this year.*

Brightside Year 9	Outreach: year 9 students in schools & colleges	Professional > school student	Nancy Bentley Widening Participation	*Now working with year 9s. Due to repeat in spring '22 (third year running).*
BAME Student Network Mentoring Scheme/Young, Gifted, and Fabulous (TBC)	SMU current students who have experienced racial issues	BAME staff network members > student.	Mel Healy SHAHPS	*Running currently with 1-2 students. Will pick up again in September.*
Student Success Mentoring Programme	L5 BAME students on SAHPS Psychology and Pedagogic Science	BAME P&PS alumni > students	Nic Evans SAHPS Psychology and Pedagogic Science	
FdA Pastoral Ministry Mentoring	Students on the FdA in Pastoral Ministry	External mentors > FdA students	Ashley Beck	*Running for several years; ongoing.*

Prospective mentoring initiatives:

Title	Target	Format	Staff/department	Notes
Study Buddy Scheme (SAHPS)	L4 students just finished FY will support current FY students	1 hour a week – quite informal. 1-2-1. (Whereas PAL is in groups).	Jane Maw	*This was due to start in September, but currently paused due to lack of funding with hopes of running next year.*
TBC	L6/graduated care leavers	Professional > student	Rebecca Hughes Student Services	

TBC	PSEYD students	TBC	Tom Hounsell SHAHPS	
TBC	Business students?	TBC	*Currently directing them to available mentoring schemes (professional accreditation and Be SMART, etc.) Were looking at doing internally, but there's a lot of existing projects. On hold whether internal.*	
TBC	Drama	TBC	TBC	

Section 7: Best Practice Materials, Additional Resources, & Group Membership

We have compiled a number of different resources which we have collected and organised in a shared Teams site, which you can find [here](). These can be updated at any stage, so if you have materials that you would like to share here, or you're looking for something specific you cannot find, please get in touch with us at studentengagement@stmarys.ac.uk.

Mentoring at St Mary's: Membership

Nikki Anghileri, Head of Widening Participation

Nancy Bentley, Widening Participation and Outreach Manager

Toby Burgess, Department Operations Manager

Jane Chambers, Head of Department, Secondary Education

Janet Clegg, Associate Dean of Student Experience

Nic Evans, Programme Director Psychology and Pedagogic Science

Gemma Garrett, Careers Team Leader

Meg Griessel, Student Recruitment Officer

Melina Healy, Learning and Development Lecturer

Michael Hobson, Senior Lecturer Physical and Sport Education

Tom Hounsell, Programme Director Football Programmes

Rebecca Hughes, Student Funding Service Manager

Ann Kennedy, Associate Dean of Student Experience

Yasmina Mallam-Hassam, Head of Employability Services

Claire McLoughlin, Interim Associate Dean for Student Experience

Ellie Moss, Business Programme Support Officer

Obi Oputa, Careers Consultant

Elizabeth Parker, Student Engagement and Retention Projects Officer

Kristen Pilbrow, International Student Experience Manager

Sarah Samadizadeh, Foundation Liaison Support Officer

Nicola Smith Wilson, Widening Participation Research and Impact Evaluation Officer

Katharina Stegmann, Senior Outreach and Widening Participation Officer

Sharifa Wilkinson, Lecturer in Business Management

Femi Yusoof, Employer Engagement Lead

It is currently planned that a part-time mentoring co-ordinator will be appointed at St Mary's and will take over the leadership of this work. In the meantime, however, if you have any queries please contact Elizabeth at studentengagement@stmarys.ac.uk

Section 8: Appendices

Resource A: Types of Impact Evaluation: Widening Participation (based on guidance from the Office for Students)

Resource B: Guidance on Theory of Change

Resource C: Impact Evaluation Resources