



ALUMNI MENTORING
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**NCI ALUMNI MENTORING
MENTORS BROCHURE**



National
College of
Ireland





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WELCOME AND THANK YOU

Thank you for connecting with the NCI Career Development & Employability team and offering to volunteer your time to mentor NCI students and graduates. We very much appreciate your involvement and believe that alumni mentoring is a powerful first step for students as they explore what meaningful work means to them. The programme is designed to match the aspirations of our students with the skills and experiences of NCI Alumni.

Over the coming months you will meet your student 3 times on a one-to-one basis and you can use this booklet to help you plan your structured mentoring meetings. Objectives for mentoring will be mutually agreed by the mentee and mentor at the start of the programme.

During the meetings, you will have the opportunity to work with students on areas that may include career planning and development, building resilience, profile building, job applications and interviews. The following are some questions and topic areas that may be discussed in your mentoring meetings.

We very much appreciate your involvement, wish you the best of luck with the programme over the next few months and are excited to hear your feedback.

Yours sincerely,

**NCI CAREER DEVELOPMENT
AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM**

PHASE 1 — PREPARATION AND MENTORING EXPECTATIONS

Setting mentoring expectations at the beginning of your relationship is a key element in developing productive mentoring relationships. The National College of Ireland alumni and students are encouraged to think about their expectations prior to their first meeting, and it is expected that both perspectives will be communicated in order to establish mentoring goals, trust and boundaries. You may want to consider the following questions:

MENTOR QUESTIONS

- What do you hope to gain from mentoring?
- What do you want your mentee to get out from mentoring?
- Are there any ground rules you would like to set?
- How do you want to communicate with your mentee?
- How do you want to work together?
- Do you want your mentee to do some work i.e. research prior your meeting?
- Is there anything you don't feel comfortable discussing?
- Can you agree what the focus of 2nd and 3rd meetings should be?
- Are these expectations realistic?

MENTEE QUESTIONS

- What do you hope to gain from this relationship?
- What role do you expect your mentor to play?
- Are there any ground rules you would like to set?
- What is the best way to get in touch? LinkedIn, email, messages?
- Can we set up a plan or schedule for when I should be setting up meetings?
- How are we going to have our meetings?
- Can we discuss what the focus of our 2nd and 3rd meetings should be?
- Are these expectations realistic?

Mentoring provides an opportunity to develop a sense of trust, respect and understanding between mentor and mentee. You will be involved in an open discussion with students, and they may disclose personal issues and experiences they have faced in their career journey. It is important to provide a safe and confidential environment where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, experiences and facilitate student's self-reflection.

QUESTIONING SKILLS

As human beings we might feel like proposing a solution, however, effective questioning skills can result in the mentee's ownership over their actions and self-reflection. Questions are a critical part of a helping conversation. Using clarifying and open questions will help you to get a fuller picture and get more meaningful responses.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What would you like to focus on/discuss?
- What makes it an issue now?
- Can you tell me more?
- How important is it?
- What have you tried so far?
- What are you doing well that is helping you get there?
- What are you not doing well that is preventing you from getting there?
- Imagine this issue is resolved. What would it look like?
- What are the barriers to your ideal outcome?
- What would be early signs that things are improving?
- What are your options?
- What action can you take now for these options?
- What is the next best step?
- Where do you need help most?/How can I help?
- What will you do differently now ?

PHASE 2 — PRODUCTIVE MENTORING CONVERSATIONS

TOPIC: CAREER PATHWAYS

This is an opportunity to share your career experience in relation to your own career planning. Students may ask questions in relation to specifics of your current role, such as exciting and challenging activities on a day-to-day basis, challenges associated with getting into that role and opportunities for advancement in that role. This is a very valuable information to students as it will help them navigate their career and identify their action plan.

MENTEE'S QUESTIONS

- How did you get into your career area?
- Did you have to overcome any obstacles to get into this type of career?
- What are some of the roles and responsibilities of graduates in your company?

TOPIC: CV REVIEW

A CV is an essential part of any job application and NCI students would love to get your feedback on their CV. Your industry and role specific CV feedback can focus on the following areas:

- Presentation and length.
- Structure and order.
- Industry relevant experience and skills.
- Communicating relevant modules/materials studied at NCI in their CV.
- Communicating extra-curricular activities with the focus on transferable skills in their CV.
- Opportunities to stand out and most common mistakes.
- Spelling.

MENTEE'S QUESTIONS

- What really stands out to you on a CV?
- What is something that automatically makes you like or dislike a CV?
- I've worked a lot of the same types of part-time roles, but am unsure how I can demonstrate skills that would be relevant to the field I want to work in. Can you help me identify some strengths?

TOPIC: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Whilst students have an opportunity to acquire academic–industry specific skills, and in some instances transferable skills through extra–curricular activities and part time work, they also would love to hear about critical skills required in your role. During this meeting, you can consult or share your experience in relation to skill development and how one can articulate those skills to employers in their CV and application forms. Some activities may involve short–term courses, career literature, work experience, extra–curricular activities you were involved in the College and volunteering.

MENTEE'S QUESTIONS

- What specific skills are critical for working in your field today?
- What skills can I develop while I am still in college that will help me gain an advantage in the job market?
- What skills would really stand out on an application or in an interview setting?

TOPIC: BUILDING THEIR NETWORK

Networking has proven to be an effective tool when it comes to career development as networking alone is responsible for filling as many as 70% of all jobs. You may meet students with various levels of experience in relation to networking and it is important to assess their current networking knowledge and skills. Students would love to hear about your approach to networking and how they can either make first steps or how they can advance their current approach. Here, students may focus on:

- Platforms or websites useful for networking (if done online).
- Events and associations students can register for.
- Identifying people relevant to the industry/role.
- Preparing their first elevator pitch.
- Discovering who is in their network and how it can be grown.
- How to initiate a conversation with someone in their network.
- Maintaining relationship.

MENTEE'S QUESTIONS

- How have you built your network over time? How did you start building your network in college?
- I'm interested in hearing more about _____, is there anyone you know who I could talk to more about these types of roles?
- Who have been your most valuable contacts over time?

TOPIC: INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Students might ask to arrange a mock interview to receive feedback on their interview skills. Some interview questions may include:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work as a _____?
- Tell me about your favorite part of your course.
- Competency based questions based on skills required for their preferred role.
- Strengths based interview questions.
- Strengths and weaknesses questions.

MENTEE'S QUESTIONS

- What type of interview format does your company use?
- Can you tell me more about what you look for in candidate responses?
- I would like to practice the answers to the following questions, can you help?
- I'd like to practice answering some competency questions around the following, can we talk through my answers?

GIVING FEEDBACK

As a mentor, you will have an opportunity to give feedback to mentees which will help them to go forward with their career planning. Consider the following feedback facts:

- Establish good relationships and trust. This is the foundation for effective feedback.
- Talk about the value of feedback and let your mentee know to expect it.
- Provide frequent feedback, ensuring it refers to the events discussed.
- Consider the individual, their situation, their feelings and opinions. Keep an open mind.
- Offer balanced feedback, start with positive comments than critical comments.
- Keep it two-way. Feedback should be a conversation.
- Feedback with the purpose. Limit your feedback to one or two items your mentee can do something about.

CURRENT SCENARIO

Ask how they feel they are doing.
Acknowledge what is going well.
Discuss specific situations and events and behaviour(s), where and when.
Talk about the actual events, not the person.
Describe the positive or negative consequences of the behaviour.



DESIRED SCENARIO

What could have gone better?
What are we trying to achieve?
What would you like to do next?
What changes would you make if you were to do it again?
What does success look like?



GETTING THERE

Suggest alternative approaches and/or ways they can develop.
Clarify what you want to see happen.
Brainstorm options.
Determine a solution.
Commit to SMART Goals.
Establish timeframe/plan for following up.

PHASE 3 — COMMITTING TO CLOSURE

Your mentoring relationship will come to an end after three meetings. Consider what you want your mentoring relationship to look like after the formal relationship concludes.

- Be sensitive.
- Give and receive thanks.
- Evaluate your expectations and goals set at the beginning.

If you wish to continue your mentoring relationship outside of NCI Mentoring programme, please ensure this is communicated directly to your mentee.

Thank you again for supporting the
NCI Alumni Mentoring programme.