

Role of the mentor

Overall

Mentors should seek to develop a positive relationship with their mentor group, seeking to:

- Engage, stretch and inspire
- Tailor the role to reflect their individual strengths, as well as tailoring mentoring to meet the needs/strengths of mentees
- Provide consistent and personalised academic support and guidance to your mentees
- Help mentees to increase their expectations, expand their horizons and start to consider University or Higher Education as a viable option. Mentors represent a human face of University or Higher Education, and should help mentees to identify, break down and ultimately overcome any perceived barriers to access
- Encourage and support the development of their mentees, helping their mentees to realise their own potential, not telling them what that should be
- Remain available to provide constant mentoring and support, acting as a consistent presence in their academic development

Academic

The role of the mentor is essentially academic, and may specifically include:

- Setting, assisting with and marking/providing feedback on appropriate work and tasks
- Planning the progression from task to task, setting tasks which are age appropriate and have a specific developmental purpose
- Being there to help with any school work if mentees require/pointing students in the right direction if unable to help themselves
- Taking the lead with the e-mentoring programme, seeking to help their mentees to engage with the programme through the platform (N.B. the onus to drive the interaction may pass progressively on to the mentee, at which point the role of the mentor is to remain responsive and helpful when required)
- Assisting mentees with exploring different revision/study techniques, providing advice and honing what works for them
- Making use of the developmental framework to understand what mentees need to focus on and the competencies they need to develop
- Providing assistance with A-Level or University choices, offering or providing resources where appropriate
- Providing a constant source of support, in addition to what may be available at school or in the home
- Engaging in intellectual discussion designed to stimulate interest in topics or subject areas that they have not necessarily been introduced to in a school environment.

Pastoral

The mentor should not feel it is their responsibility to provide significant pastoral support to their mentee. However, the nature of working with teenagers and the issues associated with growing up dictate academic and pastoral development are not distinct. Mentors should therefore aim to:

- Understand the potential link between the two
- Be sensitive to the pressures faced by their mentees, specifically those who would be the first in their family to go to University and may not receive the support at home enjoyed by some others their age in pursuing this goal. Their presence on the APP shows they have the potential to achieve a place at University, yet it can also feel to the student as if this is the expectation, which may lead to an additional level of anxiety or stress
- Act as a first 'alarm signal' in diagnosing areas of difficulty or concern, passing concerns upwards if they fall outside the general mentor remit
- Provide the mentees with a sense that someone is really taking a keen interest in them as individuals, what they are doing, and how they are looking to develop, and has a keen desire to help them succeed

Programme Development

Given the KAN APP remains in a pilot phase, and will continue to grow and develop over the next couple of years, this provides mentors with a fantastic opportunity to help shape and influence the nature of the programme moving forward. In order to do this, mentors should:

- Recognise the key role they play and therefore the responsibility they have to drive the programme forward to make it a success
- Be comfortable providing detailed feedback to those running the APP, with the understanding feedback (positive or negative) will be listened to and taken on board
- Pass on guidance and support to other mentors, reflecting the novelty of the programme and the fluid nature of the role described here. Learning from each other is important to understand what is effective and what works in making the programme a success and meeting overall aims
- Spread the word about the work of the programme, either to attract different speakers or outside support, or to encourage others in their College or University to take up opportunities to apply
- Seek to take something for their own personal development away from the programme, adding an extra layer of value to what the programme provides

Residential

Residential are critically important to the structure of the APP, as they provide mentors and mentees with a prolonged period of time to interact and work with each other. The specific role of the mentor will change from residential to residential, but broadly speaking it will be expected that mentors will:

- Facilitate the successful implementation of the schedule, showing a willingness to engage with what is going on, and inspire their mentees to do the same

- Support mentees through the programme, encouraging mentees to make the most of opportunities and get involved
- Commit to the programme, showing enthusiasm and being prepared to lead example in everything they do while around mentees, something that is especially important when a cohort is new and has come together for the first time
- Use the opportunity provided by the intense period of contact time to get to know mentees and strengthen relationships; human contact between mentors and mentees can be highly beneficial when not possible all the time
- Host daily catch-ups with mentees, helping them to focus on the day ahead
- Support outside teachers or teach mentor lessons where appropriate
- *NB. A mentor timetable for each residential week will be provided, assigning mentors with specific duties and responsibilities at certain times, as well as time 'off duty'. However, the expectation is that mentors will remain available or 'on call' at all times and there will be occasions on which mentors are required to show initiative, resolving problems, meeting the needs of teachers, or to assist those on duty or AAF staff responsible for the residential when not specifically timetabled to do so*

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