

MENTORING GUIDE

The Stirling Network connects you to your fellow alumni, current students of the University of Stirling and the University's network of business relationships. It grants you access to established professional networks around the world, allows you to share your valuable expertise and experience with students and alumni, and provides the opportunity to engage in peer-to-peer or alumni-to-student mentorship. Joining The Stirling Network is easy – the site can connect to your LinkedIn, Facebook or Google account to quickly populate your profile, or you can register by email. The advantages offered by unlocking the skills, knowledge and networks of your alumni community are only a couple of clicks away.

Site features

The Stirling Network is a customisable platform, so you can tailor it to suit your needs. We suggest you start by browsing the content in each section and then join one or two groups. The groups feature allows you to select your areas of interest where you can access cutting edge research coming out of the University, share your knowledge through discussions with like-minded members, and connect with established professionals in the field.

Why be a mentor?

We recognise that since leaving the University of Stirling you've grown personally and professionally, gaining valuable skills, knowledge and experience. Today's graduates are facing tougher competition than ever in the jobs market, and your insights can give them the edge as they transition into their professional lives. Mentorship allows you to:

- Be recognised for your skills, knowledge and experience
- Develop your leadership and coaching skills as part of your CPD
- Gain fresh perspectives from the next generation of outstanding members of your field and identify emerging talent
- Experience the satisfaction of helping a student or fellow alumni with their career navigation
- Give the benefit of hindsight you wish you'd had at uni!

How to be a mentor:

Registering on The Stirling Network is quick and easy, and once you've signed up you can customise your settings to determine what sort of help you'd like to offer and receive. You can change this at any time, keeping you completely in control. The platform allows you to offer assistance by showing that you are open to answering questions or making introductions. If you choose to share your experience as a mentor, you are in control of this, too – you can choose to engage through CV reviews, ad-hoc help, or by a more comprehensive arrangement, unique to you and your mentee. The Stirling Network allows you to set a mentoring limit, so you can control the number of approaches you receive from the community.

You can find a mentee by going to the People section and selecting the mentoring drop down option on the right of the screen and clicking on the forms of mentorship you would like to offer. The list will update to show members who fit your specified criteria, and you can learn more about them by viewing their profiles. To extend an invitation when you are in someone's profile, select the "offer mentoring" button on the right of the screen. We are encouraging our students to be proactive on this platform and to reach out to the alumni community.

Tips for mentorship:

- **Set the ground rules.** Start by making your expectations clear, and understanding what your mentee is looking for. Establish how and when you will communicate.
- **Be an active listener.** Don't just talk *at* your mentee, talk *with* them. Take in what they are saying, ask questions, and participate fully in the conversation.
- **Be a role model.** Your actions say as much as your words. Display the professional attributes that have made you successful in your field during your mentoring relationship.
- **Provide feedback.** Giving constructive feedback to your mentee is vital. Valuable feedback is honest, professional and not personal. Recognise the positive and support areas that need addressed.
- **Reflect.** This is an opportunity to look at your own career journey, take stock of the skills and experiences you have gained, and also to remember the early days of your career. What advice do you wish you had been given then?
- **Enjoy it!** Successful mentorship is rewarding for both parties. Celebrate shared successes and enjoy gaining a new perspective on your field.

What is *not* expected from mentors:

Mentoring is knowledge and experience sharing – not having all the answers, and not telling your mentee what to do. You will be a critical and trusted friend, allowing your mentee to benefit from your hindsight. You are not in any way liable for the actions of your mentee and we don't expect our mentors:

- To offer jobs or internships as part of the mentoring relationship.
- To initiate all contact with your mentee. We will encourage them to take the initiative.
- To solve all their mentees' problems for them.

By discussing and sharing ideas, such as your experiences in interviews or the workplace, you can help your mentee by allowing them to learn from your successes (and mistakes!) and come up with their own way forward.

Issues

Like all relationships, some mentoring arrangements prove to be incompatible. If you find that you and your mentee aren't a match, you can easily let your mentee know that the relationship doesn't feel like a good fit, unmatch and pursue other mentoring connections.

If you are experiencing any difficulties in using the site or need any assistance from the alumni team, please contact us via alumni@stir.ac.uk. We welcome your feedback and comments.