

Peer Mentoring Works!

How Peer Mentoring Enhances Student Success in Higher Education

Evaluation Toolkit

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¹ The tools developed as part of this package represent work undertaken by the Engineering Education Research Group. Both parties have contributed equally to all aspects of this work.

Context - Background

This evaluation kit provides two data collection tools that may be adopted and adapted to meet institutional requirements.

The first of these is a survey. The survey is divided into six sections:

1. Background
2. Before starting university
3. Impact of peer mentoring [for peer mentors and peer mentees]
4. Questions for peer mentees only
5. Questions for peer mentors only
6. Looking back: On peer mentoring and your university experience.

This survey has been developed out of the original survey used in the Peer Mentoring Works Project. Some questions have been added as a result of reflexive application of colleagues and students input as the project has progressed.

The second part of the toolkit comprises a qualitative interview guide. This guide is similar to the one used in the research, but again it has been further developed as a result of the project. It may be adapted for use in focus groups or one-to-one interviews.

The final document within the kit is a sample consent form.

Peer Mentoring Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed for you to tell us more about your experiences of peer mentoring. Your views are very important and they will form part of a government funded national project looking into the benefits of peer mentoring programmes.

The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete, as each section is very short.

Please answer as honestly as possible. Your identity will remain anonymous and the data stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1998.

Thank you very much for your time.

If you are currently a *mentor* but have been a *mentee* please answer the questions from your current perspective.

If you are both a *mentee* AND a *mentor*, then please choose just one of the categories in Question 1 and answer the questionnaire from that perspective.

You are welcome to complete the survey again later from the other perspective.

Section 1: Background Details

1. Are you a:

Mentee Mentor

2. Are you:

Female Male

3. What is your ethnicity? [Please select from the 'drop-down' box]

If you selected Other, please specify:

4. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes No Prefer not to answer

5. What was your age upon commencing first year studies at this university? (*Please specify in the box below*):

6. What is your current year of study?

1st 2nd 3rd 4th

Other (*please specify*):

7. What is your mode of study?

Full-time Part-time

Other (please specify):

8. Please specify your programme of study in the box below e.g. BSc (Hons) Mathematics:

9. Are you:

A Home student (EU) An International student (Non-EU)

10. Where do you live?

University residence Off campus (private/rented) Off campus with parents

**11. How did you find out about the peer mentoring programme?
(select all that apply)**

Poster Website Freshers/Welcome week Open day Prospectus Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Email Lecturer Other staff member Fellow student Other (please specify):

SECTION 2: Before starting University

12. Before starting university....

	Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion / neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. ...I was anxious about making new friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. ...I felt prepared for university level study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. ...I was anxious about adjusting to university life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. ...I felt confident about starting university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. ...I was confident I had the ability to develop my subject knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. ...I was confident I would be supported at university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. ...I was apprehensive about starting university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. ...I was confident about my communication skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. ...I was committed to completing my studies at university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 3: Impact of peer mentoring [for both peer mentors and mentees]

13. As a result of participating in the peer mentoring programme...

	Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion / neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. ...I feel part of the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. ...I feel I am making more use of the opportunities available at university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. ...I am finding my time at university more enjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. ...I feel my communication skills are more developed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. ...I am more committed to completing my course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. As a result of participating in the peer mentoring programme...

	Please indicate whether your confidence has increased or decreased.				
	Significantly increased	Increased	Not changed	Decreased	Significantly decreased
a. ...my confidence in succeeding in my studies has...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. ...my confidence about my academic skills has...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. ...my subject knowledge has...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. ...my confidence in using student services has...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Your learning experience

	Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion / neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Peer mentoring has positively influenced the way I approach learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Working with a peer has been a positive learning experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Peer mentoring has increased my interest in my subject area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Peer mentoring has helped me learn independently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I feel my grades will improve as a result of peer mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. The value of peer mentoring

	Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion / neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Peer mentoring is responsive to my individual needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I can relate to my mentor / mentee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Working with another student has been useful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. I enjoy working on a one-to-one basis with a student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I feel I can talk to my mentor / mentee if I am worried	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. I feel comfortable working with my mentor / mentee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. I can talk to my mentor / mentee about things I would not discuss with a member of staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 4: Questions for PEER MENTEES ONLY

If you are a mentee then consider the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree / disagree with them.

17. Being part of the peer mentoring programme...

	Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion / neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. ...has given me a good insight into studying at university level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. ...has made me more confident about successfully completing this year of study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. ...has made me better prepared to cope with the demands of my course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. ...has allayed any fears I may have had about coming to university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Was your mentor adequately prepared for their mentoring role?

Yes No Could have been better prepared

Section 5: Questions for PEER MENTORS ONLY

If you are a mentor then consider the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree / disagree with them.

19. Please indicate some of the reasons why you became a mentor by ticking the appropriate boxes below:

(select all that apply)

- I have been a mentee previously
- I have been a mentor previously
- I thought it would enhance my CV
- I wanted to help another student
- I wanted to engage in an extra-curricular activity
- I wanted to meet people from different backgrounds
- I received a financial incentive
- Other *(please specify)*:

20. Consider the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree / disagree with them.

	Please indicate your level of agreement / disagreement.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion / neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I was given support when I needed it from the central mentoring office. r	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The training I received prepared me for the role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I was supported by the mentoring coordinator in my School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. I sought support from other peer mentors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 6: Looking back – Peer Mentoring, Learning & Your University Experience

These questions are for Peer Mentors and Mentees. They are entirely voluntary, and as with the rest of the questionnaire, your answers will be completely anonymous.

21. During your time at university have you ever thought about leaving?

Yes No Not sure

22. If yes, please when and why in the box below.

21. If you have thought about leaving did peer mentoring influence your decision to stay?

Yes No Not Applicable

22. If yes, please explain how.

23. How can the peer mentoring programme be improved?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your answer will help us improve the programme and meet the needs of future students.

If you have any queries please contact _____

Qualitative Research: Interview Guides

1. Focus Group / Individual Interview Guide: Peer Mentors

This focus group / individual interview guide was developed using the survey findings. The guide utilises semi-structured interview techniques. The onus is on the individual interviewer to use and adapt the questions as appropriate.

This approach provided the participants with the opportunity to fully explore the issues they feel important, whilst allowing the interviewers the means by which all of the relevant matters could be covered in some depth.

Six themes will be addressed:

1. Before University
2. Becoming a Peer Mentor
3. Meeting the students
4. Reflections on being a Peer Mentor
5. Added value of Peer Mentoring
6. Outcomes of Peer Mentoring

Before University

- Focus on reasons for choosing [] University
- Begin with generic question...
 - o **Why** did you select to study at ...
 - *[Prompts may include...]*
 - Location
 - Course / programme
 - Studied at [] University previously
 - Access course
 - Familial link
 - o **What** were main concerns about university
 - *[Prompts if needed...]*
 - Leaving home
 - Not knowing anybody
 - Being in a strange place
 - Not being smart enough
 - Making friends
 - Living arrangements
 - Money
 - o **How** did you feel when you first arrived?
 - **How** did you feel before intro week
 - **What** were your main concerns about intro week
 - o **Were** you aware of the Aston Peer Mentor scheme before attending University
 - o **How** did you prepare for the transition to university?

Becoming a Peer Mentor

- **Why** did you become a Peer Mentor
 - o **Reasons...** *[prompts if needed may include...]*
 - Look good on CV
 - Because I had a mentor (was it a good or bad experience)
 - Enjoyed process last year
 - Wanted to help people settle in
 - Asked by lecturer / other person
 - Friends were getting involved
- **What** did you feel about the application process
- **How** did you expect to benefit from being a Peer Mentor

Training

- **How** did the training prepare you for the role
- **What** was the best part of the training
- **Was** there anything not covered in the training you would have liked to have been

First contact/meeting with mentees...

- **When** did you first get in touch with your mentee?
- **How** did you first make contact with your mentee?
- **How** did you prepare for this?
 - Prompts – *[if needed may include...]*
 - Mentor guide
 - Introductory form
 - Talked to other mentors
 - Talked to classmates
- **How** did you feel when you were contacting your mentee?
 - *[if needed may include...]*
 - Excited
 - Nervous
 - Confident
- **When** did you first meet your mentee/s?
- **How** did the first meetings go?
- **Where** did you first meet?
- **During** the first meeting...
 - o **How** did you introduce yourself
 - o **What** were your thoughts when you first met your mentees
 - o **How** did you make sure you were friendly / approachable
 - o **What** did you do to make your mentees feel welcome
 - o **How** did you introduce the university
 - o **What** did you do with your mentee/s in subsequent meetings?
 - o **Did** you meet your mentees families?
 - o **How** much time did you spend talking to families?

- **Did** any of your mentees change peer mentors in the first week?
 - o **If yes – Why? How? When?**
- **How** much contact did you have with your mentee/s during the initial week
- **How** did you help the students settle in
- **What** difference would you say your being there made to your mentees in the first few days?

Reflections on Transition: The Peer Mentoring Experience

- **How** well organised were the meetings you participated in with your mentees?
- On reflection **was** there anything in the way you organised the meetings that you would change?
- **Was** there anything that wasn't included in the peer mentoring programme that you feel would have benefited new students?
- **How** did you find leading meetings with your mentee/s?
 - o **How** would you describe your relationship?
 - o **What** was the best / worst part of leading meetings
 - o **How** did you make sure your mentee got what they wanted/expected from the meeting??

Added value of Peer Mentoring

- **In retrospect what** was the most valuable thing you got out of being a Peer Mentor
 - o **Prompts** [*if needed may include...*]
 - Building leadership skills
 - Communication skills
 - Organisational skills
 - Making friends
 - Facilitating meetings
 - Easier to approach new situations
 - o **Do** you still keep in touch with any of the mentees
 - o **Why / why not**
- **Were** there any negative aspects of being a mentor
 - o **Prompts** [*if needed may include...*]
 - Too many demands on time
 - Mentee didn't seem to need or want me
 - Difficult to make sure mentees felt included
 - Not enough individual time / attention
 - Not all the group members got on with each other
- **Did** any of your mentees discuss any worries they may have had about their studies
 - o **Were** you able to help
 - o **How?**
- **Did** any of your mentees talk to you about any personal problems
 - o **Were** you able to help
 - o **How**
 - o **Why** did they turn to you and not to a member of staff

- **Was** the problem solved
- Did you have to refer any of your mentees on to any other individuals/support services?
- Prompts – disability, counselling, personal tutor, student services etc

Outcomes of Peer Mentoring

- Did any of your students talk to you about dropping out?
 - Why did they want to drop out?
 - What were they worried about?
 - How did you deal with it?
 - Who did you seek further advice from?
 - What was the outcome?
 - Did they leave or stay?
- If you had to identify one key aspect of peer mentoring which you feel helps new students settle into university what would it be?
- Did you develop any long term friendships with your mentees
- Has being a mentor helped you with your studies
 - Is the main outcome mainly social – or social and academic
- Would you recommend the peer mentoring programme to future students
 - Why / why not
- When thinking about the role you played as a peer mentor, did reality meet expectations

Any other points individual students would like to raise...

2. Focus Group / Individual Interview Guide: Peer Mentees

This focus group / individual interview guide was developed using the survey findings. The guide utilises semi-structured interview techniques. The onus is on the individual interviewer to use and adapt the questions as appropriate.

This approach provided the participants with the opportunity to fully explore the issues they feel important, whilst allowing the interviewers the means by which all of the relevant matters could be covered in some depth

Five themes will be addressed:

1. Before University
2. Starting at University – Transition
3. Reflections of Peer Mentoring
4. Added value of Peer Mentoring
5. Outcomes of Peer Mentoring

Before University

- **Why** did you select to study at [] University ...
 - **Prompts ... [if needed may include...]**
 - Location
 - Course / programme
 - Studied at Aston University previously
 - Access course
 - Familial link
- **What** were main concerns about university
 - **Prompts...[if needed may include...]**
 - Leaving home
 - Not being smart enough
 - Not knowing anybody
 - Being in a strange place
 - Making friends
 - Living arrangements
 - Money
- **How** did you feel when you first arrived?
 - **How** did you feel before Intro week
 - **What** were your main concerns about Intro week
- **Were** you aware of the peer mentoring programme before you arrived?
 - If yes... did this influence your decision to attend [] university?
 - How?
- **How** did you prepare for the transition to university?

The Transition: Starting University

- **When** did you first have contact with your Mentor?

- **How were you first in touch with your mentor?**
 - Prompts *[if needed may include...]*
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Facebook
 - Face-to-face
 - Not left on accommodation door
- **How** did the first meeting with your peer mentor go?
- **How** did you feel about meeting them before you actually met?
- **Where** did you first meet
- **How** did they introduce themselves
- **What** were your first thoughts when you met your mentor?
- **How** friendly / approachable was your Mentor
- **How** did they make you feel welcome
- **How** did they introduce the university
- **What** sort of activities did you do with your peer mentor in the first week of meeting
- **Did** you change Peer Mentors?
 - If yes – Why? How? When?
- **How** much contact did you have with your mentor during the first week
- **How** did your mentor help you settle in
- **During** the first few weeks did you think about leaving?
 - **Why?**
 - **How** did you mentor help?

Reflections on Transition: The Peer Mentoring Experience

- **In what way** did having a peer mentor impact on your first week?
- **How** many times have you met since the beginning of term?
- **How** well organised (or not) were the meetings you participated in with your Mentor ?
- **Were** there any meetings that you felt your mentor could have done something differently to what they did?
- **Was** there anything your mentor didn't include, in terms of introductory activities, that you feel would have benefited you
- **Was** there anything your mentor did that particularly made your first term a good one?
- If you met as a group (with your mentor and their other mentees) **how** did you find this
- **How (or not)** did your mentor ensure you got what you needed from the meetings
- **What** sort of relationship do you have with your mentor now?
 - **How** has this changed over the course of the past few months?
-

Peer mentoring relationships

- In retrospect **what** was the most valuable thing you got out of Mentoring?
 - **Prompts** *[if needed may include...]*
 - Confidence
 - Knowledge of the University/city
 - Making a friend
 - Advice on societies, social activities
 - Academic advice

- **Do** you still keep in touch with your Mentor
 - **Why / why not**
 - **How** often do you meet?
 - **What** do you do?
 - **What** do you talk about?

- **Were** there any negative aspects of your experience as a mentee
 - **Prompts** *[if needed may include...]*
 - Confidence to ask questions
 - Not enough time / attention
 - Didn't get on with mentor

- **Did** you talk to your Peer Mentor about any worries you may have had about your studies
 - **Were** they able to help
 - **How** were they able to help
 - **Why** did you turn to your Mentor
 - **Did** they allay your fears

- **Did** you talk to your Mentor about any personal problems
 - **Were** they able to help
 - **How** were they able to help
 - **Why** did you turn to your Mentor
 - **Was** the problem solved

- **Did your mentor refer you to any other individuals/support services**
 - **Prompts** Disability, counselling, personal tutor, student services

Outcomes of Peer Mentoring

- If you had to identify one key aspect of the peer mentoring programme that helped you settle into University what would it be?
- Did you develop a friendship with your peer mentor?
- Has the peer mentoring programme helped you settle into your studies
 - Is the main outcome mainly social – or social and academic
- Would you recommend the Aston Peer Mentor scheme to future students
 - Why / why not

- **Any other issues you would like to raise or questions...**

Peer Mentoring Focus Group Research: Participant's Consent Form [Sample]

Thank you agreeing to take part in the Peer Mentoring Research Project. The aim of this project is to find the value of writing in helping students succeed in Higher Education. The findings from this Focus Group will be used to help the University decide on the future of Peer Mentoring.

All issues are discussed in full confidentiality*. There will be no disclosure of individual details.

First name _____

Peer Mentor / Peer Mentee _____

Programme of study _____

Date of enrolment _____

Home Country _____

I hereby consent to taking part in the focus group about Peer Mentoring. I understand that any quotes used from the focus group will not be attributable to me in anyway.

I also understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature _____

Date _____

** Everything discussed in the research is confidential. This means we ask that you do not talk to anyone else about what has been said, other than to the researchers or fellow members of the group (if in focus group).*