

**Mentoring Session 3: My University Life**

**Aim**

To provide mentees with a realistic view of university life and prepare them for university visits and the decision-making process

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this session, the mentees will be able to...

- Understand what university life entails, both academically and socially
- Reflect on personal priorities and expectations for university
- Gain insights into effective time management and study habits
- Identify key questions to ask during university visits

**Prepare in Advance**

- Be open and honest, ready to share both positive and challenging aspects of university life
- Reflect on your own university experiences
- Prepare a detailed account of a typical day, your timetable, study routines, and extracurricular activities

**Scaffolding**

If a mentee finishes early: ask what aspects of university life they are looking forward to the most. For example, you could ask if they are excited about making new friends, joining a student society, or engaging in extracurricular activities. It could be starting something completely new, like learning a new language, skills, sports, etc. It can be an individual or group activity. It could be anything. There is no set of expectations and it is important to write about your own university journey - everyone is unique.

If a mentee isn't sure what they want to do:

- Ask them what they like the most about physics/their studies and what their passions are, and suggest courses based on their answers
- Ask them what they see themselves doing in 5 years

**Session Flow**

**Time**

**Activity**

**5 min**

**Introductions and Aims**

- Run through the aim and LOs
- Introduce yourselves to the mentees
  - One/both of you, or some of your mentees, may not have been able to attend the event

**10 min**

**Discussion: Expectations and Experiences**

- Questions to participants about their expectations and experiences
- Ensure all mentees have the opportunity to contribute (can give them some time to think first) or utilise mentimeter

**20 min**

**Mentor's University Experience**

- Share a typical day as an undergraduate student and memorable events (i.e. field trips, conferences) - the idea of showing them the varieties and opportunities
- Discuss timetable, study habits, and extracurricular activities (is there a massive difference between uni and sixth form life?)
- Describe living arrangements in the first year and current situation

**10 min**

**Mentee Questions**

- Allow time for mentees to ask questions (can be proactive by inviting them)
- Summary of key points discussed

**10 min**

**Plenary: Cycle 1 Reflection**

- Give the mentees the link/QR code to complete Cycle 1 reflection
  - There are some prompt questions on the next page

## MENTOR GUIDANCE

### MENTORING SESSION 3: MY UNIVERSITY LIFE

The aim of this mentoring session is to help mentees understand what to expect from university life, both academically and socially, and to guide them in making informed decisions about their future. Your personal experiences and insights will be important in giving them a realistic perspective. Here's a detailed approach for mentoring sessions:

## DISCUSSION TOPICS AND QUESTIONS

### 1 What are you looking forward to about going to university? Academically? Socially?

Encourage participants to think about their academic goals, such as subjects they are excited to learn about or skills they want to develop. Socially, prompt them to consider making new friends, joining clubs, or engaging in university events.

### 2 Have you been and looked around any universities yet? What did you like and why?

Ask them to share their experiences from any university visits. Discuss aspects they found appealing, such as campus facilities, the atmosphere, or interactions with current students and staff.

If not, are they planning to go to Open Days? Advise them to plan ahead because some universities have several campuses. What questions should you be asking to find out more about the universities, courses, etc?

### 3 What are you looking for in a university?

Help them identify their priorities beyond rankings, such as specific academic programs, support services, campus culture, location, and extracurricular opportunities.

Ask the mentees:

- Are you considering university or not? Why?
  - Emphasise that this mentoring is designed to give them information so they can make an informed decision about whether or not they want to go to university.
- What universities/courses are you looking at?



**It's important to link these back to your own experiences. Share your methods of researching different universities or courses, whether you considered any alternatives to university, and why you ultimately decided to go.**

### 4 Do you have any worries about coming to university?

Address any concerns they have about university life, such as academic pressure, making friends, or adapting to a new environment.

## MENTOR GUIDANCE

### MENTORING SESSION 3: MY UNIVERSITY LIFE

#### 1. A Typical Day in Your Life as a Physics Student

- Describe your daily schedule, including classes, lectures, lab sessions, and study periods.

#### 2. Your Timetable

- Share how your weekly timetable is structured, highlighting the balance between lectures, practical sessions, and personal study time.

#### 3. How Much Personal Study You Do on a Day-to-Day Basis

- Discuss your study habits, how you manage your time, and the importance of self-discipline in keeping up with coursework.

## SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES

#### 5. Where You Lived in Your First Year, What It Was Like and Where You Live Now

- Describe your living situation during your first year and any changes since then, including the pros and cons of living on campus versus off-campus.

#### 4. Any Clubs / Societies / Social Activities You Take Part In

- Talk about the extracurricular activities you're involved in, such as sports teams, academic societies, or hobby clubs, and how they enrich your university experience.

#### *Encouraging Questions and Discussion*

Invite participants to ask any questions about your life at university. Being open and honest about your experiences will help them feel more comfortable and informed.



## MENTORING SESSION 3: MY UNIVERSITY LIFE BRIGHT IDEAS!

This page contains ideas for alternative sessions, changes/additions, extra activities, etc.  
Feel free to use as you wish!

### UCAS Research

Ask the mentees to open the UCAS website, and encourage them to get creative exploring different degree options.

- Remind the mentees to be open-minded about degree routes, as there will be many they haven't heard about before!
- Encourage mentees to take notes and write down pros/cons of each degree they are interested in.
  - This information can be used in the future when they apply for degrees!



### Exploring Worries

If you think the mentees are particularly anxious about university, take time to focus on this. Open a discussion about why they are feeling this way, so you can help address those concerns. You could even tailor future sessions to come back to this!

### Career Hot Potato

1. Suggest a STEM career (e.g. biomedical scientist, engineer, etc.)
2. Randomly select a mentee. They have to come up with a degree that would enable someone to work in that field, and list one thing that would be useful from that degree in the chosen field.
3. Continue randomly selecting mentees until they run out of ideas!

**You can repeat this with different careers, or choose careers that the mentees have previously shown interest in!**

### I Wanna Be Like You

Choose some role models or famous people in a STEM industry, and explore their university/career journeys. Really nice way to show there's no fixed path to success or a good career!

An example: Bessie Blount (left-handed, nurse, invented apparatus for disabled veterans, then changed career at 55 to become a forgery expert with Scotland Yard)