

Employability Mentoring Newsletter

Welcome to our November 2020 edition! – Issue #18

Fantastic Jessica Bradley!



What happens when a DMU student takes over your DMU role, networks with a range of professionals and sets up an online legal networking event? ... Well, good things happen.

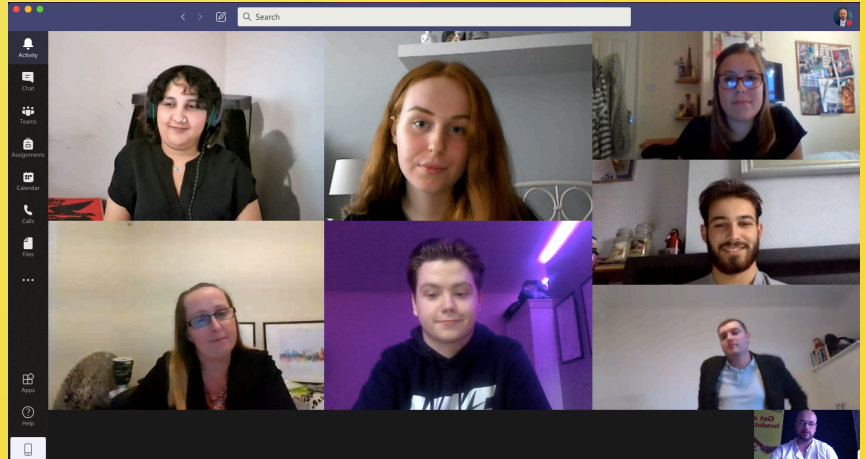
Following attending several of our successful online mentoring events via MS Teams mid summer, regular attendee Jessica Bradley stepped forward and asked to design, develop and implement a dedicated legal mentoring event. Jess' rationale was that she understood that there was reduced opportunity due to COVID-19, but was keen to do all she could to develop her employability. The event that she created provided students from within and outside of the scheme the opportunity to meet with and learn from a range of industry professionals, who responded to Jess' call for mentors. Students were active in their enquiries asking questions including: *What is the most important thing you have learnt from your experience in law, that you wish you knew when you were at my level? What was the biggest challenge you faced after completing an LLB and how did you over come it?*

Our mentors were fantastic in sharing their perspective and were full of praise for Jess' leadership: *"I could not tell it was Jessica's first time hosting. It was done with such grace and smoothness. Well done!"* Zainab Zaeem-Sattar. *"This is exactly the kind of small sensible step that I speak about with mentees so often. Spotting an opportunity to do something that's a bit left field, feeling uncomfortable but doing it anyway and realising those feelings were just part of the learning. Small step – huge gain."* Elizabeth Warhurst. *"Well done, Jess! You're a superstar!"* (Andy Morris 😊)

Online group mentoring

The new academic year has seen the introduction of online group mentoring sessions, designed to help counteract the impact that COVID-19 has had on our on campus events where we invite visiting mentors to meet students year on year. Online group mentoring allows mentors to join us using MS Teams technologies and to meet virtually with attending students to share their wisdom. In sessions facilitated by the scheme manager the students field questions based on their needs and the mentors take it in turn to share stories and perspective. The benefits of such online technologies allow mentors and mentees to engage in the comfort of their home surroundings and also to allow us to tap into the talents of mentors that are further afield both nationally and internationally (time zones pending). We have run thirteen events since the summer with over 200 students engaged in the discussions with many of those sessions dedicated to our partnership with the Law School. Huge thanks go to all the mentors for their time and perspective at the online sessions this year so far. You know who you are (but just in case), respect goes to...

Alan Smith	Natalie Saunders-Griffin
Amy Amison	Nitin Bulsara
Bhavika Dhokia	Parvien Akhtar
Dalbinder Bains	Patricia Taylor
Dave Sargent	Pete Williams
Emma Bush	Samantha Downs
Elizabeth Warhurst	Scott Bradford
Haven Carty	Sonehal Kooner
Ikhira Thandi	Steve Perks
James O'Brien	Yusuf Nagdi
James Sherwin	Zainab Patel
Mira Parmar	Zayne Tann



Legal mentoring impact!

For the past few years we have developed a brilliant partnership with the Law School and have as a department been active in lectures, promoting our services and the importance of employability. This year has been no exception with large numbers of students applying for mentoring. Two great case studies to demonstrate the impact of students making mentoring work for themselves are Tom and Jess. Recently they both got in touch to share positive outcomes of their hard work, proactivity and determination to make mentoring work for them...

"I thought you might like to know that thanks to your programme, I have managed to attain work experience in these extremely difficult times. This would not have been possible without you and the employability programme. The employability programme has allowed me network with many solicitors, which I had never done before, and lead to me attaining this fantastic work experience. I also believe the programme will have prepared me to a reasonable standard for the professional environment I will soon be entering. Thank you very much for all your guidance, constant positive spirit and motivational encouragement. I really appreciate all the work you do for the students at DMU and you have certainly inspired and improved me as a young learning professional." **Tom**

"I just wanted to let you know how my call with Richard went today. It was absolutely fantastic!!! He has offered me a virtual mini-pupillage with him, he's contacting judges for me to watch virtual hearings, and he may gather some legal research together for me to conduct!! He gave me so much valuable information even on this first call and even knows a barrister at the East Anglia courts near me who he is going to put me in contact with!! WOW!!! He wants to mentor me right through until I'm qualified and help out where he can. He says we can have a monthly call in which I can speak to him and ask questions and he will help me gain as much experience as he can! I cannot thank you enough Andy for everything that you've helped me with so far!! I'm getting so many experiences all coming from my mentoring at DMU!! Thank you Andy." **Jess**

Success!

98%

**of respondents cited
positive outcomes
from Employability
Mentoring**

The past academic year has been another fantastic year for the scheme despite the impact of COVID-19. Formative and summative evaluations provide our student mentees with the opportunity to share their feedback, assess and the impact of mentoring on them. We ask them every year to sum up their mentor experiences in one word, for every time they engage with mentors. The word cloud below is a combination of the most used words by our mentees throughout the year to sum up mentoring to them. Thanks for the great feedback!



The hugely important 2%

“It was really disappointing that the mentor was unable to fulfill their role and that another was not available to be secured”

We love a good positive headline don't we? Celebrating the achievements of a project, scheme or offer. It's attention grabbing and a source of pride, which demonstrates success, and proves that what we do, genuinely works. But what about the outcomes that are not met, or are not so positive? What about the feedback that we would rather not have received in our summative evaluations? Who would want to shout about those comments? About expectations unmet? About outcomes not achieved? About disappointment?

It would be easy to celebrate the achievements of another excellent year on the scheme and solely focus on the high levels of satisfaction reported by our evaluation respondents. So what about the 2% that didn't have a positive experience? There is integrity and real value in recognising that this scheme did not deliver on the expectations of a handful of people. This past academic year, like every academic year to date, a small number of participants did not benefit from mentoring in the way they had hoped. This of course is disappointing to hear, but importantly its not to be 'hidden from view' and instead just celebrate the 'highs'. Much, if not more can be learned from these people, their experiences and their feedback, and as a result the scheme can seek to evolve to reach an even higher quality of standard for our participants.

Sometimes mentoring does not work out the way we hope. People's commitments and priorities change, levels of interest can wane and good intentions might not be acted on. The voluntary nature of mentoring and the goodwill involved must be binding and actively pursued to ensure relationships take, grow and flourish. Effective ongoing communication between mentors and mentees must be maintained. A good relationship takes time, investment, care and attention. More than ever in the past near seven years of this scheme, I believe that our human interaction and contact with others is **essential**. Dialogue between industry professionals and our students is needed to help them understand the challenges of what lays ahead. Where a small number of relationships have not seen the same levels of success of the rest, there is opportunity to take stock, to revisit processes, to identify opportunities to reinforce the values of the scheme and ensure that commitment remains just that... **Commitment**.

Mentoring continues to play a key role in ensuring that people do not stop talking, do not stagnate in their development and that they find mutual value in relationship that seeks to bring out the best in each other. The scheme knows that despite the effort that goes in, it's not a given that this will happen despite best intentions. My thanks go to all our mentors and mentees for working hard to make mentoring work no matter what the outcome. It's not taken for granted and nor should it ever be.

Leicester Future Leaders Mentoring Scheme



The city of Leicester needs mentors!
Call for Mentors and Mentees

"Employees who received mentoring were promoted FIVE times more often than people who didn't have mentors"
"Mentees were approximately 20% more likely to get a raise"

By Rabeya Choudhury

Last August I had the pleasure of introducing the new mentoring programme as part of the Leicester's Future Leader project (LFL). LFL is DMU's ground-breaking project, supported by the Office for Students, that aims to increase the progression of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) graduates in high skilled role into leadership roles in Leicester and Leicestershire. Since August I have been speaking to both mentors and mentees to draw upon their experiences and reflections of mentoring. It has been incredibly insightful and valuable, and I would like to thank everyone who took time to speak to me.

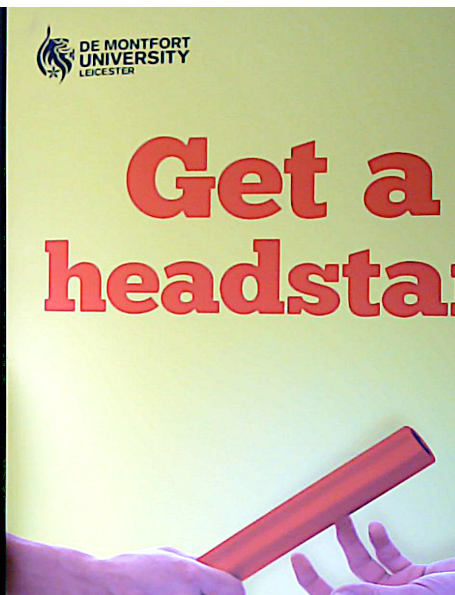
If you are a future mentor that works and reside in Leicester/Leicestershire looking to share your wealth of experience and become a catalyst in a mentees career journey or alternatively if are you a future mentee wondering how a mentor could support you into a leadership role?

TOP 5 Ways a Mentor could help you:

1. Learn from their wealth of experience
2. Be opened to a new network of professionals
3. Help identify your strengths and weakness by a trusted Mentor
4. Practice scenarios in a safe space to prepare for tough questions: for example, how to negotiate contracts, promotions, pay rise or bonuses
5. Develop your index of skills, knowledge and experience that can guide you throughout your career journey

To find out more please contact Mentoring Manager: Rabeya Choudhury: rabeya.choudhury@dmu.ac.uk

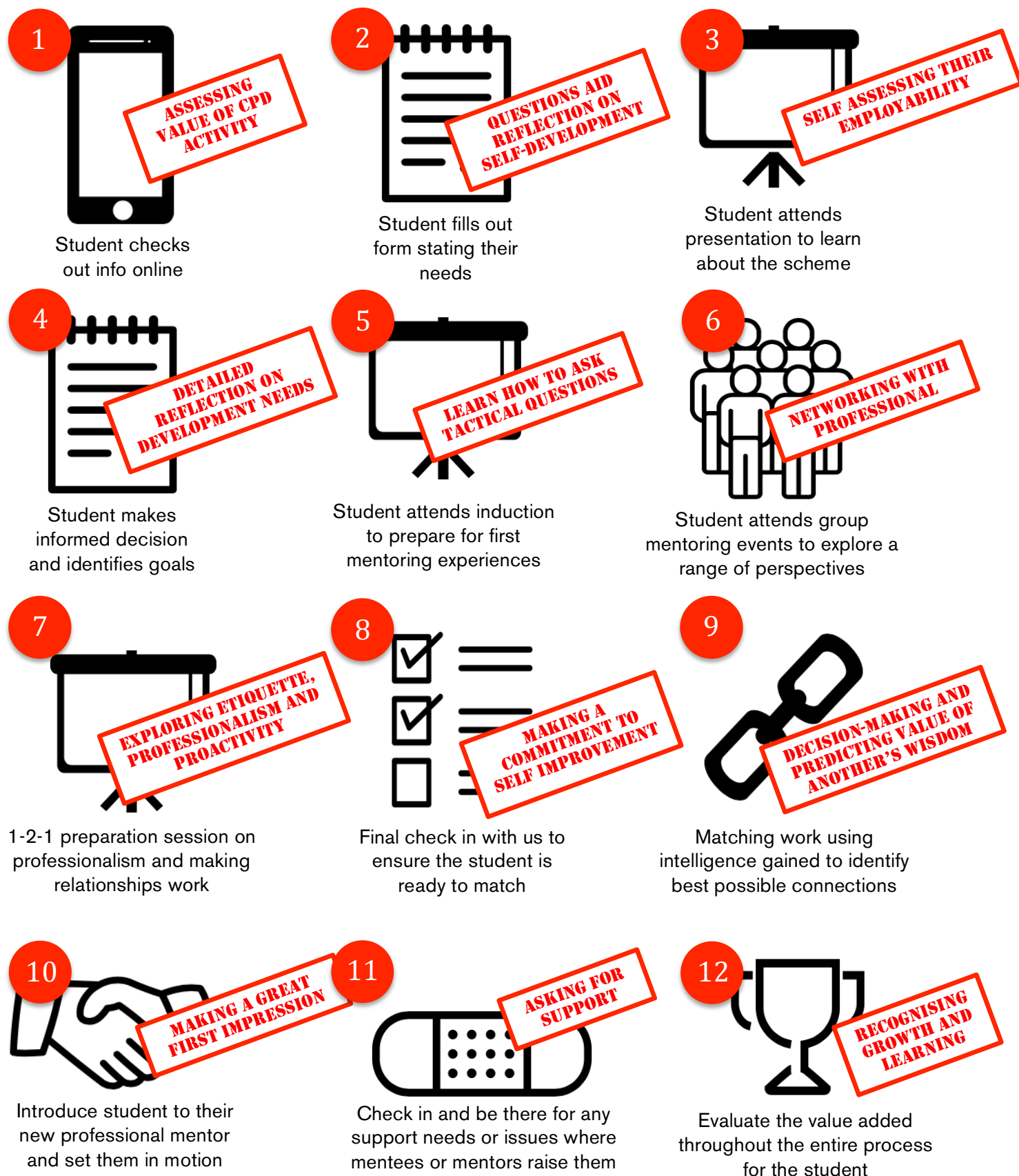
Short films and videos to promote Employability



With current significant limitations now placed on 'in person access' to students in lectures and at events, attention turns to providing short films to engage students and communicate our offer. The autumn has provided the opportunity to get in front of the lens to reach out and encourage potential mentees to engage in the scheme and develop a mentoring offer that works for them. We have been busy recording our promotions for various fairs and events to remain visible to students.

What process do student mentees go through to get their own 1-2-1 mentor?

On this scheme we understand that to provide the very best possible mentoring experience to students, that planning and preparation is needed. Also it's important that at **every stage** of the process we do our best to improve the employability of our students. Employability isn't something that we improve at the end of the process, but instead that as a concept it is wrestled with and invested in throughout. The process below highlights each stage of the scheme and illustrates the current evolution of what we do and why.



Academic partnerships

So far this year the scheme has partnered up with a range of our fantastic DMU academics to plan for and provide students with a tactical boost to employability via mentoring. Partnerships this term have provided the scheme manager with access to students to deliver presentations, trainings and interactive mentoring in classroom environments and online sessions across campus. Academic partnerships provide us with fantastic opportunity to tailor our services to the needs of their students and learn more about those students and their courses across campus. Massive thanks go to our current partners at DMU for our joint work this term and in the near future:

Wendy Stevens – (Audiology, HLS) – Student preparation for mentoring with alumni and group sessions
Heather Williams – (Game Art Design, CEM) – Student mentee preparation for 1-2-1 alumni mentoring
Heather Dichter – (Sport Management, BAL) – Employability / Mentoring tuition prior to group sessions
Lucy Wilding – (Fashion Styling and Communication, ADH) – Employability / Professional development feedback
Gina Rushin – (Fashion Design, ADH) – Employability, self awareness and skills based presentation
Della Swann – (Fashion Design, ADH) – Employability, skills and professional development presentation
Alfred Kamuyango – (Medical Science, HLS) Employability presentation / alumni based mentoring preparations
Ali Tempest – (Speech and Language Therapy, HLS) – Bespoke creation of alumni based mentoring sessions
Phil Grierson – (Law, BAL) – Employability and mentoring presentations, group sessions and follow ups

All of the sessions so far have resulted in students booking in for further mentoring and guidance for their specific employability needs. If you would like to work in partnership with us, get in touch at andy.morris@dmu.ac.uk

A word from the scheme manager (sort of...)

Thanks for getting to the end of what is the longest newsletter to date... Usually in this section of the newsletter I share closing thoughts on the past few months. At this point, instead I thought I would end with sharing a selection of comments from our mentees from this year as to their thoughts on the scheme. Well done to all of our student mentees for their achievements on our mentoring scheme. Huge thanks go to our mentors for their hard work and commitment to our students... This is for you:



"Employability mentoring really improved my self-confidence and with my mentoring. I have achieved amazing results. My mentor has been so supportive and has really opened my eyes to how I can improve my standpoint in the working world" - **Anon**

"Employability Mentoring allows you to develop and work on your professional skills, like helping you build your confidence in the workplace. This is valuable opportunity to learn about the necessary skills desired by your employers that cannot be learnt by studying alone. And with the guidance and collective experiences of the mentors, you will be able to explore a world full of opportunities whilst studying and after you have graduated" - **Amandeep**

"It is one of the best things you can do for your employability and it feels good to hear things from someone who has already been in your position" - **Ammaarah**

"One of the best possible investments of your free time" - **Darren**

"Great experience, I have learnt a lot from Andy and the other mentors. I am lucky to have connections to people in my profession and will feel comfortable in talking to them outside the mentoring group" - **Karanjeet**

"For me the mentoring experience has been elevating it has helped me develop capacity required to think like a prospective industry professional and has also puts me in a better position to be successful at interviews" - **Kingsley**

"I would like to thank you for the opportunity. I was apprehensive when signing up. Little did I know that it would help me so much and would change my outlook on many things for the better. Likewise, it has been a wonderful learning experience and I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity" - **Saleha**