Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring Handbook 2023/24



Doctoral School – doctoralschool@shu.ac.uk

This handbook is intended to support the Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring initiative. It outlines the rationale for the initiative and provides details of:

* Key contacts;
* The Sheffield Hallam PGR peer mentoring process;
* The Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring Agreement;
* Being a mentor;
* Being mentored.

The handbook also provides answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQs). In the Appendices you can find copies of the:

1. Expression of interest to be a PGR Peer Mentor form;
2. PGR Peer Mentor Profile template;
3. Sample Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring Meeting Record;
4. Sample personal development log
5. Feedback form for Mentees;
6. Feedback form for Mentors.

Rationale

The Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring initiative has been established in response to findings from a 2019 research study on PGR wellbeing undertaken by the Sheffield Hallam Student Union. One key finding that was highlighted related to PGR student isolation and a lack of PGR peer mentoring provision within the University.

PGR peer mentoring has also been flagged up during the Hallam Guild-funded PGR Mental Health and Wellbeing focus groups that were run in 2019. PGR student attendees noted a desire for:

* Peer support at the start of the research degree to adjust academically and personally to studying at Sheffield Hallam;
* A safe space to ask questions to another Sheffield Hallam PGR student during the research degree;
* An opportunity to draw on the experience of other Sheffield Hallam PGR students on studying as well as receiving advice and guidance on research degree study from the perspective of another PGR student.

To date, there has been no systematic, university-wide opportunity for PGR peer mentoring to take place. Dialogue between PGR peers have happened informally, often in campus-based PGR accommodation and this has constrained opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction. There has been no formal mentoring scheme open to all Sheffield Hallam PGR students across all Level 8 awards.

Peer mentoring can not only support the needs of PGR students who are wishing to be mentored but it also provides a development opportunity for mentors. It offers clear benefits in relation to the concept of ‘students as partners’ in higher education.

Key contacts

The Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring initiative is coordinated by the Sheffield Hallam Doctoral School – doctoralschool@shu.ac.uk

The Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring process



The Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring Agreement

The relationship between the Mentor and the Mentee is based on confidentiality. This means that anything discussed between them when they are in the Mentoring relationship is private and that the Mentor will not repeat any conversations to other people. There are certain exceptions to this, and it is important that these are recognised and agreed at the start of the partnership:

* If both partners agree that the Mentor can speak to someone else about an issue or problem. They will agree who the Mentor will speak to, this might be members of the Doctoral School team, Student Services or other staff within the University or outside;
* If the Mentor believes that there is a risk of harm to the Mentee or any other person, based on something that the Mentee has said, or that a crime has been or is going to be committed. In any of these cases the Mentor will be obliged to report the issue to the PGR Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator (the Doctoral School) or to another member of Sheffield Hallam staff;
* If the Mentee believes that there is a risk of harm to the Mentor or any other person, based on something that the Mentor has said, or that a crime has been or is going to be committed. In any of these cases the Mentee will be obliged to report the issue to the PGR Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator (the Doctoral School) or to another member of Sheffield Hallam staff.

Being a Mentor

Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentors will agree to:

* Undertake initial training and attend support sessions;
* Have regular meetings with their mentee and keep records;
* Complete a Personal Development log;
* Complete a feedback and evaluation sheet at the end of each mentoring relationship;
* Abide by the Sheffield Hallam Peer Mentoring agreement.

Being Mentored

Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentees will agree to:

* Let their Mentor know what they expect from the mentoring so they can plan to support;
* Agree with their Mentor how they will contact each other, when and by what means;
* Have regular meetings with their mentor and keep records;
* Complete a Personal Development log;
* Complete a feedback and evaluation sheet at the end of the mentoring relationship;
* Abide by the Sheffield Hallam Peer Mentoring agreement.

Frequently Asked Questions

* How long does the mentoring relationship last?

We recommend that the PGR Peer Mentoring relationship would typically last at least three months up to six months.

* Can I be mentored more than once during my Sheffield Hallam PGR registration?

Yes, you can apply to a mentor at any time during your postgraduate research degree, reflecting the differing peer support and guidance needs that you might have over time.

* How often do Mentors and Mentees need to meet?

This is something to be agreed between Mentors and Mentees (together with preferred contact methods and timings), but we recommend that you aim to meet regularly, at least every two to three weeks.

* Can I change Mentors after the mentoring process has begun?

We would recommend that changing Mentors only occurs after a period of reflection. Ideally, a change in Mentors should be discussed with your initial Mentor and also the PGR Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator (the Doctoral School).

* Is there a limit to the number of Mentees that a Mentor can have?

We do not recommend that mentors have more than three mentees at a given point in time.

* Can I be a Mentor and also be mentored?

Yes, it is possible to act as a Mentor whilst being a Mentee. If you wish to do so, you will need to follow the guidelines relating to each role as outlined in this handbook.

* Is there any support for Mentors once the mentoring relationship has started?

Yes, the PGR Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator (the Doctoral School) can signpost you to sources of support.

Appendix 1: Expression of interest to be a PGR Peer Mentor/Mentee

<https://forms.office.com/e/yhTuxDPH8n>

The Doctoral School is running a PGR Peer Mentoring scheme in 2023/24. If you would like to express an interest in being part of the initiative as a Mentor, as a Mentee, or both, please provide your details below.

1. First Name:
2. Surname:
3. Sheffield Hallam student email address (Please provide your email address ending shu.ac.uk):
4. Year of doctoral study:
	* Year 1
	* Year 2
	* Year 3
	* Year 4
	* Year 5
	* Year 6
5. Type of Study
* DBA
* EdD
* PhD
1. Are you registered as:
	* Full-time
	* Part-time
2. Which Research Institute are you enrolled in?
	* Culture and Creativity Research Institute (CCRI)
	* Health Research Institute (HRI)
	* Industry and Innovation Research Institute (I2RI)
	* Social and Economic Research Institute (SERI)
3. Which Research Centre/Department are you enrolled in?
	* Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC)
	* Allied Health Professions (HWLS)
	* Art and Design Media Research Centre (ADMRC) including Lab4Living
	* Biomolecular Sciences Research Centre (BMRC)
	* Biosciences and Chemistry (HWLS)
	* Centre for Behavioural Science and Applied Psychology (CeBSAP)
	* Centre for Culture, Media & Society (CCMS)
	* Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)
	* CENTRIC
	* Computing (BTE)
	* Culture and Media (SSA)
	* Engineering and Maths (BTE)
	* Finance, Accounting and Business Systems (BTE)
	* Helena Kennedy Centre (HKC)
	* Humanities Research Centre (HRC)
	* Law and Criminology (SSA)
	* Management (BTE)
	* Materials and Engineering Research Institute (MERI)
	* National Centre of Excellence for Food Engineering (NCEFE)
	* Natural and Built Environment (SSA)
	* Nursing and Midwifery (HWLS)
	* Psychology, Sociology and Politics (SSA)
	* Service Sector Management (BTE)
	* Sheffield Institute of Education (SSA)
	* Sheffield Institute of Education Research and Knowledge Exchange (SIRKE)
	* Social Work, Social Care and Community Studies (HWLS)
	* Sport and Physical Activity (HWLS)
	* Sport and Physical Activity Research Centre (SPARC)
4. In what capacity are you interested in the scheme?
	* As a Mentor (offering support)
	* As a Mentee (receiving support)
	* Both as a Mentor and a Mentee
5. How did you hear about the PGR Peer Mentoring Scheme?

Appendix 2: PGR Peer Mentor Profile template

The PGR Peer Mentoring training session run by the Doctoral School will support you to develop this PGR Peer Mentor Profile. You will be invited to this training session once your expression of interest to be a PGR Peer Mentor has been approved (see the Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring process chart on page 3 of this handbook).

PGR Peer Mentor Profile

1. First Name:
2. Last Name:
3. Student Email Address (please provide your email address ending shu.ac.uk)
4. Year of doctoral study
	* Year 1
	* Year 2
	* Year 3
	* Year 4
	* Year 5
	* Year 6
5. Type of Study
	* DBA
	* EdD
	* PhD
6. Are you registered as:
	* Full-time
	* Part-time
7. Which Research Institute are you enrolled in?
	* Culture and Creativity Research Institute (CCRI)
	* Health Research Institute (HRI)
	* Industry and Innovation Research Institute (I2RI)
	* Social and Economic Research Institute (SERI)
8. Which Research Centre/Department are you enrolled in?
	* Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC)
	* Allied Health Professions (HWLS)
	* Art and Design Media Research Centre (ADMRC) including Lab4Living
	* Biomolecular Sciences Research Centre (BMRC)
	* Biosciences and Chemistry (HWLS)
	* Centre for Behavioural Science and Applied Psychology (CeBSAP)
	* Centre for Culture, Media & Society (CCMS)
	* Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)
	* CENTRIC
	* Computing (BTE)
	* Culture and Media (SSA)
	* Engineering and Maths (BTE)
	* Finance, Accounting and Business Systems (BTE)
	* Helena Kennedy Centre (HKC)
	* Humanities Research Centre (HRC)
	* Law and Criminology (SSA)
	* Management (BTE)
	* Materials and Engineering Research Institute (MERI)
	* National Centre of Excellence for Food Engineering (NCEFE)
	* Natural and Built Environment (SSA)
	* Nursing and Midwifery (HWLS)
	* Psychology, Sociology and Politics (SSA)
	* Service Sector Management (BTE)
	* Sheffield Institute of Education (SSA)
	* Sheffield Institute of Education Research and Knowledge Exchange (SIRKE)
	* Social Work, Social Care and Community Studies (HWLS)
	* Sport and Physical Activity (HWLS)
	* Sport and Physical Activity Research Centre (SPARC)
9. Short personal profile (up to 250 words - you might include your subject area, your PT/FT status as a doctoral student and other information about your interests, experience and the areas in which you are able to offer peer mentoring support):
10. In which of the following areas are you able to provide peer support to a PGR mentee (please select all that apply):
	* Academic Writing
	* Doctoral assessment points (RF1, RF2, Viva)
	* Finding your way around campus services and university support
	* Living/finding your way around Sheffield
	* Making friends/interacting with other PGR students
	* Managing your time
	* Questions about your doctorate degree
	* Questions/problems with accommodation, study environment
	* Settling into university
	* Other (please specify):
11. Please upload a head and shoulders photograph of yourself for use on your Mentor Profile

Appendix 3: PGR Peer Mentee Profile template

PGR Peer Mentee Profile

1. First Name:
2. Last Name:
3. Student Email Address (please provide your email address ending shu.ac.uk)
4. Year of doctoral study
	* Year 1
	* Year 2
	* Year 3
	* Year 4
	* Year 5
	* Year 6
5. Type of Study
	* DBA
	* EdD
	* PhD
6. Are you registered as:
	* Full-time
	* Part-time
7. Which Research Institute are you enrolled in?
	* Culture and Creativity Research Institute (CCRI)
	* Health Research Institute (HRI)
	* Industry and Innovation Research Institute (I2RI)
	* Social and Economic Research Institute (SERI)
8. Which Research Centre/Department are you enrolled in?
	* Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC)
	* Allied Health Professions (HWLS)
	* Art and Design Media Research Centre (ADMRC) including Lab4Living
	* Biomolecular Sciences Research Centre (BMRC)
	* Biosciences and Chemistry (HWLS)
	* Centre for Behavioural Science and Applied Psychology (CeBSAP)
	* Centre for Culture, Media & Society (CCMS)
	* Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)
	* CENTRIC
	* Computing (BTE)
	* Culture and Media (SSA)
	* Engineering and Maths (BTE)
	* Finance, Accounting and Business Systems (BTE)
	* Helena Kennedy Centre (HKC)
	* Humanities Research Centre (HRC)
	* Law and Criminology (SSA)
	* Management (BTE)
	* Materials and Engineering Research Institute (MERI)
	* National Centre of Excellence for Food Engineering (NCEFE)
	* Natural and Built Environment (SSA)
	* Nursing and Midwifery (HWLS)
	* Psychology, Sociology and Politics (SSA)
	* Service Sector Management (BTE)
	* Sheffield Institute of Education (SSA)
	* Sheffield Institute of Education Research and Knowledge Exchange (SIRKE)
	* Social Work, Social Care and Community Studies (HWLS)
	* Sport and Physical Activity (HWLS)
	* Sport and Physical Activity Research Centre (SPARC)
9. Short personal profile (up to 250 words - you might include your subject area, your PT/FT status as a doctoral student and other information about your interests, experience and the areas in which you are able to offer peer mentoring support):
10. In which of the following areas would you like to receive peer support from a PGR Mentor (please select all that apply):
	* Academic Writing
	* Doctoral assessment points (RF1, RF2, Viva)
	* Finding your way around campus services and university support
	* Living/finding your way around Sheffield
	* Making friends/interacting with other PGR students
	* Managing your time
	* Questions about your doctorate degree
	* Questions/problems with accommodation, study environment
	* Settling into university
	* Other (please specify):
11. Please upload a head and shoulders photograph of yourself for use on your Mentee Profile

**Appendix 4: First Meeting – Suggested Discussion Topics**

Below are some suggestions of things you may wish to discuss in your first meeting with your mentor.

Acceptable times and venues for meetings and calls

* Discuss where and when you will meet
* Each party should point out any restrictions on times and places
* If meeting face to face always meet in a public place

Confidentiality

* Clarify that you both understand issues of confidentiality within the mentoring relationship and recognise the exceptions to this as set out in the PGR Peer Mentoring Handbook

Contact details

* Exchange details of how you wish to be contacted
* Agree whether you will be in contact with each other outside of your meetings

Get to know each other

You may want to share some information about yourself, such as:

* Your educational and/or family background
* Your research interests
* Your career and long-term goals
* Why you wanted to have a mentor

Note taking

* Both mentors and mentees are expected to complete records of the meetings, if anything confidential comes up, make sure you discuss how this should or should not be recorded

Plan of action

* Discuss your objectives for the mentoring relationship (refer to your Personal Development Log)

The Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring Meeting Record is a useful framework for these discussions and to capture what you agree.

**Appendix 5: Sample Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring Meeting Record**

(to be completed by Mentee in the first instance)

|  |
| --- |
| **Peer Mentoring Meeting Record**  |
| **Name of Mentee:** |   |
| **Name of Mentor:** |   |
| **Date of Meeting:** |   |
| **Duration of meeting:** |   |
| **Subjects Discussed:**  |
| **Targets set:**  |
| **Is this a true record? (Mentor) Yes ◇ No ◇ (& comments if NO)** |
| **Further Mentor comments (if appropriate):** |

\*One copy held by Mentor: One copy held by Mentee (agreed confidential storage)

Appendix 6: Sample Personal Development Log (Confidential)

It is advised that you base your personal development log on your mentoring goals, reflecting on what you hope to gain from being involved in mentoring.

Mentor example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mentoring goal  | Actions taken | Reflection on development |
| Developing my active listening skills | Using non-directive facilitation techniques to understand the mentoring goals of my mentee(s) | Feeling more confident in supporting and advising other learners. |
| Improving my cultural awareness  | Situational analysis of the context of the mentoring goals of my mentee(s) | Greater appreciation of other PGR learner contexts (e.g. mature learners, FT/PT learners, BAME learners...).Transferable cross-cultural skills. |
|  |  |  |

Mentee example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mentoring goal linked to underlying challenge or problem | Actions taken | Reflection on development |
| Working on study/life balance and effective time management | New approach to time management – use of Pomodoro technique | Feeling calmer, less stressed.Fewer arguments at home.Productivity has increased.I have learnt how to set and respect boundaries between study/life. |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Appendix 7: Feedback form for PGR Mentees

Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.

Your feedback is important to us as it will help us to evaluate our current approach to PGR mentoring so that we can continue to make improvements to benefit PGR student mentors and mentees in the future.

**How you liaised with your PGR mentor**

* How did you communicate with your mentor? (Please tick all that apply):
	+ Email
	+ In Person
	+ Phone calls
	+ Text/WhatsApp
	+ Video conferencing/ online meeting platform
	+ Other (please specify):
* Approximately how many times did you communicate with your mentor? (Please factor in all communication methods as listed above):
* This was (please tick one response):
	+ Too little
	+ Just right
	+ Too much
* What did your mentor support you with? (Please tick all that apply):
	+ Academic writing
	+ Doctoral assessment points (RF1, RF2, Viva)
	+ Finding your way around campus services and university support
	+ Living/finding your way around Sheffield
	+ Making friends/interacting with other PGR students
	+ Managing your time
	+ Questions about your doctorate degree
	+ Questions/problems with accommodation, study environment
	+ Settling into university
	+ Other (please specify):

**Being a PGR mentee has …**

* Increased my confidence:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Helped me develop my communication skills:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Increased my sense of belonging at university:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Advanced my personal development:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**I have…**

* Found being mentored rewarding:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Felt supported as a mentee and understood where to seek support if/when needed:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Received sufficient information to prepare me for getting the most out of being mentored:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

If you have any comments about your experience of being mentored, please provide them here:

* Do you have any suggestions about how we could improve PGR mentoring?
* Do you have any other comments you wish to make about anything to do with the mentoring process?
* Do you agree to your **anonymised** responses being used for publicity and/or research purposes?
* Yes
* No

Which Research Institute are you in?

* Culture and Creativity Research Institute (CCRI)
* Health Research Institute (HRI)
* Industry and Innovation Research Institute (I2RI)
* Social and Economic Research Institute (SERI)

Thank you for completing this feedback form, your responses have been received.

The PGR Peer Mentoring Scheme is expected to run again in 2024/25 academic year, updates will be communicated to students via the Doctoral School Friday Email.

**Appendix 8: Feedback form for Mentors**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.

Your feedback is important to us as it will help us to evaluate our current approach to PGR mentoring so that we can continue to make improvements to benefit PGR student mentors and mentees in the future.

**How you liaised with your PGR mentee**

* How did you communicate with your mentee? (Please tick all that apply):
	+ E-mail
	+ In Person
	+ Phone calls
	+ Text/WhatsApp
	+ Video conferencing/ online meeting platform
	+ Other (please specify):
* Approximately how many times did you communicate with your mentee? (Please factor in all communication methods as listed above):
* This was (please tick one response):
	+ Too little
	+ Just right
	+ Too much
* What did you support your mentee with? (Please tick all that apply):
	+ Academic writing
	+ Doctoral assessment points (RF1, RF2, Viva)
	+ Finding their way around campus services and university support
	+ Living/finding their way around Sheffield
	+ Making friends/interacting with other PGR students
	+ Managing their time
	+ Questions about their doctorate degree
	+ Questions/problems with accommodation, study environment
	+ Settling into university
	+ Other (please specify):

**Being a PGR mentor has …**

* Increased my confidence:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Helped me develop my communication skills:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Increased my sense of contributing to the university:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Advanced my personal development:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**I have…**

* Found being a mentor rewarding:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Felt supported as a mentor and understood where to seek support when/if needed:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Received sufficient information to prepare me for getting the most out of being a mentor:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

If you have any comments about your experience of being a mentor, please provide them here:

* Do you have any suggestions about how we could improve PGR mentoring?
* Do you have any other comments you wish to make about anything to do with the mentoring process?
* Do you agree to your **anonymised** responses being used for publicity and/or research purposes?
* Yes
* No

Which Research Institute are you in?

* Culture and Creativity Research Institute (CCRI)
* Health Research Institute (HRI)
* Industry and Innovation Research Institute (I2RI)
* Social and Economic Research Institute (SERI)

Thank you for completing this feedback form, your responses have been received.

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