Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring Handbook 2026/27



RIDA – rida@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

Rationale

The purpose of this programme is to provide PGRs with a mentor – another PGR further along in their studies - with whom they can have supportive, non-judgemental conversations about their experiences of postgraduate research, as well as their professional and career development. PGR peer mentors can advise mentees about community and development within PGR study. Discussions may include: building networks; personal organisation and workload management; working effectively with supervisors; balancing work and life commitments and managing the demands of personal and professional responsibilities.

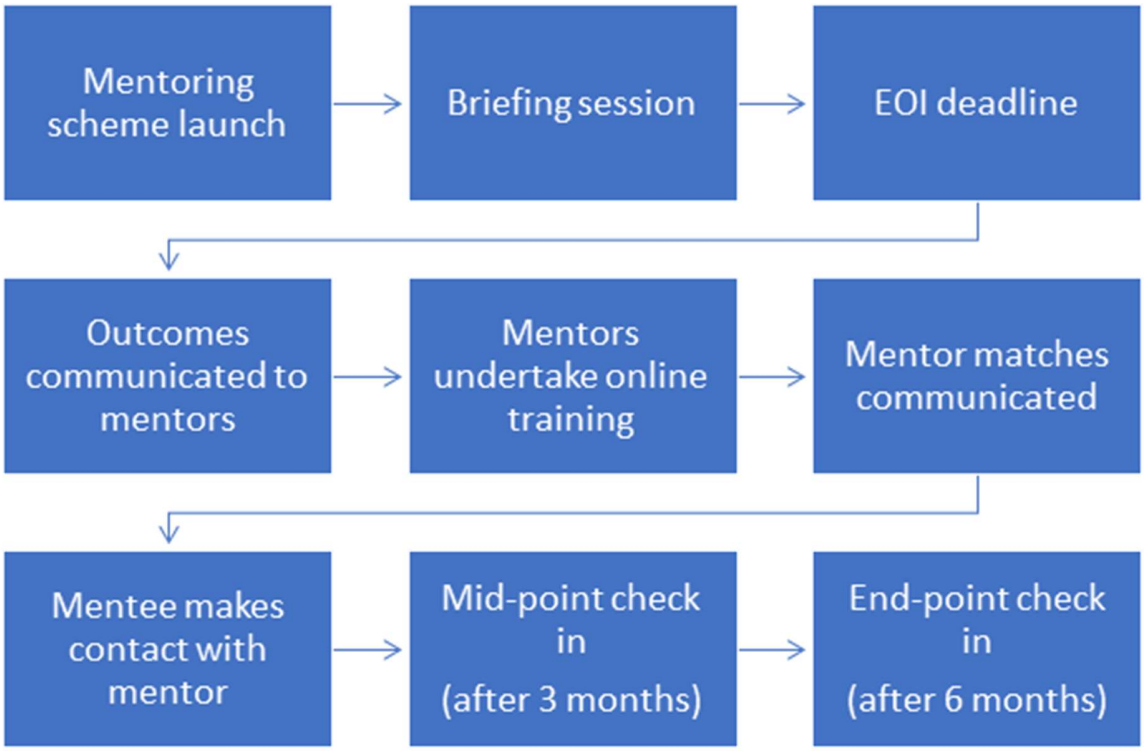
The scheme is designed to benefit both mentees and mentors. For mentees, it offers valuable support and a sense of connection. For mentors, it provides opportunities for personal and professional growth. More broadly, the initiative aims to strengthen collaboration and mutual support within the PGR community.

In 2026/27 we will be establishing a pool of PGR mentors, who we will aim to match with mentees from November 2026 onwards. Mentors and mentees can join the scheme at any point in the year via an EOI form. This will ensure that all students have the opportunity to benefit from a mentoring relationship as soon as possible after enrolment. Mentors will be given training ahead of being matched with a mentee and will be supported by regular cohort group drop-in sessions and check-ins with the RIDA team.

Key contacts

The Sheffield Hallam PGR Peer Mentoring initiative is coordinated by the RIDA team (rida@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 RIDA 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 (RIDA) 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 (RIDA) 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 be matched with a mentor at any time during your postgraduate research degree, reflecting the differing peer support and guidance needs that you might have over time.

- Can I act as a Mentor in my first year of study?
  No, all Mentors must have completed their first year of study.

- 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 (RIDA).

- 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 (RIDA) can signpost you to sources of support, and mentors will be invited to monthly drop-in support sessions.

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

Expression of Interest Form

RIDA is running a PGR Peer Mentoring scheme in 2026/27. 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. Doctoral award:
    - DBA
    - EdD
    - PhD
6. Are you registered as:
    - Full-time
    - Part-time
7. Which Institute or Research Centre are you most closely aligned with?
8. 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
9. For mentors:

    Please select all the areas in which you would be able to support a mentee

    - Communicating effectively

- Confidence and assertiveness
- Resilience, work life balance and wellbeing
- Building your networks
- Personal organisational skills and workload management
- Getting the most from your supervisors
- Becoming a doctoral researcher – reflecting on your identity
- Other – please specify

10. For mentees:

    In which of the following areas would you like support from a PGR mentor (please select all that apply):

    - Communicating effectively
    - Confidence and assertiveness
    - Resilience, work life balance and wellbeing
    - Building your networks
    - Personal organisational skills and workload management
    - Getting the most from your supervisors
    - Becoming a doctoral researcher – reflecting on your identity
    - Other – please specify

11. Mentees
    Please tell us why you are interested in working with a mentor and describe any previous mentoring experiences you have had (required)

12. Mentees
    Please add some information here about your experience, background, and any additional person information that you feel may be relevant to help us when matching you with a mentor (optional)

13. Mentors
    Please tell us why you are interested in being a mentor and describe any previous mentoring experiences you have had (required)
14. Mentors

Please add some information here about your experience, background, and any additional personal information that you feel may be relevant to help us when matching you with a mentee. (optional)

15. How did you hear about the PGR Peer Mentoring Scheme?

Appendix 2: 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 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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

1. 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

2. If you selected other please specify

3. Approximately how many times did you communicate with your mentor? (Please factor in all the communication methods as listed above):

4. This was

Too little
Just right
Too much

5. 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

6. If you selected Other, please specify

Being a PGR Mentee has…

7. Increased my confidence:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

8. Helped me develop my communication skills:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

9. Increased my sense of belonging at university:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

10. Advanced my personal development:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

I have…

11. Found being mentored rewarding:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

12. Felt supported as a mentee and understood where to seek support if/when needed:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree

Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

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

15. Do you have any suggestions about how we could improve PGR mentoring?

16. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about anything to do with the mentoring process?

17. Do you agree to your anonymised responses being used for publicity and/or research purposes?

Yes
No

18. Which College do you belong to?

BTE
HWLS
SSA
Unsure

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your feedback will be invaluable in helping us to develop this scheme for future cohorts of PGR students across the University. The information provided will be treated in confidence. It will be used solely for internal evaluation and to enhance researcher development provision, unless you have given permission for us to use quotes in other materials.

Appendix 6: Feedback form for Mentors

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

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How you liaised with your PGR mentee

1. How did you communicate with your mentee? (Please tick all that apply):

Email
In Person
Phone Calls
Text/WhatsApp
Video conferencing/online meeting platform
Other

2. If you selected Other, please specify

3. Approximately how many times did you communicate with your mentee? (Please factor in all communication methods as listed above):

4. This was
Too Little
Just Right
Too Much

5. 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

6. If you selected Other, please specify

Being a PGR mentor has…

7. Increased my confidence:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

8. Helped me develop my communication skills:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Disagree

9. Increased my sense of contributing to the university:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

10. Advanced my personal development:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

I have…
11. Found being a mentor rewarding:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

12. Felt supported as a mentor and understood where to seek support when/if needed:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree

Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

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

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

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

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