

# Doctoral Peer Mentor Workshop



# 1. Introductions



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# Meet the Peer Support Team



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

... reflect on your experiences of starting your course.

... understand the role and responsibilities of a peer mentor.

... plan meetings and topics to discuss with mentees.

... understand how to use active listening skills as a peer mentor.

... understand mentor/mentee boundaries.

... signpost mentees to appropriate support services and information.

... positive end a mentor/mentee relationship at the end of your role.

... understand the logistics of the scheme.

# 2. Reflection

Think back to when you started your course. What support did your peer mentor provide and what would you have liked additional support on? Discuss your ideas in groups or share in the chat.

# 3. Peer Mentoring at the University of Bath



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# What is Mentoring?

- Mentoring is an informal relationship between two people.
- A mentor has experience in a particular department and imparts specific knowledge about life & work at Bath.
- The scheme is peer-to-peer and confidential.

# Doctoral Peer Mentoring

- An opt-out scheme coordinated through the Doctoral College, the SU and your Faculty/School.
- Mentors will be assigned mentees in your department where possible.

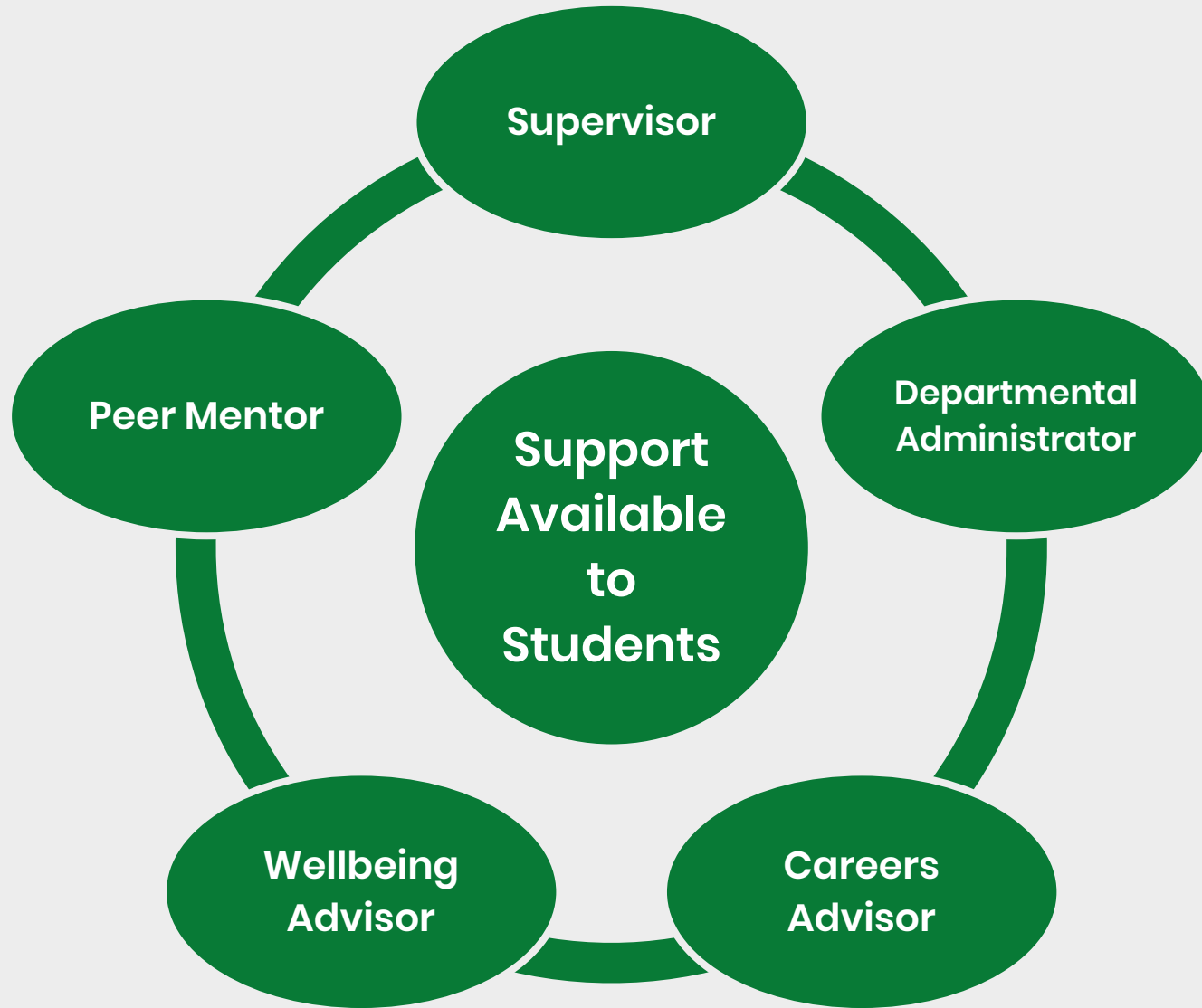


# Aims of Doctoral Peer Mentoring

- Support the transition to life and work at Bath for new doctoral students.
- Support the step up to doctoral study.
- Build a sense of community for doctoral students.
- Reduce feelings of isolation for doctoral students.

# Responsibilities of a Peer Mentor

- Support small groups of new doctoral students at the start of their studies.
- Meet your mentees virtually or in-person as a group during their first two weeks.
- Advise or signpost mentees to appropriate support.
- Encourage mentees to make the most of opportunities available to them.



Peer mentors make up a large network of support available to students when they start their course.

In groups, discuss the unique support these roles provide to students. How is this support different to what you can offer as a peer mentor?

# 4. Working with your mentees



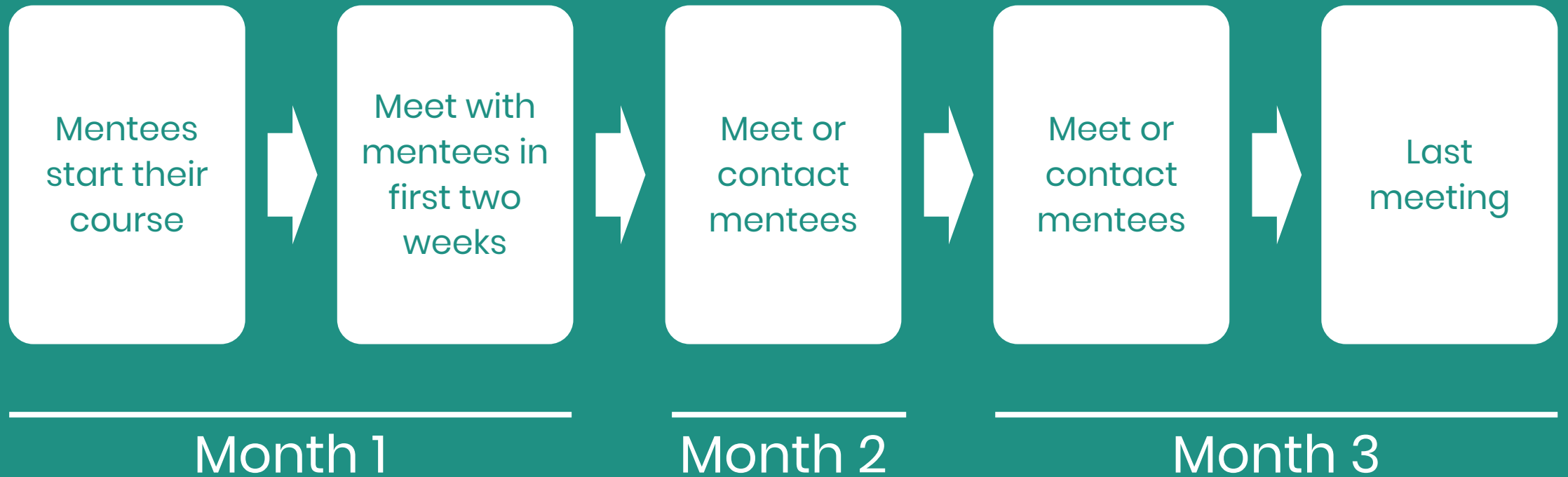
# The First Meeting

- You will be given mentees' Bath emails to make contact and arrange your first meeting.
- Please meet your mentees as a group to help introduce them to other new students.
- Explain your role, what you can help with and how long the relationship lasts (contracting).
- Find somewhere quiet where you can talk together without interruptions. This could be a café, outside by the lake or a social space in your department.

# Maintaining contact with mentees

- You can stay in touch with your mentees however you both feel comfortable doing so – not all mentees will want to keep in contact with you in the same way!
- Make sure to check in with them regularly to see how they are and show you are still there to support them.
- Some mentees may not respond but you are still providing valuable support by reaching out.

# Meeting timeline



How does confidentiality  
relate to the role of a peer  
mentor?



# Confidentiality 1

- Mentees and mentors may talk about sensitive things that you should not share with others.
- However, If a mentee asks their mentor not to tell anyone about their conversations, they should explain that they may need to tell someone else if they are concerned for their safety or someone else's.
- Here is an example of how you could phrase this:

“I’m really glad that you have come to me about this, I just need to let you know that I can’t promise that what we discuss will be kept between us as I may need to talk to a staff member to make sure you’re given the right support”

# Confidentiality 2

- If you think your mentee is a danger to themselves or someone else, you should refer to Peer Support, your department, Student Services, Advice and Support.
- Don't be afraid to mention something if you're 'not sure'. The person you speak to will be able to decide if something needs to be done or not.

# Being an inclusive mentor

- It's important to ensure that your mentees are all receiving the same level of support from you. You might want to consider...
  - Do you know where your mentee can find targeted support (e.g. related to gender, race and ethnicity, disability status)?
  - When suggesting a meet up, will the timing clash with caring, cultural or religious commitments?
  - Is the location we're meeting in accessible? Will the noise level be appropriate? Does it rely on mentees spending money?
  - What prior experience has your mentee had? Have they studied their entire academic career at Bath? Have they come straight from the world of work?

# 5. Active Listening Skills

# When meeting with your mentees, it's important to use active listening skills.

- Focusing on the conversation – don't think about distractions, don't plan what you're going to say next and don't think about how they might respond.
- Demonstrating that you are listening to the other person – maintain regular eye contact, make reassuring noises and ask relevant questions.
- Ensuring you understand what people are saying – summarise what they say, reflect phrases and ask clarifying questions.
- Giving the other person freedom to talk and articulating what they're feeling – avoid leading conversations, use wait time, etc.
- Pay attention to how the other person is behaving – body language, tone of voice, etc.

# Using Active Listening Skills

Think about the different scenarios you might talk to your mentor. What active listening skills would you use in these scenarios? Add your ideas to the Padlet.

[padlet.com/peersupport1/active-listening-skills-s1w0ful5v5cm3qgs](https://padlet.com/peersupport1/active-listening-skills-s1w0ful5v5cm3qgs)

# 6. Professional Boundaries



# Boundaries are important for successful mentoring

Appropriate

Boundary Crossing

Boundary Violation





# How do you feel about...?

1. ... giving your mobile number to your mentee so you can stay in contact during your time together?
2. ... helping your mentee filling out a form for the doctoral college?
3. ... giving your mentee some money to help them out with their bills?
4. ... attending a social for doctoral students with your mentees?
5. ... sharing a difficult experience you had with your supervisor to help your mentee with their own experiences with their supervisor?
6. ... not being able to meet up with your mentee when they need you, because you have other plans.

# Difficult Conversations

- When preparing for a difficult conversation, you should think about:
  - The end of the conversation (How do you want the individual to be thinking and feeling at the end of the conversation?)
  - During the conversation (What do you need to do during the conversation?)
  - The beginning of the conversation (How will you open?)
  - Before the conversation (How are you going to prepare?)
- Use this structure if you're planning to meet your mentee about a specific problem they're going through.

# 7. Signposting Support



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# Which support services would you signpost in these situations?

1. Your mentee is feeling lonely and would like to meet other doctoral students.
2. Your mentee is struggling with the statistical elements of their research and would like some help.
3. Your mentee has dyslexia and would like additional support.
4. Your mentee is struggling with their mental health and would like to talk to someone.

# Tips for Signposting

- Listen to your mentee if you feel comfortable doing so – sometimes they may just need someone to talk to.
- Where possible, give different options to help your mentee find the right support for them.
- We have a [signposting page](#) on our website to help you if you're unsure where to direct your mentee.
- Follow up with your mentee a week or so later to see if they accessed support and how it went.

# 8. Saying No

You may need to say no to your mentee if a situation oversteps a professional boundary, or if you are not the right person to help. This section will help you do this in a constructive and positive way.

# No... but... let's...

No...	...but...	... let's...
I don't think I can answer that question...	... have you tried speaking to Advice and Support instead?	... let's write this down in an email together so you can contact them.
I don't think I'm the right person to talk to about this...	... would you like to talk to someone more appropriate?	... let's see if we can find the right support service to talk to on the University website.
I don't have the time to answer that question right now...	... your supervisor may be able to help instead.	... let's check in next week to see how things went with them.
I'm not able to meet today...	... are you available to meet up tomorrow instead?	... let's put a time in our diaries to meet.

# No... but... let's... activity

- In pairs/threes, formulate responses to some of the scenarios we've discussed so far today. Be prepared to present one scenario back to the group.



# 9. Ending the mentor/mentee relationship

# Planning the last meeting

- Your mentor/mentee relationship lasts for the first three months of their course. Towards the end of the relationship, you should meet with your mentees to explain what happens next.
- In groups, using what we've covered today, plan what you should talk about in your last meeting with your mentees.

# 10. Logistics



# Matching

- You will be matched with a small group of mentees from your department, where possible.
- You may be matched at any point in the year to support students starting at different times.
- We will be in touch during the year to see if you can mentor more students.
- We may ask you to mentor a second group of mentees later in the year.

# Data Protection

- It is important to follow good data protection practices as a mentor –
  - Any personal data like a phone number or personal email should be treated as confidential.
  - Don't collect any personal data that is not necessary to complete your role.
  - Delete any personal data when you finish your role.

# Code of Conduct

- The code of conduct outlines the expectations for mentors and information to help in your role.
- It covers behaviour, meeting safely, signposting support and confidentiality.
- The code of conduct will be sent round after this training – please read and complete the online signature form to show you've read it.

# Any questions?

Congratulations – you are officially a peer mentor!



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