

AIM4University



Mentee Handbook

Introduction to the Programme

Thank you for taking part on AIM4University, an online mentoring programme from the University of Surrey. Please read your mentee handbook for further details about the programme and frequently asked questions.

WHAT IS AIM4UNIVERSITY?

The Widening Participation & Outreach Team have developed the programme to further support you with your university application by offering tailored advice, information, and mentoring.

You are enrolled to take part on a sustained engagement programme across 6 weeks. Using Brightside Mentoring's 'Mentor Match Tool', you will connect with a mentor of your choice who will support you in receiving additional support and advice towards your UCAS application.

Your mentor can assist by sharing suggestions and recommendations towards the completion of your personal statement whilst offering their own experience and insight to navigating work experience and/or placements.

WHEN AND WHERE?

AIM4University launches on Monday 23 September and completes on Monday 11 November.

You will be invited to activate a Brightside Mentoring account, your online platform to connect with your mentor, from Monday 23 September. This is not a social media profile and both mentees and mentors should regard Brightside as an academic environment. You will be able to liaise with your mentor and share drafts and resources via Brightside throughout the duration of the programme, attaching links and files to messages.

All participants are also invited to attend either of our Open Days on Sunday 6 October or Saturday 2 November 2024, or an alternative campus visit to see the facilities at the University of Surrey on Wednesday 30 October 2024.

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

You will have access to your mentor through 1:1 messaging. Your conversations should revolve around the following:

- ❖ UCAS application support
- ❖ Personal statement advice
- ❖ University insight
- ❖ Suggested reading and references
- ❖ Work experience and/or placement recommendations

All participants are also invited to attend weekly webinars (Wednesdays at 17:00) to further support with your university preparation. Content includes:

- ❖ UCAS, Personal Statements & Open Days
- ❖ Student Finance
- ❖ Employability & Professional Training Years
- ❖ Student Life

Your conversations with your Mentor will also provide support and advice around these sessions based upon their own personal experience. All webinar content is impartial and are led by members of the Widening Participation & Outreach Team at the University of Surrey. Each are typically 45 minutes – 1 hour long dependent on Q&A. A recording of each webinar, minus the Q&A, will be uploaded onto our Virtual Learning Environment each week for you to view in your own time.

Online Mentoring

WHAT IS IT?

Online mentoring matches you with a mentor with a view to providing resources, facilitating discussion, and answering any questions or queries that you may have about university. You will be able to select your Mentor to based upon their Brightside profile. You can access the mentoring platform at any time, connecting with your Mentor via direct messenger function. Online mentoring is not the same as social media and you and your Mentor should conduct yourselves responsibly whilst using the platform.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a Student Mentor?

A Student Mentor is a current university student who shares details about their own experiences and learning to further inform mentees of their options. They are a role model and another layer of support in terms of questions and queries with regards to studying at higher education.

2. Who provides the online mentoring platform?

Our provider for the platform is Brightside Mentoring. You can expect to receive an activation email to coincide with the launch of the programme which will give you access to the platform. To access the site, please visit: <https://surreymentoring.co.uk/>

3. How safe is online mentoring?

Online mentoring is a controlled online environment in which content and communication is moderated. All student mentors will have completed safeguarding checks in addition to receiving online safeguarding training. Members of University of Surrey and Brightside Mentoring staff have access to communication and manually moderate messages that include the following: **flagged words, contact numbers and addresses, files, web links**. Any messages shared that do not comply with the safeguarding policy will be declined. Further details with regards to safeguarding policy and site security can be found at: [Brightside site security](#)

4. Do I receive training to use Brightside?

Yes, you can find a video to orientate you further with the platform on our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and in your welcome email. You can expect to receive further details and links on Monday 23 September.

Mentor Support

WHAT IS IT?

The programme is centred around the tailored and impartial support for students. As a result, Mentors will be responsive to the questions, queries and concerns that their mentees share with them. The role of a mentor is to inform and to share helpful tips and suggestions following their own experience. They are not experts and may not be able to answer all of your questions, however, you can trust that they will remain neutral.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How should I pick my Mentor?

You will select your Mentor based upon their profile. Your decision to select could relate to their course of study, interests, hobbies, or background. Therefore, please review all profiles before making a final decision. All mentors are current University of Surrey students studying a range of different courses. If their course does not exactly correspond with your preference, their interests and pathway may still be similar so do look beyond course of study in their profile. As you develop your relationship with your Mentor, ask questions around their previous study and career ambitions and be respectful of their choices. Your Mentor will be aware that you will be considering other institutions and pathways and they will provide impartial advice throughout the programme.

2. What advice can my Mentor share on personal statements?

All mentees will be able to share personal statement drafts with their Mentors through this programme. To avoid the potential for influencing or plagiarism, your Mentor will only be able to check grammar, vocabulary and structure whilst also recommending any other appropriate content to mention (e.g. volunteering, work experience, reading). They will not be writing any suggested passages for your personal statement nor will they share their own personal statement.

3. What details can they share about their university experience?

Mentors will talk about their experience of university, particularly in relation to studying within their own subject area. This will include timetabling, accommodation, facilities and placements. They can share insight into hybrid learning and the balance between face-to-face and online teaching along with examples of clubs, societies, course and community events that they have either accessed or are aware of on campus.

4. What should I do if my Mentor hasn't contacted me in a while?

It can take up to 72 hours for your message to be replied to. All mentors are current students and will have their own timetabling and deadlines to consider. If you have not received a reply within 72 hours, please contact wp@surrey.ac.uk for further assistance.

Webinars

WHAT IS IT?

Each week, the University of Surrey will provide exclusive webinars for AIM4University participants. These will consist of information, advice, and guidance towards university, covering topics such as student finance, personal statements and student life. These are excellent opportunities for you to learn more about the process of going to university and to ask further questions, either through the webinar or directly with your Student Mentor.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How long are the webinars?

We plan our webinars to last around 45 minutes before setting aside up to 15 minutes for Q&A. It is our aim to provide an interactive experience whilst sharing up to date information. All webinars are exclusive to the programme with recordings shared with participants.

2. What is the webinar schedule?

All webinars take place at 17:00 on each of the following dates:

- ❖ Wednesday 25 September – UCAS, Personal Statements & Open Days
- ❖ Wednesday 2 October – Student Finance
- ❖ Wednesday 9 October – Employability & Professional Training Years
- ❖ Wednesday 16 October – Student Life

3. How do I watch the recordings?

You will be enrolled onto our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which will house all recorded content and resources. You can expect to receive login details once the programme launches with content updated weekly. This is a separate platform to the mentoring.

Campus Visits

WHAT IS IT?

Participants on the programme are invited to attend either of our Open Days on Sunday 6 October or Saturday 2 November 2024, or an alternative campus visit to see the facilities at the University of Surrey on Wednesday 30 October 2024.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why are we hosting campus visits?

With Open Days taking place on campus during Autumn, AIM4University invites you to attend one of these dates to explore the Surrey campus further, getting to hear from academic and support staff in person. We are also providing an alternative campus visit on the Wednesday of October half term, to provide participants an opportunity to visit the University of Surrey with their supporters to enjoy a tour of the campus on a quieter date and to meet with members of the Widening Participation and Student Support Teams. These visits are designed to provide additional advice and information regarding the pastoral and support services available at the University of Surrey.

2. When are the visits scheduled?

You can attend one of the following Open Days:

- ❖ Sunday 6 October
- ❖ Saturday 2 November

Or, the alternative campus visit on:

- ❖ Wednesday 30 October

3. Is transport provided?

No, but all participants are eligible to receive a £40 travel bursary towards your travel expenses.

4. Do I have to attend a campus visit?

No, these visits are optional and there is no obligation to attend a campus visit. These visits are designed to further enrich your experience on the programme but ability to participate via the online provision will not be inhibited if you are unable to attend a campus visit.