

Starter Notes on CS Peer Mentoring (2025/26)

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1 Background

The Student Guide or CS Peer Mentoring scheme is a student-led initiative to provide support for students in early years, with a focus on Year 2. More senior students, mainly from Year 4, should act as guides or mentors to junior students, sharing their knowledge and experience in informal sessions that are started in Week 1/2 of Semester 1.

Basics about the set-up:

- In CS this is an **opt-in scheme**, i.e. it is voluntary for Year 2 students
- You can sign-up to the scheme in the group formation session right after the kick-off session
- It should be **student-led**. From Week 2 onwards, students and mentors should arrange their own events based on interest and feedback from students
- We recommend to identify a regular meeting date, and we (academics) can help with booking rooms
- CS academics will continue to act as contact points to support activities:
 - Hans-Wolfgang Loidl <H.W.Loidl@hw.ac.uk>
 - Tessa Berg <T.Berg@hw.ac.uk>
- MACS Student Advisors (first contact point for students):
 - Nicola Forrest <n.forrest@hw.ac.uk>
 - Frances Rowbottom <f.rowbottom@hw.ac.uk>
 - Contact in Wellbeing, as Student Success Advisor: "Smeal, Madeleine A" <M.Smeal@hw.ac.uk>

2 Initial list of CS Peer Mentors

- Marshall Dawson, Hamish <hm2074@hw.ac.uk>
- Brown, Anna <ab2240@hw.ac.uk>
- Callcut, Jake <jc2110@hw.ac.uk>

- Ahmad, Aadham <aa2212@hw.ac.uk>
- Sunil, Shruti <ss2299@hw.ac.uk>
- Owie, Tovie <to2013@hw.ac.uk>

We plan to **cap the group sizes at ca 12 students**, to enable meaningful interactions. This means we won't be able to cater for all students in the cohort, but for those interested we will try to find a place. We will try to recruit more mentors as we go along.

In the group formation phase, just take on as many students as are interested. We will implement the cap after this point, probably from Week 2 onwards. We want to give all students who are interested an opportunity to engage in the first week.

3 Kick-off meeting (Thu 11.9. 15:00 in JW1)

The initial meeting and group allocation should happen in Week 1, **after the Welcome Back Y2 slot: Thu 11.9. 14:00 in JW1**. We will have a slot during the Welcome Back session to introduce scheme and helpers (approx **14:40**). As this is an opt-in activity we won't pre-allocate students and just ask them to sign up online, using a QR code, and to form a group with one of the Peer Mentors.

The **schedule** on **Thu 11.9.** is to:

- **14:00:** Start of **Welcome Back** session for Year 2 students in **JW1** (you don't need to be there from start; just for Introduction below)
- **14:40 (approx):** **Introduction** to CS Peer Mentoring; we will use the 10 minutes for slides and an **introduction of peer mentors**
- **15:00:** **Sign-up** and questions just **outside JW1/JW2**.
- **16:00:** **Group formation:** Meet up with peer mentors for **group formation** just **outside JW1/JW2**. For later weeks you may want to use/book rooms in the GRID building.

During **group formation** start a discussion. Here some general tips:

- Introduce yourself and say in your own words why you would have found such a session useful in Year 2
- Re-inforce the message of a student-led scheme: **you** (the students) will decide how to spend the time once signed up
- **IMPORTANT:** Invite students to sign-up for a weekly meeting slot, and **get their names and email addresses**
- **IMPORTANT:** **Fix a weekly slot** that works with everyone interested to meet up (eg. in GRID Collaborate 2)
- Aim to come up with **suggestions for activities**, based on the discussion below.
- Ask students if they are involved in student societies, and if a society panel member is in the room to get in touch
- If you want to continue discussion with the group on the same day, you may want to walk over to the GRID for brainstorming on activities

Topics that could be covered in the general discussion:

- Ask students about difficulties of remote / hybrid mode of learning
- Ask students about Experiences from Year 1
- Ask students about Expectations on Year 2
- Share own experience in this phase of the studies
- Ask for individual comments and feedback
- Discuss communication channels you can use in the group (Slack, Discord, or other)
- Share contact details for direct communication and suggestions

- Ask for suggestions on activities that would be useful (see below)
- Fix a next/regular meeting date to make sure meetings will continue (on a voluntary basis)

Tips:

- Keep your own intro and statement short and let students do the talking; just get them started with the points above
- If some are hesitant to speak, pass around post-it notes and ask them to write down e.g. experiences/expectations
- Encourage them to sign up at least for the next week, without being too pushy

4 Other activities

In order to start activities we could run the events below; get an impression how much interest there is and collect suggestions for further events in this time period.

- Week 1: **Kick-off** meeting
- Week 2: **Try-out-kit** session: we can provide robots, oculus rift and other kit (available on loan) and the students can try it out
- Week 3: **(Board-) gaming session** we plan to bring some simple board games, let student groups play through a game and reflect on how to turn it into a digital game (or other discussion)
- Week 4: **Unity tutorial session** for those interested in developing games, pick one of the many Unity tutorials and work through them together

Other potential topics for further weeks suggested so far:

- advice from Career Services on a range of issues (we plan to run a seminar specifically on interviews)
- meet-up with some of the student success advisors
- invited talks from HWU alumni
- a Unity intro session for games programming

5 Useful Links

- CS Peer Mentoring site