Mentoring Programme

Supporting you in planning your professional and personal life through experienced mentors

The mentoring programme is undertaken in partnership with the University of St.Gallen (HSG) and HSG Alumni.
Who would not appreciate considered advice and sympathetic support? In Homer’s “The Odyssey”, Mentor is a friend of Odysseus. During his absence, Odysseus entrusted him with raising his son Telemachus and presiding over his household. Mentor was Telemachus’ constant companion and imparted advice and wisdom to him. The personal name Mentor has become synonymous with an exemplary advisor and educator.

Integration into the course architecture
It is a main objective of the University of St.Gallen to challenge its students and further to foster and encourage their personal development. The course architecture at the University of St.Gallen deliberately sets goals beyond just the transfer of knowledge in order to meet its educational mission. The mentoring programme, available to all students at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and Ph.D. Levels, is an important part of this concept.

The mentoring concept at the University of St.Gallen (HSG)
As part of the mentoring programme, an experienced person (mentor) guides a mentee (student of the University of St.Gallen) in his or her personal development and in enhancing their professional growth. Mentoring is an objective process, but it is also a personal relationship between two people, who work closely together over a longer period of time (around 2 years) and have a regular exchange regarding individual subjects. Mutual goodwill and respect are the keys to the relationship being a success.

The mentoring programme – a partnership between the University and HSG Alumni
The mentoring programme is a partnership between the University of St.Gallen and HSG Alumni to promote an exchange of knowledge between university, students and alumni. Over 80% of the mentors who transfer their knowledge and experience are alumnae and alumni of the HSG.

Guiding principle

The approach

Voluntary participation and commitment
- The mentoring relationship relies on the voluntary participation and commitment of the participants.
- Mentoring is a process within an established timeframe with clearly defined goals based on mutual trust.
- The mentoring programme is not just another component in the traditional educational format. The University offers the appropriate framework by establishing first contact after the initial matching process between mentor and mentee, as well as assuming an advisory role for the benefit of all stakeholders.

One-to-one mentoring – the classical form of a mentoring relationship
- The focus of the mentoring programme at the University of St.Gallen is on the personal relationship between mentor and mentee, i.e. a mentor supports one mentee, although in a few cases there might be two or three mentees.

Flexibility, a key factor in building the mentoring relationship
- The extent and focus of the mentoring relationship is agreed exclusively between mentor and mentee.
- Advice and the topic of conversation are based on the goals and requirements set by the mentees and the capabilities and skills of the mentors.

Mentoring process
- In the first meeting, both parties clarify their expectations regarding the mentoring relationship, determine the channels and frequency of communication and establish the individual rules for their mentoring relationship. These principles can be outlined in a written mentoring agreement.
- A personal meeting based on a semester report by the mentee must be convened once a semester. Individual, relationship-orientated aspects will be discussed in this meeting.
- Ending the mentoring relationship: the mentoring relationship officially ends after two years but may be continued on a voluntary basis. In a final meeting, both parties reflect on the preceding two years, and possible future prospects should be addressed. Premature termination of the mentoring relationship is allowed at any time by mutual consent. Information of the programme administration is necessary.
Every year more than 800 students are part of an active mentoring relationship. Mentees study at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and Ph.D. Levels, focusing on different core subjects.

In order to support the development of a sustainable mentoring relationship, students must be aware of their roles and responsibilities as mentees. In addition to handing in semester reports, it is the responsibility of mentees to establish contact with the mentor and actively maintain communication. Furthermore, mentees are obliged to show full commitment to meetings and compliance with agreements.

Iwan Alijew, Bachelor’s Level, Bachelor in Business Administration (BBWL)

“Through motivating, inspiring and challenging conversations, my mentor offers me new perspectives and supports me in the decision-making process in various subjects. I can count on the advice of my mentor in many different issues and thus develop my personal and professional skills.”

Sarah Rickenbach, Master’s Level, Master in Business Management (MUG)

“My mentor has consistently accompanied me during the Bachelor’s and Master’s degree courses, was supporting me with general helpful advices for my study and gave me particular support with my Bachelor’s thesis. If I have questions regarding study or career entry, I can ask her anytime. Over the past two years we have become genuine friends, which is something I wouldn’t want to be without.”

Over 1’000 mentors from different working fields – more than 80% are HSG Alumni – are already involved in the mentoring programme.

Mentors of the University of St.Gallen are individuals with professional experience who assist students in their professional, social and personal orientation. Guiding and supporting students is initially fixed for a period of two years. Mentors should allocate about three hours per semester for the compulsory semester meeting, as well as being available as a point of contact by phone or e-mail.

HSG mentors can perform within the mentoring relationship certain tasks:
- Give advice in specific situations, on pressing issues and current difficulties;
- discuss career plans and potential obstacles;
- provide social, professional and business connections;
- share experiences from their own development and professional practice;
- provide an insight into daily professional life;
- take a stance on individual behavior.

Markus Mader, Director of the Swiss Red Cross

“I am delighted to accompany students during their studies and provide them with advice. I am always impressed by the engagement, interests and purposefulness of young people when starting their professional careers. With my extensive and broad experience, I can encourage my mentees with critical questions for reflection, strengthen their views or show them alternative ways.”

Andrea Winkelmann, Senior Consultant, Synpulse Management Consulting

“Mentoring is a wonderful task – mentees have the possibility to exchange with an experienced person, to ask important questions and to get stimulations for their personal career. As a mentor, I have the chance to accompany a student in his/her development and to keep in touch with the academic time through the eyes and thoughts of the student. Over all, the individual relationship to a person inspires me and is a huge enrichment for my own way.”
**How can I participate in the mentoring programme?**

- **Registration as a mentor**
  If you are interested in becoming a mentor, you may register online from the beginning of May to mid-September, via the website www.mentoring.unisg.ch by following the “Registering as a mentor” link.

- **Application as a student**
  Students at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and Ph.D. Levels can apply online from the beginning of the Autumn Semester, via the website www.mentoring.unisg.ch by following the “Applying as a student” link.

- **Matching process**
  Prospective mentors outline their ideas and expectations of a mentoring relationship in the registration form. Based on this information, brief profiles of mentors will then be produced. During the application phase, students complete the application form in describing their ideas and expectations regarding the mentoring relationship and attaching their CVs. After completing their application form, students have the opportunity to name their three preferred mentors within a preselection of 30 suitable mentors. Due to the amount of applications of students, it is not possible to guarantee the participation within the mentoring programme.

  Experience of recent years has shown that more than 85% of the assigned mentoring relationships have worked successfully. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that not all preferred choices can be arranged. Ultimately, mentors and mentees are paired on the basis of their outlined profiles, so that those who are best suited to each other can be matched.

  The allocation of ideal partners is carried out with the help of a special matching software with numerous, differently weighted criteria. After the conclusion of the matching process, mentors and mentees will be informed of the outcome of the allocation, and mentees are asked to contact their respective mentors immediately.

  **The mentoring programme begins with the official kick-off event in mid-November.**

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**Registration, application and matching process**

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Programme administration

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schmid
Professor of Russian Culture and Society
Academic leadership of the mentoring programme

Pascale Lutz, M.Sc.
Master of Science in Psychology
Head of the mentoring programme