

Strengthening Academic Mentoring at LSE Annual Report 2024-25

Inclusive Education Team, Eden Centre, LSE - August 2025

Executive Summary

The Inclusive Education Team delivered a comprehensive, multi-layered programme that reached academic and professional services staff across LSE through 375+ participant engagements. This year, our activities aimed to provide multiple points of entry to academic mentoring content, support departments in developing specific approaches and strategies, and increase awareness of the importance of academic mentoring in students' success at LSE.

Our work successfully engaged five distinct stakeholder groups – academics, professional services staff, senior management, student support services, and students – through strategically designed interventions at individual, community, and institutional levels. The programme achieved measurable impact, with 87.5% of Community of Practice participants implementing concrete practice changes and consistently high satisfaction ratings (4.6-4.9/5) across collaborative activities.

Key Achievements

- 375+ participant engagements across 12 distinct activities
- 5 academic mentors pursuing professional recognition through UKAT
- Established a sustainable Community of Practice with 18 active members from 11 departments
- Enhanced individual and departmental practice through evidence-based workshops and peer learning
- National sector engagement through 4 presentations at the UKAT annual conference

Strategic framework: A Multi-tiered Approach to Enhance Academic Mentoring

Academic Mentoring and Inclusive Education

At the Eden Centre, the Inclusive Education team plays a central role in supporting academic mentoring by facilitating workshops designed for academics and professional staff. These workshops aim to provide essential information, practical guidance, and evidence-based insights into the challenges and successes of academic mentoring.

Our work also involves gathering and analysing feedback from both academics and students to better understand their experiences and needs. This evidence informs the School's approaches to mentoring and contributes to its ongoing development. Additionally, we coordinate the Community of Practice, fostering dialogue and collaboration among colleagues to share knowledge and refine practices.

Through these efforts, we aim to offer a nuanced understanding of how academic mentoring is implemented across the School, highlighting variations in practice and recognising initiatives and individuals that drive continual improvement.

What we developed

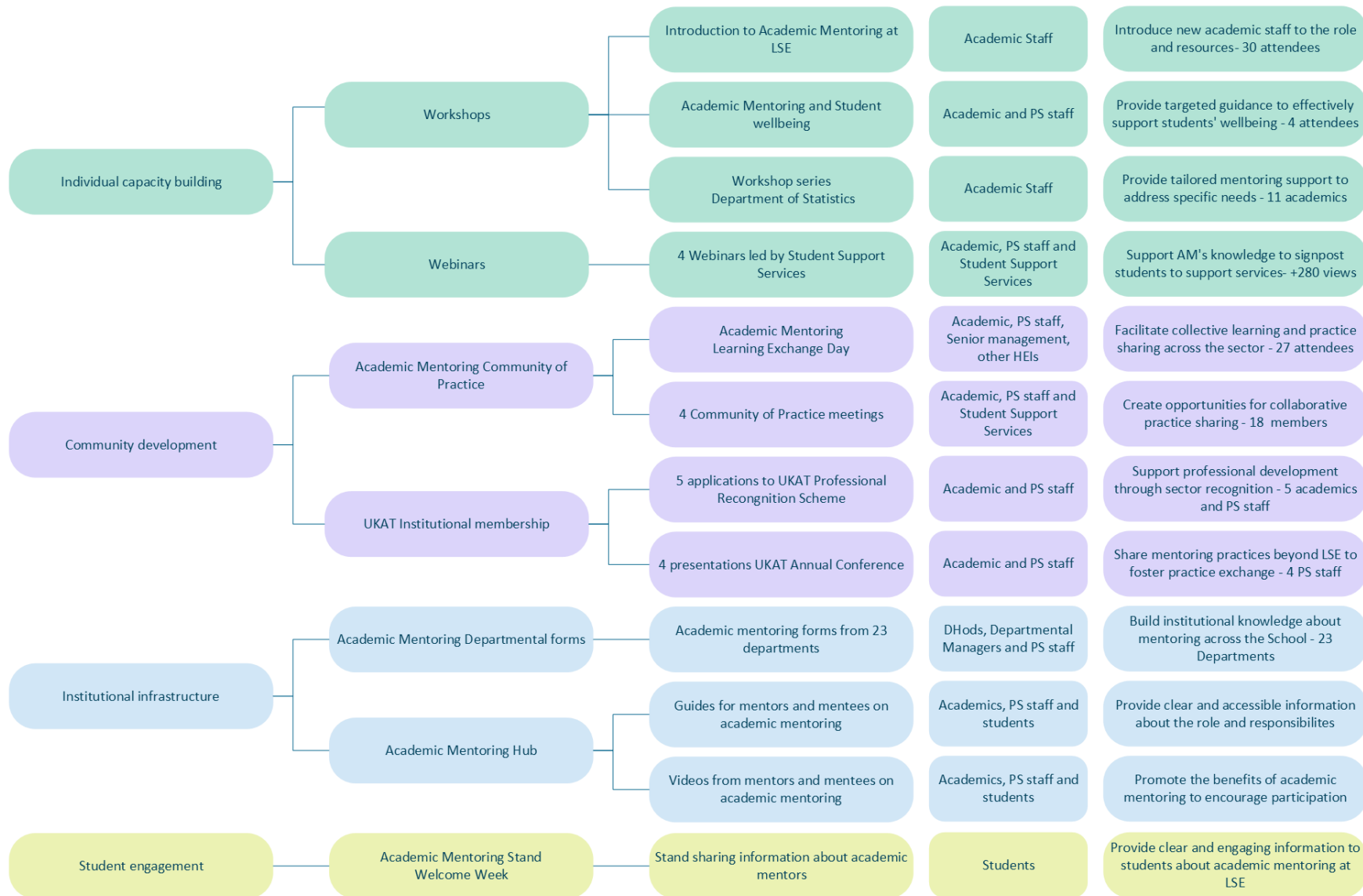
To enhance academic mentoring, we developed a multi-layered ecosystem of support that addresses:

- **Individual Capacity Building:** Strengthening the skills, knowledge, and confidence of academic mentors to support students effectively.
- **Community Development:** Building networks and spaces for collaborative learning and sharing of mentoring practices.
- **Institutional Infrastructure:** Developing resources, systems, and processes that enable effective academic mentoring.
- **Student Engagement:** Increasing students' understanding of and connection with academic mentoring to enhance their experience.

We managed to engage different stakeholders in our activities, to promote a whole-school approach, offering different activities that reach different audiences. Some of our activities are:

- **Workshops and webinars on academic mentoring:** Strengthen individual capacity
- **Targeted interventions:** Address contextual needs with tailored support for departments
- **Peer learning activities:** Foster collaborative practice through community engagement
- **Resource and professional development:** Create accessible materials and facilitate paths for professional development.

Academic Mentoring Activities Portfolio



Activities Portfolio by Development Area

Individual Capacity Building

Academic Mentoring and Students' Wellbeing Workshop

Rationale: Implemented to address gaps in role understanding and resource awareness among academic mentors, aiming to help them build balanced mentor–student relationships. The goal was to enhance mentors' capacity to show care, interest, availability, and proactivity from the outset to strengthen engagement and mentoring value for both parties.

Key Topics: Building effective mentor–student relationships, adapting mentoring approaches (including attachment theory), signposting to LSE services, cause-for-concern procedures.

Feedback Highlights: Participants valued learning different mentoring approaches, particularly attachment theory, to help them “read students better.” They appreciated peer learning opportunities, describing the exchange of experiences as “food for thought.” Practical updates on signposting and procedures were seen as “always helpful” for staying current. Several requested more cross-departmental connections, including one-to-one conversations with mentors from other departments.

Impact Indicators: Improved signposting capability and updated knowledge of LSE support services and protocols. Increased understanding of attachment-informed mentoring approaches, enabling mentors to adapt support to individual student needs and engagement patterns.

Workshop Series for the Department of Statistics

Rationale: Designed to enhance academic mentoring competencies in response to departmental concerns about low student engagement with mentoring. A progressive, four-session structure built from core mentoring principles to engagement strategies, culminating in co-created departmental resources.

Key Topics: LSE mentoring principles, wellbeing support, student engagement strategies, co-creating departmental mentoring resources.

Feedback Highlights: Participants valued peer learning from experienced colleagues, collaborative discussions, and reminders about available resources. The interactive format and community-building elements were noted as strengthening departmental culture.

Impact Indicators: Enhanced communication and guidance approaches, with reports of “better communication styles,” “more and better-informed signposting,” and “asking better questions.” Improved student engagement, evidenced by one participant receiving the LSESU Academic Mentor Award and attributing this recognition to skills gained in the series.

Webinars from Support Services to Academic Mentors

Rationale: Addressed the complexity of LSE's support landscape, which can lead to missed opportunities for effective signposting. Aimed to improve mentors' knowledge, confidence, and awareness of student support services through concise, interactive presentations.

Key Topics: Widening Participation, LSE Careers, Disability and Mental Health Services, LSE Life, and their links to academic mentoring.

Feedback Highlights: No direct feedback collected.

Impact Indicators: Achieved a 14:1 asynchronous-to-live engagement ratio, indicating strong demand for flexible access. Reduced information gaps between available services and mentor knowledge.

Community Development**Academic Mentoring Learning Exchange Day**

Rationale: Created to bring colleagues together across the School, share experiences, and build a stronger, more cohesive approach to academic mentoring. Designed to celebrate diversity in mentoring models while fostering collaboration and reflection.

Key Topics: Sharing mentoring experiences, showcasing research and impact, exploring future directions, keynote discussions, panel presentations, interactive workshops.

Feedback Highlights: Participants rated satisfaction highly (4.6–4.9/5), valued networking, gained new approaches, and appreciated senior leadership engagement as a sign of institutional commitment.

Impact Indicators: Cross-institutional participation from 18 departments/divisions, effective knowledge exchange, and strengthened institutional support for mentoring development.

Academic Mentoring Community of Practice

Rationale: Established to enhance mentoring practice across the School, encourage knowledge sharing, develop resources collaboratively, and create a regular space for interactive dialogue.

Key Topics: Student engagement strategies, supporting vulnerable student populations, mentoring infrastructure, professional development opportunities, institutional integration, operational challenges.

Feedback Highlights: Participants reported an 87.5% implementation rate of practice changes, valued cross-departmental reflection, and all would recommend the space to colleagues with mentoring responsibilities.

Impact Indicators: Evidence-based practice enhancement through resource integration and systematic approaches. Innovations in student engagement and strengthened sense of professional learning community.

UKAT institutional membership

Rationale: Aimed to embed mentoring excellence into formal professional development pathways and extend practice sharing beyond LSE into the wider higher education sector.

Key Topics: Professional recognition standards, sector-wide knowledge sharing.

Feedback Highlights: No feedback collected.

Impact Indicators: Four conference presentations delivered; five staff members pursuing UKAT professional recognition, embedding mentoring excellence into formal professional pathways.

Institutional Infrastructure**Academic Mentoring forms from 23 departments**

Rationale: Developed to gather institutional-level data on mentoring approaches and needs, providing a comprehensive evidence base for targeting future support and resources.

Key Topics: Departmental mentoring structures, approaches, needs assessment.

Feedback Highlights: No feedback collected.

Impact Indicators: Complete mapping of mentoring practice across all departments, enabling more targeted and evidence-informed interventions.

Academic Mentoring Hub Updates: Guides and videos

Rationale: Designed to centralise and update key information for mentors and mentees, and to highlight the benefits of mentoring through peer-led content.

Key Topics: Information for mentors and mentees, meeting guidance, undergraduate and postgraduate guides, mentoring benefits, practice examples.

Feedback Highlights: No feedback collected; high online view counts indicate broader reach than in-person activities.

Impact Indicators: Produced three guides and two videos, with over 280 views. A student-led Change Makers project produced a tailored guide for the International Relations Department, demonstrating adaptability and departmental customisation.

Student Engagement**Academic Mentoring Stand – Welcome Week**

Rationale: Created to increase student awareness of academic mentoring from the start of the academic year and encourage early engagement with mentors.

Key Topics: Importance and benefits of academic mentoring for new students.

Feedback Highlights: No feedback collected.

Impact Indicators: Direct engagement with 60 students, distribution of guides, and increased early awareness of the mentoring role.

Evaluation: Adaptive Methodology and Key Findings

This year's evaluation focused on understanding both the reach of our activities and the quality of engagement they generated. We began with plans for standard pre- and post-workshop surveys, but low initial response rates prompted a shift to a more adaptive approach. By gathering expectations at the start of sessions and capturing reflections at the end, particularly in multi-session activities, we collected richer, more relevant feedback.

Our findings highlight three main areas of success:

1. Engagement and Satisfaction

Interactive, relationship-focused activities produced the most detailed and insightful feedback.

- **Community of Practice, Learning Exchange Day, and the Statistics Department workshop series** consistently received high satisfaction ratings (4.0–4.9/5).
- 100% of Community of Practice participants said they would recommend the space to colleagues, citing the value of practical examples, resource updates, and cross-departmental networking.
- Participants particularly valued opportunities to learn from peers, share real-world strategies, and gain practical updates on LSE processes.

2. Practice Implementation

Many activities translated directly into changes in mentoring practice.

- **87.5% of Community of Practice participants** implemented concrete changes, such as adopting more proactive communication styles, improving the way they ask questions in mentoring meetings, and refining their signposting to student support services.
- Several mentors reported increased student engagement following these changes, with one receiving the **LSESU Academic Mentor Award** and crediting the skills gained in our workshop series.
- Five staff members began formal **UKAT professional recognition** applications, demonstrating the link between our activities and professional development.

3. Access and Reach

Our blended delivery model supported both broad participation and flexibility.

- **79% of all engagements** (298 of 375) were delivered in hybrid or fully digital formats, enabling participants to engage on their own schedules.
- The Community of Practice attracted members from **46% of LSE departments**, building a network that spans disciplines and roles.
- Across the portfolio, we reached **five key stakeholder groups**: academic staff, professional services staff, senior management, student support services, and students.

Lessons Learned and Future Directions

What we learned

- **Evaluation methods:** Standard survey approaches alone are not enough, the richest feedback came from activities where participants could discuss their needs and reflect in real time. Future evaluation will combine structured surveys with these more conversational approaches.
- **Format and accessibility:** Hybrid delivery works well for reach, but smaller in-person groups foster deeper learning and stronger professional connections. A blended approach will remain our standard.
- **Coordination and timing:** Even highly relevant activities saw reduced attendance when clashing with departmental priorities. Closer coordination with departments will be essential to maximise participation.

Looking ahead

- **Stronger evidence collection:** We will introduce systematic feedback surveys for both academic mentors and mentees, enabling us to capture a wider range of perspectives.
- **Broader departmental engagement:** Targeted outreach will focus on the 54% of departments not yet involved in the Community of Practice, using departmental mapping data to inform priorities.
- **Sustaining momentum:** We will continue to support the Community of Practice, track the use of Academic Mentoring Hub resources, and promote professional development pathways through UKAT engagement.

Conclusion

The Inclusive Education Team has successfully created multiple points of entry to academic mentoring enhancement, addressing individual capacity building, community development, and institutional infrastructure needs through evidence-based, stakeholder-inclusive programming. Our comprehensive approach demonstrates how adaptive methodology and strategic stakeholder engagement can generate measurable improvements in practice whilst building sustainable communities of learning and development.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Individual Capacity Building

- [Visual Summary of Workshop Series with the Department of Statistics](#)
- [Webinar recordings](#)
- [Webinars visual summary](#)

Appendix B: Community Development

- [Report on Academic Mentoring Learning Exchange Day](#)
- [Annual report Academic Mentoring Community of Practice 2024-25](#)

Appendix C: Institutional Infrastructure

- [Resources for mentors](#) and [mentees on academic mentoring](#)
- [Videos from mentors and mentees on academic mentoring](#)