

Recommendations Based on Students' Feedback

In 2023-24, undergraduate students shared their experiences of academic mentoring at LSE through a series of focus groups run by the Inclusive Education Team. Their feedback has informed a set of practical recommendations to support your mentoring practice as well as a positive student experience. Implementing these actions can help academic mentors provide more effective support, foster stronger relationships with their mentees, and enhance our students' experiences at LSE.

Meetings Structure and Content

- **Mentor-Led Relationship for First-Year Students:** Guide students on how to be proactive mentees by suggesting discussion topics and providing structured sessions.
- **Use the [Academic Mentoring Hub](#):** Draw on ideas and resources appropriate to the year of study.
- **Regular Individual Meetings:** Hold at least one individual meeting with each student per term and allow flexible 30-mins slots for more complex issues.
- **Plan Ahead:** Develop a shared action plan for the year, including key check-ins, based on both, yours and your mentees availability.
- **Track Meeting Content:** Note discussion points and agreed actions (e.g. using LFY) to make follow-up easier.
- **Focus on Discipline-Specific Advice:** During individual meetings, concentrate on discipline and department-specific academic advice and offer space to develop personal mentor-mentee relationships.
- **Tailored Group Meetings:** Address general academic skills tailored to the discipline and common challenges students may face.
- **Smaller Group Sessions:** Offer smaller group sessions for more personal discussions, allowing students to feel comfortable sharing with others (between three to six students).

Communication

- **Clarify Role Definition:** Explain your role, outline what mentees can expect from you, and clarify their responsibilities. This will foster a shared understanding of scholarly partnership.
- **Clarify Relationship Boundaries:** Offer academic and pastoral support, while signposting to specialist services when appropriate.
- **Be Accessible:** Tell student how and when to contact you, confirm preferred channels (e.g. email), and times of response.

Building Rapport and Trust

- **Allocate Time for Individual Meetings:** Meet with all mentees individually at least once per term, accommodating schedule clashes via email when necessary.
- **Be Approachable:** Ask students about their academic interests and follow-up in later meetings to show continuity.
- **Foster Connection:** When possible, hold informal check-ins (e.g. a short coffee meeting in the first weeks) to build rapport. Ask your department for funds for these activities.
- **Acknowledge Their Position:** Recognise that students value close, supportive relationships with mentors as part of belonging to their department and the School.

Signposting

- **Know the Support Services Available:** Familiarise yourself with School support services. You can use the Academic Mentoring Hub or the [Find support at LSE](#) webpage for further information.
- **Use your network:** Seek advice from colleagues who have experience mentoring in your department or contact the Inclusive Education team at the Eden Centre when needed.
- **Understand Administrative Tasks:** Make time to learn the basics of administrative tasks such as handling requests or how to implement the provisions outlined in Inclusion Plans for students. Remember you can always seek for extra support within your department.

“I think it's really valuable, just knowing there's someone there for you if you need support, because you never know what might happen over the three years of university.”

First-year Undergraduate Student