

Building Inclusive Education Environments through Academic Mentoring

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Session Outline

- Introductions and aims of the session
- Academic Mentoring and Inclusive Education
- Pillars of Academic Mentoring at LSE
- Introduction to the Academic Code
- Introduction to Services at LSE
- Questions and next activities

Aims of the workshop

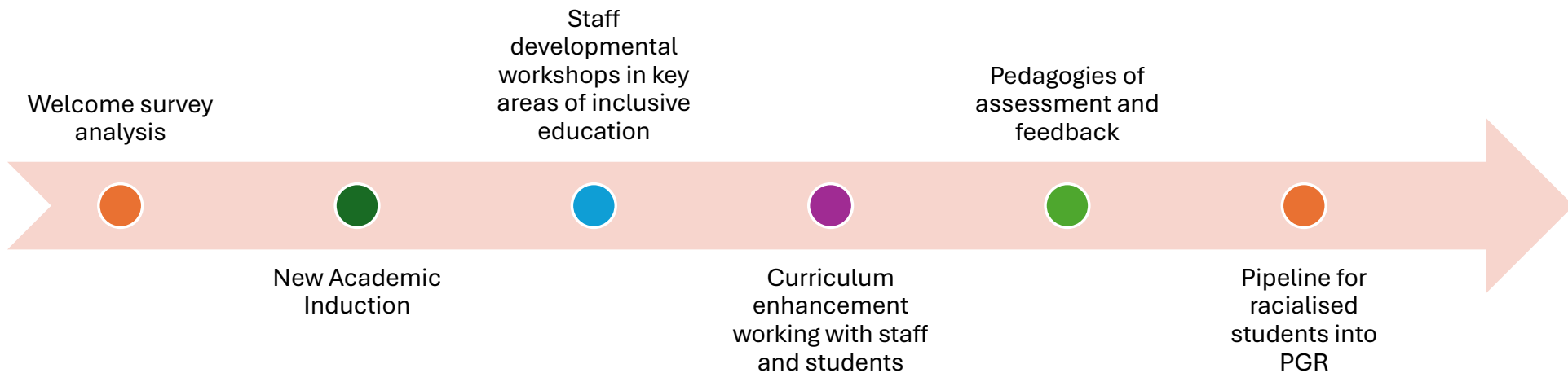
- Generate a **common understanding** of academic mentoring at LSE;
- Highlight the **importance of academic mentoring in students' development**;
- Introduce **resources available** to enhance the practice of academic mentoring;
- Get familiar with **support services and School regulations** related to your practice as academic mentors;
- Encourage **open discussions** to ask questions and raise concerns about academic mentoring.

The Inclusive Education Team develops research, training and resources across five areas of work:

1. Academic Mentoring
2. Curriculum Enhancement
3. Inclusive Pedagogies
4. Developing Higher Education Identities
5. Anti-Racism

We have developed a series of activities to **improve academic support** and **strengthen inclusive educational practices** within LSE.

We work across the student journey





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What is Academic Mentoring?

Eden Centre and Student Wellbeing Service ■



Feedback from survey



Previous experience in Academic Mentoring:

Diverse range, with people having mentored in three different countries and people with no prior experience.



What is the main purpose of
academic mentoring in Higher
Education?

Facilitate student engagement with their **courses**

Help with **problem-solving** – **Study support** – **Academic guidance**

Substantive **advice** - **Guide** students

First point of contact for students whenever they **need help and guidance**

A more **personalised support** person to **help** with challenges students face in
personal and academic domains

Contribute to **students' well-being**

Academic Mentoring is building scholarly partnerships based on shared purpose and understanding.

Components of the Academic Mentor role

Provide students with **academic guidance and feedback on students' progress and performance** and discuss any academic challenges they may experience.

Provide **pastoral guidance** on non-academic issues and refer students, as necessary, to the appropriate **support services within the School**.

Implement the provisions outlined in **My Adjustments** in liaison with the School's Disability and Mental Health Service.

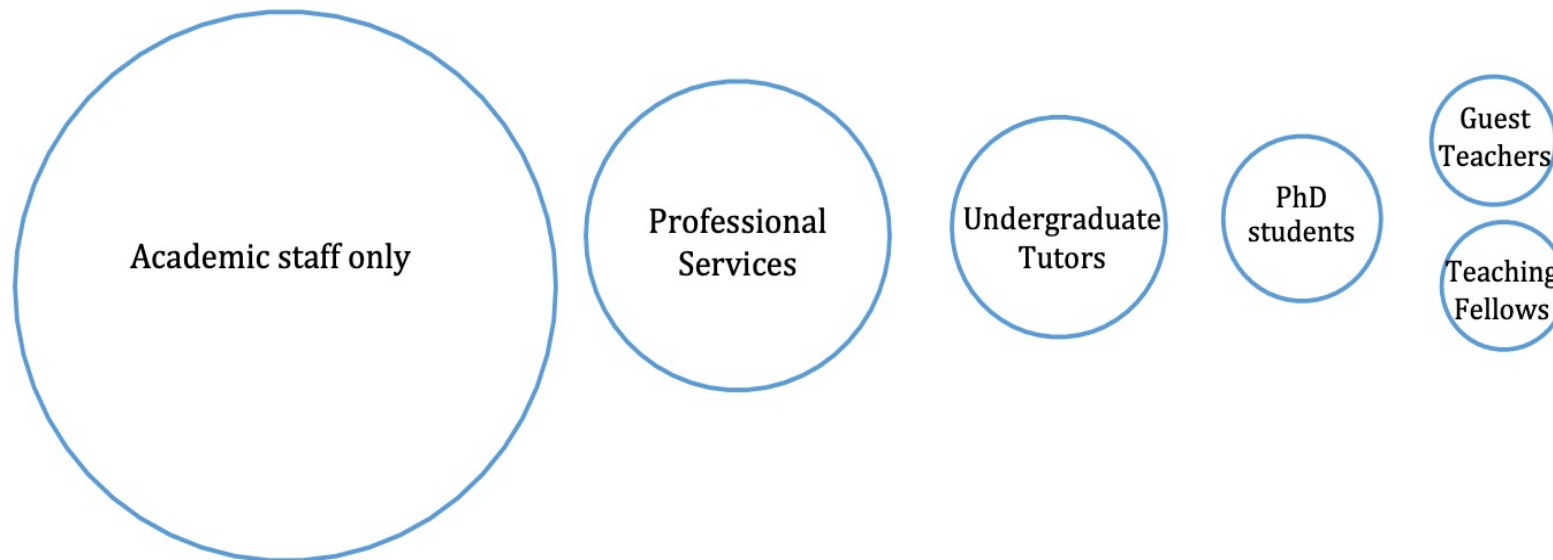
Encourage **meeting twice during each of the Autumn and Winter terms**.

This meetings could be 1-2-1 sessions or small group gatherings (up to 5 students)

Comment on and **provide general assessments of students' progression** on their termly class reports via LSE for You.

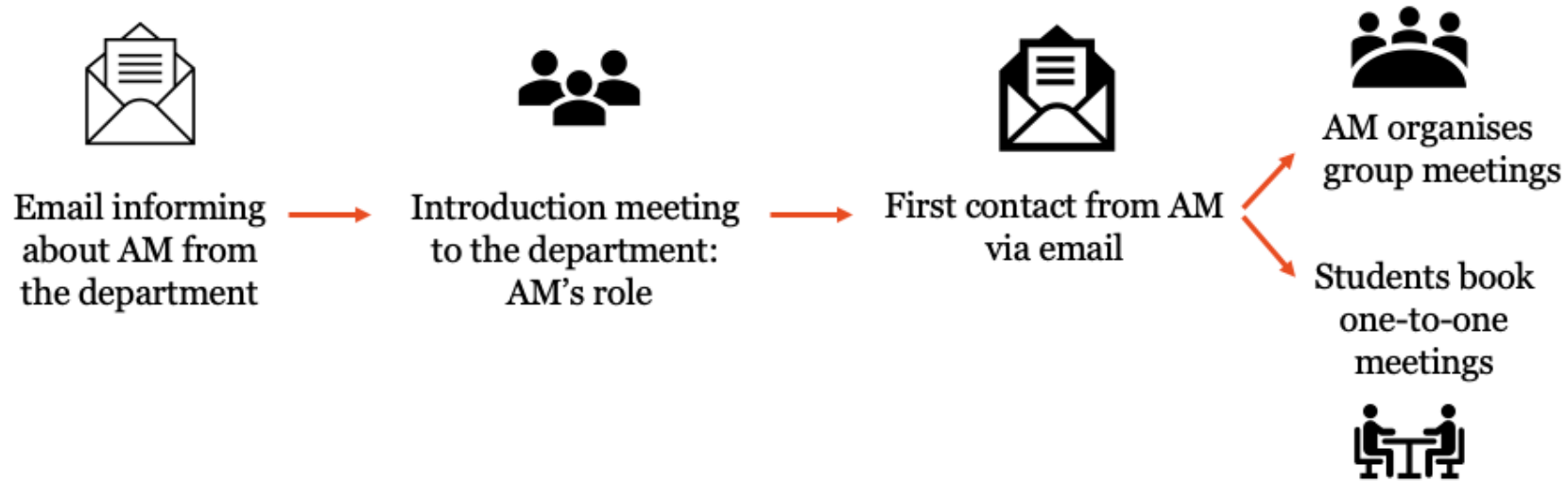
Inform the department tutor and school of any students whose attendance and progress are **not satisfactory**.

Staff involved in providing Academic Mentoring

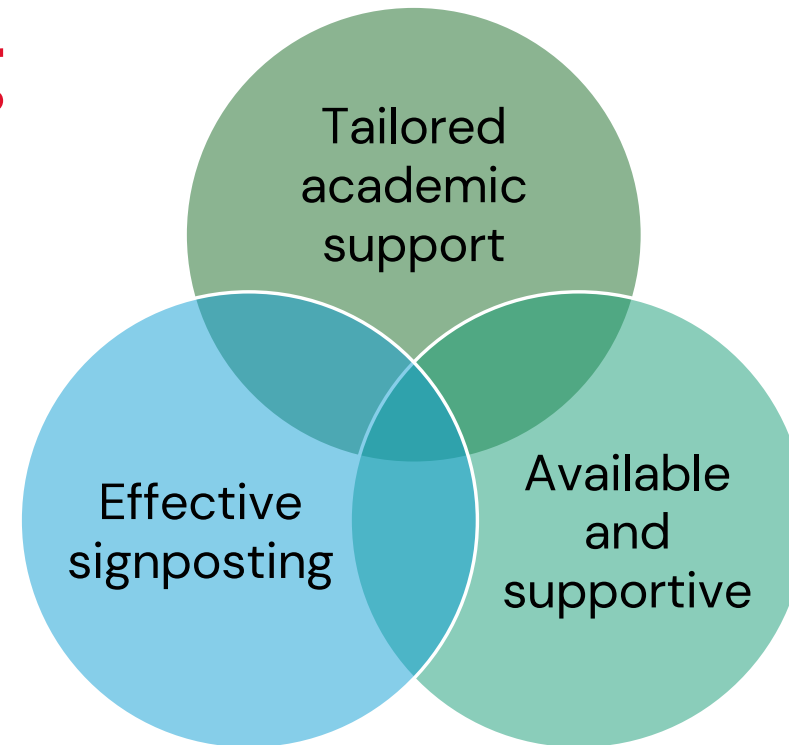


*The size of the circles represents the proportion of staff carrying out academic mentoring.

Process of Academic Mentoring



Academic Mentoring Pillars



What can you offer as an Academic Mentor?



A consistent relationship



A first point of contact



As a cultural navigator you
can facilitate access to
academic and social
capital



Holistic guidance

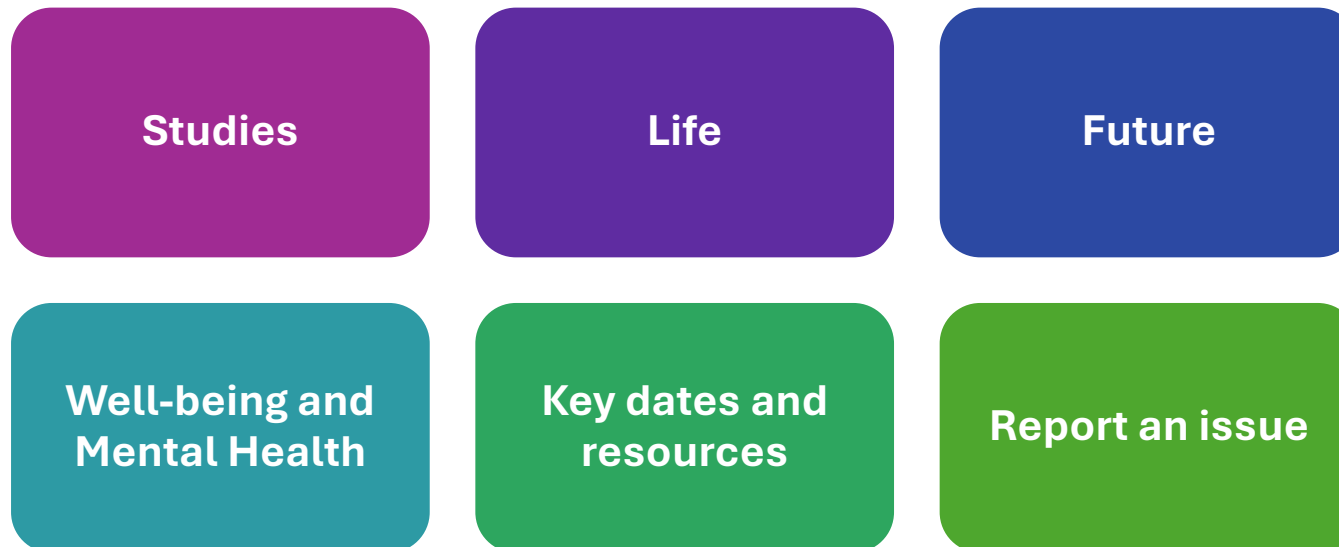


Insight of students'
trajectory



Signposting services and
support

Areas in which Academic Mentors can offer support:



For more detailed information, visit the [Academic Mentoring Portal](#)

Good Practice

- Make an effort to get to know your mentees personally;
- Familiarise yourself with the wider support network available to students;
- Assist students in identifying how they can access help and guidance with their academic skills;
- Have a thorough understanding of your programme and guide students accordingly.

Challenges

- Students may not always recognise the value of attending mentoring meetings; these challenges can persist if previous experiences have been discouraging. By showing genuine interest in them, you are more likely to see your mentees more frequently.
- Students might also feel intimidated by their mentors. They will often try to present their best selves, which can make it challenging to build a relationship based on trust. One way to alleviate this feeling is to share aspects of yourself that could help students feel closer to you.

What do students say about Academic Mentoring?

I think it's just about care, like whether they care or not. Luckily, my academic mentor does seem to care. But I've heard from my other friends that theirs don't seem to care as much. And when that happens you know you feel like you need a reason to go to them and you don't always have that. (Economics student)

I've been visiting my mentor throughout the years, and I really enjoyed just having those conversations that are nice and friendly, so it's a person that I can go to and talk about anything, not only issues, but like good things that are happening, what I enjoy, not enjoy about the course, and I just feel they're valuing the feedback as well. (Management student)

Yeah she knows about me. (laughs) But other than that, I can also talk about stuff I want to (...) I just email her, and she almost instantly replies back, so I think that's pretty nice of her to do. (Economics student)



Any questions?

The background features several faint, grey icons: a magnifying glass over a document on the left, a graduation cap in the center, a document with a pencil on the right, and a puzzle piece with question marks at the bottom right. Lines connect these icons to the central text.

LSE Academic Code

LSE Academic Code

- All students will have an Academic Mentor to advise on academic matters. Academic Mentors should have the necessary experience and guidance to undertake the role. Ideally, students will keep the same mentor throughout their time at LSE.
- Students will be invited to meet with their Academic Mentor at least twice during each of the Autumn and Winter terms. These meetings may take the form of 1-2-1 sessions or small group gatherings, so that mentees can meet one another and discuss issues of mutual interest.

LSE Academic Code continued

- In addition to academic guidance provided by the Academic Mentor, students will have access to personal advice, for example with respect to mental health and wellbeing. Students will be clearly informed about who to go to for what kinds of advice and this will be available through various mechanisms, such as the Student Wellbeing Service, Student Services, and Departments.
- Staff teaching on LSE programmes will be available to students through a minimum of **35 office hours** (for full-time teaching staff) during term time. Normally, the expectation is to meet face-to-face, but contact may take other forms that are mutually agreed between the teacher and students.

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Advice and Support

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Stay aware of your students throughout their time with us

- **Meet students early – individually/as a group**
 - Get to know your mentees
 - Outline your role and importance of Student LfY
 - Encourage early disclosure of disability/concerns
- **Hold regular office hours (see guide on setting up office hours via the Student Hub)**
 - Be available and accessible
 - Hold your office hours on the half hour
 - Offer constructive advice/guidance
- **Stay in regular contact with students**
 - Face-to-face or via email
 - No. of meetings set out in Departmental Handbooks
- **Provide timely feedback on your mentees' progress in line with departmental expectations**

Providing monitoring and support via Staff LfY (Dept view and Staff view)

- **Reviewing mentees' LfY reports**
 - Check if class reports up to date: attendance; work submitted; participation
 - Actively use feedback through LfY (e.g. alerting you to student absence. Watch out for strategic absence)
 - Following prompts from Departmental Tutor/Prog Directors/Dept Admin, contact students
- **Complete end-of-term tutor/supervision reports**
 - *Accurately, fully and on time*
- **Discuss and comment on reports**
 - **UG and PGT:** termly via LfY
- **Reports used:**
 - in decisions to bar from examinations (mainly UG)
 - by the Repeat Teaching Panel (UG)
 - reference writing
 - *crucial to audit trail*

Advising and Supporting Students

- Monitor general student wellbeing
- Support students in distress or difficulty
- Advise and support where you can, but signpost effectively to other support services
- Course choice and changes (start of academic year)
 - Programme regulations: LSE [Calendar](#)
 - UG: suspension of regulations
 - BSc/BA/LLB – departmental tutor
 - PG – check coherence. If concerns, student must consult with programme director
 - Programme change – refer to Departmental Tutor/Programme Director!
 - If in doubt - seek advice from Student Services Centre (SSC)

Extension and Deferral requests

During the academic year

- **Coursework Extensions**
 - Decided at departmental level
 - Evidence required, but threshold may differ depending on duration
 - More information [here](#)
- **Deferral**
 - School operates a 'fit to sit' policy for all assessments
 - Decided centrally by the Student Regulations Team (SSC)
 - Evidence is required – see the [Standards of Evidence](#)
 - Online form for students to complete
 - More information [here](#)

Students' issues: summary

- **Variety of concerns**
 - Usually academic work concerns, but can also raise other issues – homesickness, money, health, family, accommodation, relationships stress life.....
- **Signpost and refer onwards**
 - Remember your boundaries and your own professional competence
- **Do alert your DT/relevant Programme Director (DSSA, UG Tutor, etc.)**
- **If you're concerned...**
 - Check the [Cause for Concern](#) pages for guidance. Where appropriate, make referral to appropriate support service/agency
- **Keep an *accurate/full* note for audit trail**

Note on confidentiality and disclosure

- Students have a right to confidentiality under UK GDPR
- Convey concerns about named student without their consent only on a “need to know” basis
- Confidentiality can/must be broken in some cases
- Some specialist staff have strong requirements re confidentiality – may not always provide feedback to you
- Under Equality Act 2010, institution must promote equality of opportunity
 - If a student discloses a disability to you, **encourage to contact Disability and Mental Health Service**
 - If a student requests information not be passed on, please confirm in writing with the student that they do not give consent for information to be passed on

Support for you

- Other academic mentors
- PSS in your department, DSSAs, UG/PG tutors etc.
- Student Services (SSC and SWS)
- LSE LIFE
- EDEN
- [‘find support’](#) webpages which are designed for students, but a great general resource

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Scenarios

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Scenario One

During a meeting with David, a second-year mentee, you discover that they are beginning to feel overwhelmed by their degree programme's workload. After talking for a while, you find out that completing the weekly problem sets take them a significant amount of time (over three hours) and they do not feel that they have accomplished much. They express that they feel as though the course convenors do not appreciate the workload from other courses, especially those with summative deadlines during the term. They have also told you that they are feeling the pressure to start applying for internships and placements as this is important for their future and one of the key attractions of studying at LSE. Given the intense workload and competing time pressures, they tell you that they feel as though they might have chosen the wrong degree and so are considering changing their programme or even their department and/or university. How would you guide David?

Scenario Two

Ashlee has come to you to express that they feel as though their difficulties are being marginalised by teachers and lecturers in their courses. They give you examples such as lectures, classes and printed materials including wording such as ‘obvious’ and ‘clear’ when they do not appear that way to them, despite several readings. Their homework is often returned with lots of annotations, but none of these seem to help Ashlee identify where their problems in understanding lie. When the work receives good grades and feedback, they still feel confused as to why this work is better than others, as they have merely followed what they have seen in lectures and classes. Ashlee tells you that they have tried to speak with their class teachers directly but they do not feel that they get any meaningful responses and that often the teachers seem to not acknowledge their concerns. How would you support Ashlee?

Scenario Three

At your first meeting at the beginning of the Autumn term, Caitlin, one of your third-year mentees indicates that they are frustrated with their current academic performance. Her teachers speak highly of her, and she is chair of two student societies. She wants some advice from you about internships. She is very hard-working and wants the coveted United Nations internship. She wants to know how you can support her. One of her friends, in another university, got her dream job thanks to the fantastic reference her mentor gave her. She wants to know what corporate experience you have, in which sector, have you written references for other students.

Key sources of information

- [Academic Mentoring Portal](#) for staff and students – useful source of information on all aspects of the role.
- [Cause for Concern](#): Guidance to working with students in difficulty
- [Calendar](#) contains dates, committees, programme regulations, course information etc.
- **If in doubt, do ask! N.B.** Huge expertise across the School.

Support within and beyond the Department

- Departmental tutors, programme directors, programme manager
- Departmental Senior Student Advisers (where applicable): ssc.dssa@lse.ac.uk
- Deputy Head of Student Services (Advice & Policy): p.evanson@lse.ac.uk
- Student Services Centre (SSC): ssc.servicedesk@lse.ac.uk
- Student Wellbeing Service: disability-wellbeing@lse.ac.uk
- Faith Centre: faithcentre@lse.ac.uk
- SU Advisory Team: su.advice@lse.ac.uk
- LSE LIFE: lselife@lse.ac.uk
- LSE Eden Centre: eden@lse.ac.uk
- Language Centre: j.heyworth@lse.ac.uk
- Library: library.enquiries@lse.ac.uk
- Careers: careers@lse.ac.uk
- Financial Support Office: financial-support@lse.ac.uk
- LSE Peer Support Scheme: sws.peer.support@lse.ac.uk
- Medical Centre (Emergency surgeries): enquiries@lsetreatmentclinic.co.uk
- Wardens in the Residences: see <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/accommodation/contacts-in-halls-of-residence>

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Any questions?

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Continue the conversation with upcoming sessions for academic mentors

Developmental workshop on Academic Mentoring
schedule for the 25th September 2024

To join the Community of Practice on Academic
Mentoring please email d.c.perez-aguilar@lse.ac.uk

Use this QR
code to access
our guides for
Academic Mentors

