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Activate Mentor Handbook 2024/25

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Welcome to the Activate Mentoring Programme!

Welcome to the Activate Mentoring Programme. We are delighted you are joining us.

Activate is a mentoring programme dedicated to supporting under-represented groups at Imperial. It seeks to improve experiences, increase retention, develop a peer community, support career development and create a deeper sense of belonging.

Activate aims to match mentees with mentors who have insight and understanding of the educational experience of under-represented groups of students, the challenges they face within education and navigating Imperial life.

During its pilot year (2022-23) Activate supported recipients of Imperial's Presidential Scholarships for Black heritage students and PhD students of Black heritage. The feedback we received from both Activate Mentors and Mentees demonstrated the value that the programme brings and in 2023-24, we were able to extend Activate to Minority Ethnic PhD students.

Now in 2024-25, we are pleased to extend Activate to recipients of Imperial's Master's Scholarships supporting disabled students and to disabled PhD students.

Finally, we welcome mentor and mentee feedback to ensure we develop and strengthen the programme for future cohorts. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the programme team if you have thoughts you would like to share.
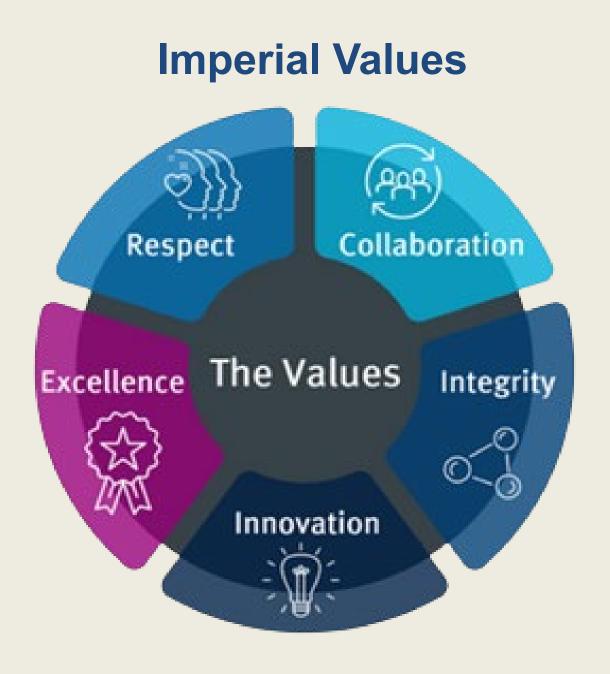
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Expectations for Activate Mentoring Partnerships

Activate mentors and mentees are encouraged to meet for an initial "Aligning Expectations" meeting, prior to starting their formal partnership.

The Aligning Expectations meeting is designed to build rapport, for the mentee to share their aspirations for the mentoring partnership and to establish whether the partnership is a good match. Following this meeting, if either the mentor or mentee have a concern about their match, they should contact the Activate Mentoring Programme Coordinator at: activate.mentoring@imperial.ac.uk

This expectations document is designed to be discussed at the first formal mentoring meeting between Activate mentors and their mentees. Each topic should be considered and tailored to meet the needs of both Parties, setting clear expectations from the start. The list is not exhaustive and can be adjusted accordingly.

At the heart of mentoring is the relationship between the mentee and the mentor. Even though Activate mentoring partnerships will typically last 6 months, the partnership will be dynamic and may change over time. Therefore, mentees and mentors are encouraged to re-visit this document at appropriate stages of their partnership.

Imperial Values

Imperial has developed a set of values and behaviors which it expects from its community. Activate mentees and mentors are expected to adhere to these values in all aspects of their partnership and in their contribution towards Activate mentoring programme events and activities.

It is expected that Activate mentors and mentees will respect individuals' autonomy, fundamental rights and any cultural and role differences, as well as personal values, attitudes and opinions.

- How will you embed these values in your partnership?
- How will you be supportive and non-judgmental of your partner's views, lifestyle and aspirations?

Mentoring Meeting Practicalities

It is expected that Activate mentors and mentees will meet up to 6 times over a period of about 6 months. Mentoring meetings will typically last 1 hour. Activate mentors and mentees should commit to arriving on time, at the agreed date and venue (if applicable) and be present and prepared for each meeting.

- How often will you meet and where?
- Will your meetings take place remotely, in-person or a mixture?
- If either of you needs to re-schedule a meeting, or are late for a meeting, how will you inform each other?
- What level of contact outside of the scheduled mentoring meetings can you expect from each other?

Trust and Confidentiality

It is expected that Activate mentors and mentees will work together to build trust to facilitate open and honest dialogue.

All Activate mentoring conversations and meetings should remain confidential unless both Parties agree that it would be helpful to disclose relevant details to another member of Imperial staff who is better placed to advise.

Further, Activate mentors are not permitted to maintain confidentiality if there is a significant and immediate risk to the mentee's health and safety or that of others.

- What ground-rules will you set for your partnership?
- How will you facilitate open and honest dialogue?
- How will you let each other know when you are not comfortable with a conversation?

Outcomes and Objectives for the Mentoring Partnership

At the Aligning Expectations meeting, the mentee is asked to share their aspirations for the mentoring partnership. Please re-visit these at your first meeting and consider how these might be achieved.

- How often will you check whether the partnership is fulfilling the needs and objectives of the mentee?

Commitment to Action

Activate mentees are responsible for their own learning and for taking forward any actions agreed during mentoring meetings. A mentor may also agree to an action or to pursue a line of enquiry between meetings which mentees are free to accept, counter-offer or decline.

- How will you follow-up on any actions agreed at your prior meeting?

Wellbeing, Support and Signposting

The wellbeing of the College's students and staff is paramount. Where a mentor has concerns about the wellbeing of their mentee, they should sign-post the mentee to a member of the Activate Programme Team for advice (activate.mentoring@imperial.ac.uk) and the College's Student Support Zone: Student Support Zone | Imperial students | Imperial College London. Depending on the nature of the concern, it may also be necessary for the mentor to seek advice from the College's Student Support Services, noting the confidentiality statement above.

Mentors and mentee are reminded about the College's Report and Support Tool which can be used by staff, students, contractors and visitors to Imperial. The tool can be used if you have witnessed an incident, or experienced bullying or harassment directly. You can disclose something anonymously or you can provide your details to be put in contact with someone: Report and Support | Administration and support services | Imperial College London

Postgraduate students and staff of the College also have access to Imperial's ace quality network, Imperial As One Network: Imperial As One | Administration and support services | Imperial College London and the @ableImperial Network which supports disabled staff and postgraduate students: Able@Imperial | Administration and support services | Imperial College London.

The Disability Advisory Service also works with Diversity & Ability to run on-line study skills workshops which you may wish to signpost to your mentee: Live Webinars | Administration and support services | Imperial College London

Further signposting to support is also provided throughout the programme.

When Changes are Needed to your Partnership

Throughout the partnership, mentees and mentors are strongly encouraged to have regular informal conversations about whether the mentoring partnership is meeting the needs and expectations of the mentee, or if a change in mentor would be in the best interest of the mentee.

How will you approach this conversation?
- How will you address issues raised, or recognise and acknowledge when a change in mentor is needed?

Request to Change Mentee

Where an informal conversation does not resolve the issue and it is clear that a change in mentee would be in the best interests, either Party can request a change by contacting the Activate Mentoring Programme Coordinator.

Concerns and Complaints

Mentors and mentees can raise confidential concerns about their partnership through the Activate Mentoring Programme Coordinator (activate.mentoring@imperial.ac.uk).

Activate mentors and mentees wishing to make a formal complaint about the Activate Mentoring Programme or an individual, should review the Activate Mentoring Programme Complaints Procedure at the end of this handbook.

Key Dates for Mentors Supporting Minority Ethnic Mentees

Date	Time	Topic	Mode
July 2024 – August 2024	60 minutes (with optional 6 hour full course)	Union Black	Optional Self-paced online
	60 minutes	Unconscious Bias	Mandatory self-paced online
	90 minutes	Safeguarding	Mandatory self-paced online
Mid-August – Early September 2024	60 minutes	An Introduction to Mentoring for Mentors.	Mandatory Self-paced online
11 September 2024 or 25 September 2024	90 minutes	Option 1: Safe Conversations* 11 September 2024 13.00 - 14.30	Mandatory in-person online
	90 minutes	Option 2: Safe Conversations* 25 September 2024 13.00 - 14.30	Mandatory in-person online
10 March 2025	14.00 - 15.00	Mentor Check-in Activity Option 1*	Optional Live and interactive via Teams
12 March 2025	13.00 – 14.00	Mentor Check-in Activity Option 2*	Optional Live and interactive via Teams
15 May 2025	13.00 – 14.00	Mentee and Mentor Cohort Activity	Optional, in-person cohort activity.
02 July 2025	17.00 – 18.30	End of Programme Celebration Reception	Optional In-person, South Kensington Campus

* You will only need to attend one of these sessions.

Course Information for Mentors supporting Minority Ethnic Mentees

Activate Mentoring is a flagship programme and all Mentors are required to complete the mandatory training as outlined below.   If you have already completed the mandatory training, you are not required to complete it again, however, it is strongly recommended that you re-visit the training, at least once every two years.

Mandatory training: Introduction to Mentoring for Mentors
This course sets the scene for the Activate mentoring programme, outlining the structure of mentoring sessions and the skills required to be an effective mentor. The course also takes you through the Aligning Expectations document.   It is mandatory for all Activate Mentors.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Outline the role of a mentor and mentee
2. Define the key stages of mentoring
3. Identify skills and practice for effective mentoring relationships
4. Explore resources for signposting
5. Prepare to share and clarify expectations with your mentee

You will be provided with further details about how to access the training in due course.

When you complete the course, the Activate Programme team will automatically receive an email confirming your course completion.

Mandatory training: Safe Conversations

This session is designed to support mentors to be confident when exploring sensitive topics in relation to race. The workshop also covers power dynamics which exist within mentoring partnerships. Three areas are covered: Assumptions/bias, Power and Race. It is highly recommended that you complete Safeguarding, Unconscious Bias and Union Black prior to taking this course.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Discuss and manage potential biases
2. Identify how power dynamics and views on race may influence open discussion.

Your attendance at this training workshop will be recorded and passed to the Activate Programme Team.

Course Information for Mentors supporting Minority Ethnic Mentees

Mandatory training: Unconscious Bias

This course provides a non-judgemental approach aimed at understanding how unconscious bias operates in the workplace. It is the starting point in understanding how biases can impact individuals and the organisation. The course will offer you the opportunity to increase self-awareness and learn new information, with the aim of identifying actions to foster equal opportunity and begin to address individual and organisational biases with confidence. This course is part of Imperial Essentials training so if you are a member of staff and you have already completed this course, you do not need to complete it again.

Mandatory training: Safeguarding

Imperial's safeguarding training has been developed to provide an overview of the statutory frameworks and to signpost how members of Imperial can identify and escalate concerns. This course is part of Imperial Essentials training so if you are a member of staff and you have already completed this course, you do not need to complete it again.

Further details on accessing these courses will be provided in due course.

You will be asked to provide proof of course completion by sending a screenshot to the Activate Programme Team.

Optional training: Union Black

The course explores Black cultures in Britain and provides learners with an understanding of Black British history, dispelling myths to inform, challenge and contribute towards the anti-racism agenda. Hosted on FutureLearn, the short course is delivered through a mixture of online learning content, discussion forums, reading materials and interactive activities which can be completed in your own time and at your own pace.

You will need an Imperial email address to be able to access this course. If you are an Imperial Alumnus and you do not already have one, you can request one by contacting the Alumni Relations Team: alumni@imperial.ac.uk

You will be provided with further information on how to access this training in due course.

There are a range of resources available to you via Imperial's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre (EDIC), many of which will support you to gain a good understanding of the challenges faced by students of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic heritage. If there is an EDIC course you would like to take, but you cannot access it, please do get in touch with the Activate Programme Team for support.

Course Information for Mentors supporting Minority Ethnic Mentees

Student Voice Report

With Insight Education is a charity that aims to create an educational and professional landscape where the representation of students of black heritage is truly reflective of the potential available. They recently ran two focus groups with students spanning undergraduates through to PhD students across various universities. Their aim was to better understand the experience of being a black-heritage student at university and gain an insight into the practical strategies that they would like to see implemented to address any challenges raised. The students raised 10 key recommendations that they would like to see universities take forward. These are highlighted in their report which is available here on the Activate website. You can read this as a part of your preparation to be a mentor.

Key Dates for Mentors Supporting Disabled Mentees

Date	Time	Topic	Mode
July 2024 – August 2024	60 minutes	Unconscious Bias	Mandatory self-paced online
	90 minutes	Safeguarding	Mandatory self-paced online
Mid-August – Early September 2024	60 minutes	An Introduction to Mentoring for Mentors.	Mandatory Self-paced online
September 2024	90 minutes	Mentoring Disabled Students	Mandatory self-paced online
10 March 2025	14.00 – 15.00	Mentor Check-in Activity Option 1*	Optional Live and interactive via Teams
12 March 2025	13.00 – 14.00	Mentor Check-in Activity Option 2*	Optional Live and interactive via Teams
15 May 2025	13.00 – 14.00	Mentee and Mentor Cohort Activity	Optional, in-person cohort activity.
02 July 2025	17.00 – 18.30	End of Programme Celebration Reception	Optional In-person, South Kensington Campus

* You will only need to attend one of these sessions.

Course Information for Mentors supporting Disabled Mentees

Activate Mentoring is a flagship programme and all Mentors are required to complete the mandatory training as outlined below.   If you have already completed the mandatory training, you are not required to complete it again, however, it is strongly recommended that you re-visit the training, at least once every two years.

Mandatory training: Introduction to Mentoring for Mentors
This course sets the scene for the Activate mentoring programme, outlining the structure of mentoring sessions and the skills required to be an effective mentor. The course also takes you through the Aligning Expectations document.   It is mandatory for all Activate Mentors.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Outline the role of a mentor and mentee
2. Define the key stages of mentoring
3. Identify skills and practice for effective mentoring relationships
4. Explore resources for signposting
5. Prepare to share and clarify expectations with your mentee

You will be provided with further information on how to access this training in due course.

When you complete the course, the Activate Programme team will automatically receive an email confirming your course completion.

Mandatory training: Mentoring Students with Disabilities
This course builds on and will refer to content from the mandatory training "Introduction to Mentoring for Mentors", "Unconscious Bias" and "Safeguarding". It is designed to prepare you to support mentees with disabilities and assist you to:

1. Identify the key ideas of the social model of disability.
2. Recognise some of the environmental, institutional and attitudinal challenges and barriers which affect students with disabilities (your mentees).
3. Discuss and manage potential biases.
4. Identify how power dynamics may influence discussions within the context of mentoring relationships.
5. Open conversations with your mentee about disability.
6. Signpost fellow mentors and mentees to relevant resources and support.

You will be provided with further information on how to access this training in due course.

When you complete the course, the Activate Programme team will automatically receive an email confirming your course completion.

Course Information for Mentors supporting Disabled Mentees

Mandatory training: Unconscious Bias
This course provides a non-judgemental approach aimed at understanding how unconscious bias operates in the workplace. It is the starting point in understanding how biases can impact individuals and the organisation. The course will offer you the opportunity to increase self-awareness and learn new information, with the aim of identifying actions to foster equal opportunity and begin to address individual and organisational biases with confidence. This course is part of Imperial Essentials training so if you are a member of staff and you have already completed this course, you do not need to complete it again.

Mandatory training: Safeguarding
Imperial's safeguarding training has been developed to provide an overview of the statutory frameworks and to signpost how members of Imperial can identify and escalate concerns. This course is part of Imperial Essentials training so if you are a member of staff and you have already completed this course, you do not need to complete it again.

You will be sent information on how to access this training in due course.

You will be asked to provide proof of course completion by sending a screenshot to the Activate Programme Team.

Optional training: Supporting disabled students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)

As a mentor supporting disabled students with SpLDs, you may also wish to complete the online course, "Understanding Specific Learning Difficulties/Differences (SpLDs) – Inclusive Strategies for Learning.   The learning outcomes for the course are:

1. Appreciate the learning experiences and challenges for learners with Specific Learning Difficulties/Differences (SpLDs)
2. Identify principles for making learning resources accessible and inclusive for students with SpLDs
3. Utilise technology to enhance learning for all
4. Critically evaluate existing learning resources and identify improvements
5. Develop inclusive learning resources yourself or in conjunction with colleagues

You will be sent information on how to access this training in due course.

Your feedback

The Activate Mentoring Programme aims to meet the needs of the mentors and mentees in the most effective way possible. To do this, we would appreciate and value your feedback to help the future development of the programme.

You will be invited to provide formal feedback at various stages of the programme, after your Introduction to Mentoring training (before the start of your mentoring partnership), during the mentoring programme and towards the end of the programme. This will help us assess the impact of the training programme and further enhance our offer for the next iteration.

You are more than welcome to share your insights and ideas at any point during the programme.

My mentor was knowledgeable, easygoing and friendly which facilitated interaction. Overall, it was a great experience.

The Programme came as an opportunity to connect with a person to provide general guidance and support with "navigating all things Imperial" as well as a source of encouragement.

My mentor's insights and advice have been instrumental in my academic and personal development. With my mentor's help, I found applying to jobs a lot less daunting. I also appreciate they took time to introduce to new people.

The Activate Mentoring program has been invaluable in enhancing my student experience and engagement with the College. It provided me with guidance, support, and a sense of belonging within the Imperial community.

It's been amazing been put in contact with someone directly in the field I am looking to enter! It's been really eye opening and has helped steer me towards learning more industry-specific skills.

Activate Mentoring Programme - Complaints Procedure

1. Scope of Procedure

1.1   Throughout the mentoring partnership, mentors and mentees are encouraged to have regular conversations about whether the partnership is working or whether change is needed. Mentors and mentees who have not been able to informally resolve challenges they are experiencing should first raise concern with the Activate Mentoring Programme Coordinator. Where challenges cannot be resolved, this complaints procedure can be used.   There could be occasions where an Activate mentee or mentor wishes to express concern or dissatisfaction with aspects of the Activate mentoring   programme.

1.2   This procedure sets out the process by which Activate mentees and Activate mentors can raise concern or complaints about:

   a) the training and support provided
   b) the wider programme of development activities available through the Activate mentoring programme
   c) their mentoring partnership (except where this includes concern about matters listed under 1.3 below)
   d) other aspects of the programme, including its administration.

1.3   This procedure **cannot be used** where an Activate mentee or mentor wishes to raise concern or a complaint which relates to safeguarding, bullying, sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, racial   discrimination and harassment, or other issues concerning the Equality Act 2010.

1.4   Where this is the case, Activate mentees and mentors should seek advice   from the Head of Strategy and Operations (Graduate School) as to which   College procedures they should use to raise a formal concern. Such conversations will be handled in confidence, unless there is a significant and immediate risk to the health and safety of a mentee, mentor or of others. Where this is the case, confidentiality will be broken.

   Depending on the situation College procedures which could be used include:

   1. The College's Student Complaints Procedure (Ordinance E3)
   2. The College's Student Disciplinary Procedures (Ordinance E2)
   3. The College's staff Ordinances

   Where situations involve alumni, advice will be sought from the Director of Advancement.

2. Principles of the Activate Mentoring Programme Complaints Procedure

2.1   The College's position is that no student or member of staff should be discriminated against or in any way penalised for raising a complaint and the same principle applies to this procedure.

2.2   Where an Activate mentee or mentor believes that they should receive reasonable adjustments to this procedure on the grounds of disability, this should be clearly stated in their submission, including the reasons for requesting the adjustment and suggestions of what this may mean in practice i.e. extended deadlines.

2.3   Every effort will be made to ensure complaints and concerns raised through this procedure are handled quickly and efficiently with a view to seeking a positive outcome for all concerned.

2.4   All complaints will be handled in confidence unless there is a significant and immediate risk to the health and safety of the mentee, mentor or of others. Where this is the case, the complainant will be informed that confidentiality will be broken.

3. The Process

3.1   The Activate Mentoring Programme Complaints Procedure is a "stage one: local resolution" process.

3.2   Activate mentees or mentors wishing to make a complaint should raise their concern with the Head of Strategy and Operations (Graduate School), Laura Lane, l.lane@imperial.ac.uk. It is recommended that mentees and mentors raise their concern within 15 days of becoming aware of the issue.

3.3   The Head of Strategy and Operations (Graduate School) will consider the complaint and aim to provide a written response (via email) within 10 working days. Where appropriate, the response will also be copied to student.complaints@imperial.ac.uk to ensure that a record of the response is kept.

3.4   The response will report:
    a) how the issue has been considered or to advise the mentee/mentor as to how it will be resolved
    b) where relevant, inform the mentee/mentor of the next step(s) and timeframes for doing so
    c) provide the mentee/mentor with information on how to escalate their complaint within the College should they be dissatisfied with the outcome.

3.5   As part of the consideration of the complaint, it may be necessary for the Head of Strategy & Operations (Graduate School) to meet with the mentee/mentor to understand more fully the concern and resolution sought.   It may also be necessary for the Head of Strategy & Operations (Graduate School) to meet with other parties referred to in the complaint.

3.6   In order to address the complaint, the Head of Strategy & Operations (Graduate School) may choose one or more of the following options, or something different, depending on the nature of the complaint:

1. Make a change to the mentoring partnership, supporting both parties through this process
2. Offer mediation between the mentee/mentor
3. Make changes to the way in which the Activate mentoring programme is administered
4. At the next appropriate time, make changes to the training and   development programme and activities available to mentees/mentors
5. At the next appropriate time, make changes to the criteria for recruiting mentors

4. Raising a complaint with the College

4.1   Should the mentee/mentor remain unsatisfied with the outcome of the Activate Mentoring Programme Complaints Procedure, they can escalate their concern within the College via one of the College's formal procedures. The Head of Strategy and Operations (Graduate School) will provide information on which procedures to use as part of the written response to the "stage one local resolution process."

5. Support

5.1   Activate mentees wishing to make a complaint are advised to seek support from the Imperial College Union Advice Centre. Activate mentees can also seek support from their Departmental Senior Tutor and/or the Faculty Senior Tutors.

5.2   Activate mentors (who are PhD students) wishing to make a complaint are advised to seek support from the Imperial College Union Advice Centre.   Activate mentees can also seek support from their Departmental Senior Tutor   and/or the Faculty Senior Tutors.

5.3   Activate mentees and mentors are also reminded that the Report and Support tool, allows students to disclose unwelcome behaviours such as bullying, harassment, sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, racial discrimination and more. Reports can be made anonymously through this tool.

**Activate Mentees from 2022-23
Wish you all the very best!**

End of Handbook