

# SHAPING YOUR FUTURE

## A guide to making the most of career mentoring with Villiers Park

Thank you for your interest in Shaping Your Future with Villiers Park. In order for you to make the most of your mentoring experience, we have created this helpful guide to give you an idea of what to expect from mentoring.

### **What is a career mentor?**

Our career mentors are working professionals, who have volunteered to offer you their advice and guidance based on their own experiences of the working world. A career mentor is a great way to find out more about a career area you're interested in and get support as you take your first steps towards it. While offering you access to relevant career information, it's important to note that their support does not constitute professional career guidance.

### **What type of advice can I get from my mentor?**

- What their job entails, and what they find most/least interesting about it
- What qualifications are needed for their profession
- What personal qualities an employer typically looks for
- How to improve your CV and job applications
- Interview tips and techniques
- What steps to take to get into their profession (i.e. internships, graduate positions)
- Where to find more information about the career you're interested in

### **What is not expected of my mentor?**

- To have all the answers for you
- To offer jobs or internships to you
- To make personal recommendations or write applications for jobs/internships on your behalf
- To continue the mentoring relationship indefinitely

### **How does mentoring with Shaping Your Future work?**

Using your chosen areas of interest, we will find an appropriate mentor for you. Once they have confirmed they are happy to help, we will send an email introducing the two of you so that you can begin communicating. How you communicate is entirely up to you, be it via email, phone or even arranging to meet them in their workplace.

## Important things to note when communicating with your mentor:

- Be sure to get in touch with your mentor as soon as possible. This lets us know you are able to communicate with them, and shows you value their offer of help.
- Remember your mentor is volunteering their time, please be sure to express you appreciate their help and be appropriate in your requests (for example don't directly ask for a job or an internship).
- Although mentoring is a two way process, it is up to you to be proactive and drive the relationship onward. Ask follow up questions and keep engaged. If you need ideas for what to ask, try looking at the previous page for areas that your mentor could help you with.
- Mentors are often busy individuals and may not respond quickly. If you have not heard from your mentor in a while, send them a gentle reminder or ask Villiers Park for help.
- Add your mentor's email to your list of contacts, this avoids emails being sent to spam.
- Lastly, you may be nervous about contacting your mentor, but remember they were in your position once too, and are more than happy to speak with you and answer your questions.

## How long does mentoring last for?

Whilst there is no formal length of time for your mentoring, typically it lasts for around two months. Often it is tempting to ask all your questions at the start, however try and tackle one thing at a time, giving you both time to work through your questions.

Take a look at the following weekly plan for an idea of how the mentoring process might work:

### Week 1: Introductions

Find out about your mentors experience, and let them know what you are interested in.

### Week 2: Setting goals

What do you hope to gain from mentoring? Set some goals to work through with your mentor.

### Weeks 3-7: Working on goals

One week you might want to simply find out more about the industry, the next you might want to improve your CV. Having goals keeps you engaged with your mentor, and helps you focus on what you want to achieve.

### Week 8: Finish and review

Look back on what you have gained from mentoring, and see what you have achieved. Ask if your mentor would like to stay in touch, for example by adding each other on LinkedIn.

## Can I request another mentor?

Yes, you can request another mentor either by completing the mentoring feedback survey, or by contacting Villiers Park directly at any time. Having multiple mentors can give you insights into a variety of industry areas, and is certainly something we recommend.

**Good luck!** We hope you enjoy your experience of Shaping Your Future, and find it valuable in planning your career. If you have any other questions, would like to contact another mentor, or just want to let us know how you're getting on, please contact [development@villierspark.org.uk](mailto:development@villierspark.org.uk), or call the development team on 01223 872601.