Mentoring WCCS Bursary Students

Thank you for being the professional contact and mentor for one of our WCCS bursary students. Your interest in their lives will make a real difference to their future as they pursue their degrees and a career in real estate.

They are receiving a life-changing amount of money from their sponsor in order for them to be able to complete a real estate degree. These monies are raised from individual firms, organisations and syndicates of individuals. For them to make the most of their studies however, it is vital that they have good professional mentoring and access to advice and work experience. Thank you for providing this.

This document is a guide to mentoring. It is not prescriptive, but may form a good starting place for you and your student.

What is required?

- **Time**

First and foremost, a willingness to give some time on a regular basis – twice a term - to your student. This will be via Teams, WhatsApp, Email or however you and your mentee prefer.

You need to be empathetic and recognise that the student is unlikely to have come from a background where higher education is the norm. This may mean that initially, they need support in becoming professional. This might require additional reminders to attend meetings, guidance in etiquette in business email, or even just how to manage their time and priorities.

- **Career skills**

All our students will need guidance as to when they should be applying for work experience, internships, placement years and grad roles. They may well need things flagged up for them and some support in the processes required for success.

In general, first year undergraduates need to get used to being at university. They should be encouraged to visit your office in their first or second term and then be encouraged to do a short work experience around Christmas or Easter. If they are ready, they can look for a bigger stint of work experience in the summer holiday – either with you or another industry connection.

In the second year, we encourage more attention to the CV and increased work experience, the culmination being a summer internship where possible. Again, this can be with you or another industry connection. All students will benefit from your expertise about how and when to apply for summer internships.

In the final year, help applying for grad schemes and guidance for interview technique and assessment days is really helpful. This needs to be targeted from the September of their final year as many grad scheme applications close in December. The focus after this is supporting job applications and the final year at university.

Sharing your expertise and experience will be aspirational – even if you don't feel aspirational!

- **Education**

Can you check in with them to ensure they are happy with their modules and on track to pass? This might need some probing to get past the "I'm fine" responses. We find that mentored students are less likely to fail if they trust someone enough to ask for help.

Having an interest in which modules they are studying each term will help you to target any provision or expertise available from you or your colleagues. Some students are independent and need no guidance for university work; others value discussion over dissertation topics, guidance and help with tricky economics or valuation modules and general reassurance over coursework tasks.

This help doesn't have to come from you. If it is in your remit and you are willing to provide a bit of confidence boosting and/or tuition, feel free to do so. But if it is an area outside your expertise, or if you don't have the capacity to do this, then simply flag it to me and I'll find someone within WCCS to provide further academic support.

- **Safeguarding/Wider Counsel**

Our students are all adults and thus if safeguarding intervention is needed, it will be because they qualify as potentially at risk in their university years. Safeguarding can be an issue of abuse – self or inflicted by others, neglect of self, or a mental health issue. We do not expect you to be expert in any of these fields.

In the unlikely event that they disclose a safeguarding concern to you, **please do not ask questions**, but thank them for their honesty and then pass those concerns to me. I will liaise with their university safeguarding officer.

If you have any concerns at all, please simply pass them onto me, and I will follow due process as set out in the WCCS safeguarding policy. You can tell your student you are passing a concern on, but you don't need to ask their permission – they have all signed relevant GDPR forms which include acknowledgement of me as a place where safeguarding will be flagged if necessary.

If they need gentle wisdom and counselling over work or a careers issue, please use your discretion – if you are confident to chat to them, do so, but always know I can take over, draw alongside or flag additional help. If the matter is personal, always refer them to me.

- **Regularity**

Best practice is to check in with your student about twice a term. At the beginning they will need you to lead the agenda – sometimes they don't know what or how to ask for what they need. Let their modules guide what you might offer at any given time.

Have a stepped approach when offering work experience, webinars, additional professional learning or experience. Gauge where your student is at – they may need your reassurance and encouragement – sometimes they might need direction. Again, I can help with all of this.

Generally, I would expect communication to be about half an hour each meeting, but sometimes it could be less. Expect a flurry if they need a bit of extra support in CV writing or dissertations etc

- **A Bit of Background**

Be mindful that our students come from backgrounds where higher education is not the norm. Many of them have never been outside the few miles of where they live. Going to university is a big deal.

Our students attend universities across the UK, from Westminster, to Loughborough, to Cambridge and Newcastle. They are all individuals with different backgrounds and experience – this results in differing needs. Some students are driven, academic and ambitious and will look to you for networking, opportunity and challenge. Others are more tentative and will need reassurance and support to get the most out of the bursary opportunity. Still others will need a bit of a push – showing them that the bursary could represent far more than financial security across the duration of their degree.

- **Me**

I am Bursary Programme Manager for the WCCS. I am self-employed and contracted to the WCCS. My expertise is in students and education, absolutely not in any aspect of the surveying profession. My job is to get to know all the students, provide support of a personal nature and give them encouragement and advice. I also function as a key liaison point between industry sponsors, mentors and the students.

As a mentor, if you have any questions or concerns about the programme or your allocated student, please contact me.

As part of the mentoring process, if you want to copy me in on anything you email between you, that is fine. It provides a level of safeguarding. I won't respond if I am simply cc'd in unless specifically directed to in the body of the email. The students will know of my involvement in the whole process.

- **Mentors and Sponsors**

When a sponsoring company does not wish to/cannot provide mentoring and/or work experience, we find the bursary student further industry exposure by introducing them to another firm for these purposes.

Where this is the case, the mentoring firm will be told who the student's sponsor is. Everything about the bursary process is open and transparent, ensuring that there is no conflict of interest, advice or support.

The aim of our programme is to provide funding and industry support to those who may not have been able to attend university without it. It aims to support students throughout their degree and onto the first rung of their real estate career.

Thank you for playing your part in that.

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Bursary Programme Manager for The Chartered Surveyors Company
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