



Mentoring Scheme at University of Malta

organised by
The Gender Issues Committee (GIC)

Mentoring is a way of reaching out to students at crucial decision-making stages in their lives and helping them to have the confidence to continue in their chosen field of study. The members of the GIC are very sensitive to students' needs since, in liaison with the KSU, it is their brief to identify sources of discontent at the University of Malta and to recommend ways of dealing with problems - both real and potential.

When the GIC approached the Rector with this scheme the members were really pleased to find him very receptive to the idea.

This is unlike the traditional work experience schemes in which a student is often under-employed and forms a negative attitude to work. Evaluation is to be planned from the start and will enhance the learning process throughout the scheme. In this way, the

University can further this avant-garde initiative, the need for which is beginning to be understood by leading universities world wide.

Depending on the individual needs and stage of studies of the mentees, the mentors provide impartial advice on careers and a broad range of other issues. The help provided can be aimed at various levels, namely:

- * to make efficient, effective and pleasant use of the life on campus;
- * to direct students towards areas of study for which they have the most aptitude;
- * to give students a genuine insight into the world of work when possible;
- * through contacts enjoyed by the mentors, placements can be negotiated with companies so that the student mentees can develop skills related to the profession of their dream.

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How the Scheme Works

Aims

To provide students with role models thus empowering them

- i) to have a smooth induction at the beginning of their course
- ii) to consolidate their vision during their course
- iii) to be directed towards a rewarding career
- iv) to buffer unexpected setbacks that may force the students to leave their chosen field of study.

A list of mentors can be found on the University website.

Method of application

A student can:

- i) contact a particular mentor who then decides whether s/he is in a position to help.
- ii) ask to be matched by the MMSC. When a potential match is found, the mentee is informed first and is given the power of veto. If the mentee wishes to go ahead, full contact details are passed to the MMSC and the mentor is also informed. The pair are then free to communicate as they see fit (guidelines are provided). If problems are encountered (e.g. the matching turns out not to be successful), the MMSC or the GIC can be contacted.

The method of communication between mentor and mentee

a) on a personal level

b) web-based.

In cases where help from other professions is required, existing university structures such as the counselling unit and the chaplaincy can be made use of. Any issues arising may eventually be referred to the GIC for recommendations and assistance.