

THE ACADEMY OF URBANISM

young urbanists

Mentoring Scheme Guidance

The mentoring scheme is a great programme that brings together Academicians and eager Young Urbanist members to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships. This leaflet tells you a little bit about how you can get the most out of it.

Young Urbanists can expect to gain senior insight into their industry or research field, receive advice, improve professional skills, and have a clearer understanding of how to achieve the aims they have set for themselves and develop their chosen career path.

As Mentors, Academicians will support the Young Urbanist in the above, and may use the experience to evaluate ideas of their own, work in a different way, gain insights into the emerging ideas in their field, and reflect on their career.

"It has been very valuable... John is always insightful and able to relate to my perspective as a curious interdisciplinary."



The benefit of having a mentor who is a senior member of the AoU (as opposed to a straightforward planner or similar) is that they are able to think beyond professional boundaries and advise accordingly."

George, mentee

"I found the Young Urbanists mentorship programme a great opportunity to both learn from young professionals at the start of their careers about new ideas of cities and urban life while having the chance to convey some of my experience in stimulating conversations and new thinking."



George Arvanitis
AoU, Mentor /
Urban Designer
& Senior
Associate, Arup

I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to contribute to their professional development and welcome further opportunities through the Academy of Urbanism."

The mentoring scheme is designed to give Young Urbanists the chance to learn from more experienced Academicians, who want to share some of their experience. You apply, saying a bit about yourself, then if there is a suitable match, you are introduced to your Mentor.

The key thing to remember about the scheme is that there is no set programme. You're totally free to use this opportunity however you wish. Urbanism is inherently multidisciplinary, and therefore different approaches to sharing ideas are to be expected. However, this leaflet is intended as a short guide to a possible structure for the meetings with your mentor.

First contact

You'll hear a little bit about your mentor in an email, if you are successfully matched. **If you're not familiar with their work or their organisation, it would be good idea to do a bit of quick research to give yourself a better idea of what they do.** Get in touch and say hello, but at this stage you don't need to spend too long introducing yourself or your experience – they will have seen your application and they'll have a good idea of the basics about you and why you want to get involved. You should arrange a meeting, as it's face-to-face where you'll really get the most out of the mentorship.

First meeting

This is your chance to get to know each other a little bit. The advantage of the Mentoring Scheme is that it builds up a good informal relationship, so you probably don't need to worry too much about lots of planning for this meeting. It's a chance for you to get to know your mentor, so you could come prepared with a few key questions, or bring in something to structure your discussion, like your CV or your portfolio, if you have one.

A good place to meet would either be at your mentor's place of work, or your own, or in a cafe nearby.

You could use this time to tell your story – what got you into what you're doing now? What would you like to be doing more of? And ask the same of your mentor.

Remember, they have signed up to the mentoring scheme because they want to help, and they've been matched with you because you seem suitable. Try and find out what your similarities are!

What are the best projects they've worked on? And their worst? What motivates them? How did they get to the role they're in now? Think about what your own answers to questions like these might be, too

At this point you can think about what you'd like to get out of the scheme. Why did you apply? This will help your mentor understand how best they might be able to help you. Of course, they'll have their own reasons for wanting to be involved on the scheme too, and their own ideas for how it could work– find out what they are!

In order to keep the momentum going, it would be a good idea to try to organise your next meeting at the end of this one, or at least agree to have arranged it in the next few days.

Second Meeting

A good way to structure the second meeting would be to talk in more detail about a particular project of yours, or possibly a couple of them.

You could bring in some information about it to get the conversation flowing and help your mentor understand the project. You can ask your mentor for advice, and what approach they might take to it. The project could be an ongoing piece of work, or it could be something you've already finished.

Third Meeting

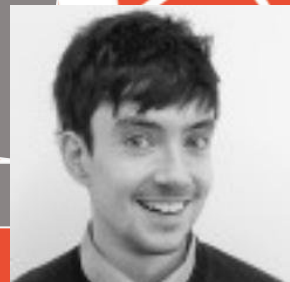
It would be great to see your mentor at work. Is there any way they could involve you in their work. Could you 'shadow' them for a day or a few hours, to get a sense of the different things they do in their job? Could you just sit in on a meeting or two with them?

Could you accompany them on a site visit? Could they share one of their projects with you, and you could brainstorm how you would approach it? The approach to this could vary quite a bit depending on the work your mentor does, but the main thing to pivot it around would be their work, and how you as a mentee could get involved.

The mentoring scheme was excellent. I was very grateful for the generosity of my mentor. I was involved in the pilot scheme, so it was a learning process for everyone involved – but I think it works well that way, as different people will want to get different things out of the scheme. I found it particularly helpful to see and discuss my mentor's work in relation to my own. It was also fantastic to build up a longer term relationship that led to good opportunities such as interviewing my mentor and his colleague for Here & Now

Even now, we are still in regular contact, which might not be the case for all mentorships, but it's testament to the possibility and opportunity the scheme offers that we are. I'd advise anyone interested to give it a go, and to not be afraid to ask questions and come up with ideas – after all, your mentor has volunteered their time and expertise, so they'll definitely be keen to help and make the most out of it.

Kieran, Mentee



Fourth Meeting and beyond

It would be great to get some sort of 'output' to your mentorship, something you can share with other Young Urbanists and future mentorship scheme participants. In the fourth meeting you can really focus on this.

It'd be great if you could write a short couple of paragraphs explaining your experience. We're looking to collate people's experience to share for future mentors and mentees.

Think about

- **3 Things you've learned**
- **3 things you will now do differently in your work.**
- **Have you changed your opinion or understanding of anything?**
- **What actions will you take in the upcoming month?**

The Academy has a journal, Here & Now – perhaps you could interview your mentor for it, or they could suggest someone for you to interview and meet. Or perhaps your mentor might have some ideas for an article for you to write based on things you've discussed in your meetings.

Remember, this leaflet is just meant as an advisory template – feel free to structure things in a totally different way if that suits you and your mentor better!

But your 'output' could be a bit more adventurous

Would you like to present your joint approach to a project you've discussed (whether it is one of your projects, or your mentor's?) Could you present it at your work / place of study, or theirs?

Would it be something other YUs would be interested in hearing about? Would you be interested in presenting it to a group of other YUs? **Let us know if this is the case, we'd love to help arrange this!**