Tech4Girls

SOFT SKILLS LEARNING THROUGH E-MENTORSHIP

FAQ Soft Skills E-Mentoring Programme

Goals of the programme

1. What is a mentor and what is my mentor supposed to help me accomplish?

A mentor is a more experienced person (in the case of the Tech4Girls e-mentorship programme, mentors are professionals working in different professional fields) who is willing to share their knowledge and skills to support and guide a less experienced person, you, the mentee, to help you develop your knowledge and skills.

Your mentor's role, within the frame of the Tech4Girls e-mentoring programme, is to help you develop a specific set of valuable soft skills that will serve you in both your professional and personal life. The mentor-mentee relationship and communication are guided by a programme syllabus that covers a range of topics relating to various soft skills. The programme has been designed to enable mentees to learn and reflect on key soft skills — such as developing self-confidence, communication, problem-solving, time-management and teamwork — that will help mentees on their learning journey and as they seek and navigate formal employment. Your mentor will guide and support you, in your capacity as a mentee, on this learning journey and as you think about and work towards your study/employment/career objectives.

2. How will I benefit from the programme in my capacity as a mentee?

The e-mentorship programme can be a very rewarding learning experience for mentees: it can be an excellent opportunity to develop valuable soft skills that are helpful for one's professional and personal life and, through the mentee-mentor relationship and the expertise and insights of mentors, to learn methods that will help mentees progress towards the achievement of their study and/or employment/career objectives. The e-mentorship programme can also be a wonderful (and fun) opportunity to discover another culture as your mentor may well come from a different country and culture.

Practical questions

1. How long does the Soft Skills e-Mentoring programme last & what time commitment is required?

The Soft Skills e-Mentoring programme lasts 8 weeks (usually consecutive). The weekly time commitment required of mentees is approximately 1 hour, maximum, per week. The mentee-mentor exchanges take the form of written correspondence, and mentees and mentors follow a programme that covers 8 different, weekly topics. The goal of each topic is to foster specific soft skills. The time commitment of 1 hour per week includes the time required for mentees to read their mentor's weekly letter and respond to their mentor. You can find the weekly topics on your dashboard in the "Weekly Topics" tab. At the beginning of the programme, you will only see the topic for week 1. As you progress from week to week in the programme, you will have access to each of the weekly topics.

2. What if there are weeks/periods during which I don't have enough time to write my letter? Should I not be a mentee?

The mentoring programme lasts only 8 weeks, with each week dedicated to a specific, important topic that contributes to the mentee's learning journey and to a mutually valuable, rewarding exchange between mentees and mentors. Given this brevity, mentees are required to commit to the full 8-week programme and make every effort to dedicate sufficient time to read their mentor's letters and respond in writing to their mentor in a timely manner, in accordance with the e-mentoring programme syllabus.

Of course, unforeseen events may occur that prevent mentees and mentors from writing to each other in a timely manner. If a mentee is unable to send the weekly letter to their mentor on time, the mentee is requested to inform the e-mentoring programme coordinators as soon as possible. The mentee is also requested to write and send the weekly letter to their mentor at the earliest opportunity following the initial due submission date, in order to ensure that you do not miss out on the weekly learning and exchange of correspondence. In the event that a mentee is obliged, for whatever reason, to stop participating in the e-mentoring programme before the end of the 8-week programme, the mentee is asked to immediately inform the e-mentoring programme coordination team.

3. Do I need to provide a CV or motivation letter to qualify to be a mentee?

It is not necessary to provide a CV. As a candidate mentee, you will be requested to fill in a short mentoring application form in which you will be asked to provide some information about yourself, your studies, work (if applicable), your hobbies & interests, and your work/professional goals. The e-mentorship programme is all about supporting you, as a mentee, to achieve your goals!

4. Will there be an interview to select mentees?

No interview is required. However, it is important to fill in the short application form as accurately as possible, providing relevant information about yourself and your study/professional objectives and aspirations.

5. Do I need specific technical/professional skills to take part in the programme?

Participation in the e-mentoring programme does not require any specific skills. However, participation in the program does require open-mindedness, kindness, curiosity, reliability (making sure that you send your mentor your weekly letter) and a willingness to share your goals with regard to your studies and/or future work with your mentor.

6. How will I communicate with my mentor?

Mentees will be guided throughout the entire 8-week mentoring programme by the Tech4Girls e-mentoring coordination team. Mentees will communicate with their mentors via email: the mentor-mentee exchanges take the form of written weekly exchanges of letters. Mentees will be asked to send their weekly emails for their mentors to the local e-mentoring programme coordinator, who will forward the email to the mentor. This enables the local coordinator to supervise and facilitate mentor-mentee exchanges.

7. How often am I supposed to connect with my mentor? Am I free to decide this with my mentor?

The mentor-mentee exchanges take the form of a written weekly exchange of emails, with each exchange addressing the specific weekly topic indicated in the e-mentoring syllabus. The Tech4Girls e-mentoring coordination team will provide a timeline at the beginning of the 8-week programme, indicating the dates on which you will receive your mentor's emails and the dates on which you are requested to send your emails for your mentor.

8. Can I participate in live, interactive e-mentoring sessions with my mentor, such as Zoom calls etc. and contact my mentor directly by email or social media?

No. As specified in the Terms & Conditions of participation in the programme, you are requested to communicate with your mentor only via the Tech4Girls e-mentoring platform in writing and to refrain from any direct contact with your mentor outside the framework of the Tech4Girls e-mentoring programme and the Tech4Girls e-mentoring platform, for the duration of the Tech4Girls e-mentoring programme.

Mentor's profile

1. How will I be matched with my mentor?

Mentees and mentors will be matched by the Tech4Girls e-mentorship coordination team. The matching process takes into account mentees' study and professional (work/career) dreams and goals and mentors' professions and professional experience.

The Tech4Girls e-mentorship coordination team will make every effort to make the most suitable matches so that your mentor can provide you with as much support as possible to help you learn a lot and work towards the achievement of your study/employment/career goals.

2. Will my mentor come from the same country as me?

Not necessarily. At the beginning of the e-mentoring programme, our coordination team will send you some information about your mentor, including information about where your mentor lives and works. Your mentor may well come from a different country and culture. This can be exciting for you, as a mentee: not only will you have the opportunity to learn and develop your knowledge and skills, thanks to your mentor's professional experience, but it may also be an opportunity for you to learn about a new country and culture.

3. In which language will I communicate with my mentor? Will my mentor be fluent in English?

Unless you specify otherwise in the e-mentoring application form, you will be matched with a mentor who speaks fluent English and who will communicate with you in writing in English.

4. Will I have access to information about my mentor before the programme?

Yes, before the programme starts, you will receive an email from the e-mentorship programme coordination team which will provide some information about the mentor with whom you have been matched: the mentor's name, their job, where they live and work etc. The first letter you will receive from your mentor will be an introductory letter in which your mentor will introduce themselves to you, in their own words.

Interactions with your mentor

1. Where do I start when writing to my mentor for the first time? Is Tech4Girls going to introduce me to my mentor?

At the beginning of the programme, you will receive an email from our coordination team introducing your mentor. As indicated in the programme syllabus, Week 1 of the 8-week programme is dedicated to introductions. The programme syllabus provides tips and suggested questions to help you write your introductory letter to your mentor.

2. What if I don't receive a reply from my mentor?

If, for some reason, you do not receive a reply from your mentor, our coordination team will immediately contact your mentor to check the reason why and to remedy the problem. In such an instance, our team will send you an update on the situation. Occasionally mentors may be unable to respond to their mentee in a timely manner owing to professional responsibilities (as they are busy professionals) or for personal reasons. If this is the case, our coordination team will immediately contact you to discuss the matter and make every effort to ensure that your mentor responds as soon as possible.

3. What if I encounter other problems in my communication with my mentor?

The Tech4Girls e-mentorship coordination team will be available throughout the entire 8-week programme to answer any questions you may have and to provide support. If you encounter any problems in your communication with your mentor, please don't hesitate to contact our coordination team. You can contact the programme coordinator at any time via your mailbox on your dashboard. The coordinator will reply to you promptly.

Boundaries

1. Is there a Code of Conduct for the Tech4Girls mentorship programme?

Yes, before participating in the e-mentoring programme, mentors and mentees will be required to sign the Terms & Conditions of participation in the programme which outline a code of conduct. By signing this document, mentors and mentees acknowledge and agree to adhering to the guiding principles of the programme and the code of conduct. The goal of this document is to establish a supportive, positive and safe environment for both mentors and mentees throughout the duration of the programme.

2. Am I allowed to talk about personal matters with my mentor? What if I feel the relationship is getting too personal?

Mentees and mentors may, of course, communicate with each other about personal matters, experience and insights. Indeed, mentoring is all about sharing experience and insights. However, if you feel the communication is getting too personal and/or you are uncomfortable with the communication with your mentor, you should not hesitate to notify our e-mentorship coordination team about it and we will find a suitable solution.

3. Are the exchanges with my mentor private? Will my or my mentor's communication be monitored or edited?

Before starting the e-mentoring programme, mentees and mentors are requested to acknowledge the terms and conditions of participation in the programme which aim to ensure a mutually beneficial mentoring environment for mentees and mentors. The e-mentoring programme coordination team may screen mentee-mentor communication but will not edit any communication, nor disclose any communication between mentees and mentors, unless the content is in breach of the terms and conditions of participation in the programme.

4. Will the information I share with my mentor be kept confidential?

As specified in the Terms and Conditions of participation in the programme, both mentors and mentees must respect the confidential nature of their email exchanges and refrain from disclosing information contained in the email exchanges, unless otherwise expressly agreed to by the mentee and/or mentor.

Similarly, the e-mentorship coordination team will respect the confidential nature of the email exchanges and will not disclose any communication between mentees and mentors.

5. Am I allowed to contact my mentor directly and/or meet my mentor in person?

For the duration of the e-mentorship programme, mentees and mentors are requested to only communicate with each other via the specific channels provided by the Tech4Girls e-mentoring programme coordination team.

In the Terms & Conditions of participation in the programme, mentees and mentors are requested to refrain from any direct contact with each other outside the framework of the Tech4Girls e-mentoring programme and the channels authorized by the Tech4Girls e-mentoring coordination team.

6. Am I allowed to be in touch with my mentor outside of the framework provided by Tech4Girls (for example, via social media etc.)?

During the 8-week mentorship period, mentees and mentors are requested to only communicate with each other via the specific channels provided by the Tech4Girls e-mentoring programme coordination team.

7. Can I continue the relationship with my mentor after the end of the programme?

Mentees and mentors may continue their relationship after the end of the e-mentorship programme, if they so choose. However, once the Tech4Girls e-mentoring programme is over, if mentees and mentors choose to remain in contact and/or continue their mentor-mentee relationship, Tech4Girls will no longer be responsible for supervising the mentor-mentee relationship or for ensuring compliance with the Terms & Conditions of participation in the programme and the code of conduct.

Reporting

1. With whom should I liaise in my capacity as a mentee? Is there a local contact person I could liaise with if needed?

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact our Tech4Girls e-mentorship coordination team at any time via your mailbox where the email address of your programme coordinator will automatically appear. At the beginning of the e-mentorship programme, the school/NGO to which you are affiliated may also provide you with the contact details of the local e-mentoring programme coordinator.

2. Am I supposed to report to Tech4Girls about my exchanges with my mentor and if so, how?

Mentees do not need to report to our team about their exchanges with their mentors, unless there is a specific concern.

If a mentee considers that their mentor's communication is inappropriate or disrespectful, and does not respect the required code of conduct, the mentee should immediately inform our coordination team and/or the local e-mentoring programme coordinator of their concerns by email. The coordination team will assess the situation and propose a suitable solution.

3. Will my mentor evaluate my progress in the e-mentoring programme? If so, how will it work?

Mentors will not be required to conduct a formal evaluation of their mentees' progress. However, your mentor may provide you with some positive, constructive feedback throughout the 8-week program. At the end of the 8-week e-mentorship programme, both the mentee and mentor will be asked to fill in an evaluation questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions in the evaluation questionnaire. The aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the programme and gather feedback from mentees and mentors regarding ways the programme might be improved to better meet mentees' needs.

4. Will I have to give feedback about/evaluate my mentor?

You will be asked to fill in a short questionnaire at the end of the 8-week e-mentorship programme. The questionnaire aims to assess the impact of the programme and gather feedback from you about how the programme has helped you and how the programme might be improved. You will have the option of completing the evaluation form anonymously (you do not have to give your name if you prefer not to). However, if you agree to sharing your feedback with your mentor, our team can provide your mentor with the evaluation and feedback from you.