



**ATAS**  
UNITE TO INSPIRE

# Mentorship Programme

## MENTORS' GUIDANCE

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## Introduction

The ATAS Mentorship Programme connects mentors and mentees to support personal, academic and professional development. The mentoring relationship should be respectful, supportive and based on clear expectations.

A positive and effective mentoring experience is more likely when participants follow a small number of clear rules and consider the good-practice recommendations provided in this guidance. These principles are intended to support trust, mutual respect, appropriate boundaries and constructive communication throughout the mentoring relationship.

All participants are expected to follow this guidance and the safeguarding, mutual-respect and professional-conduct principles established in the relevant ATAS policies<sup>1</sup>.



*"I gained not just skills but a powerful network of like-minded individuals."*

*"Program eased my education challenges and enhanced awareness of valuable opportunities."*

*"My mentor was not merely a guide but a source of inspiration, pushing me to step out of my comfort zone."*

## Purpose of the Programme

The programme aims to:

- provide practical guidance and encouragement;
- support personal and professional development;
- help mentees build confidence and connections;
- share relevant experience, knowledge and resources;
- strengthen the ATAS community.

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<sup>1</sup> ATAS, *Safeguarding & Mutual Respect Addendum: Language Cafe Project*, adopted 25 June 2026. The safeguarding, mutual-respect and professional-boundary principles referenced in this guidance are applied to the Mentorship Programme as appropriate.

## **Matching Process**

Mentor and mentee matches are made by the ATAS Mentorship Committee based on the mentee's expectations, areas of interest and the availability of mentors with relevant experience.

The Committee will aim to create the most suitable match possible. However, a suitable mentee may not be available for every registered mentor, and participation as a mentor does not guarantee that a mentee will be assigned.

Where a suitable match cannot be identified immediately, the mentor may remain in the programme pool for future matching opportunities.

## **The Role of Mentor**

A mentor should:

- provide guidance based on relevant experience;
- listen to the mentee's goals and concerns;
- share useful information, opportunities and resources;
- encourage independent decision-making;
- refer the mentee to suitable support when necessary;
- act professionally, respectfully and reliably.

A mentor is not expected to:

- act as a counsellor, therapist, legal adviser or financial adviser;
- complete work or make decisions for the mentee;
- provide advice outside their knowledge or competence;
- allow mentoring responsibilities to interfere significantly with other commitments.

## **The Role of Mentee**

A mentee should:

- identify their goals and areas where support is needed;
- attend agreed meetings and communicate reliably;
- prepare questions or topics for discussion;
- consider guidance openly while making their own decisions;

- respect the mentor's time and boundaries;
- inform the mentor when their needs or circumstances change.

## Establishing the Mentoring Relationship

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to agree:

- the purpose and expected outcomes of the relationship;
- the anticipated meeting schedule, subject to the programme's minimum meeting requirement;
- preferred communication methods;
- reasonable response times;
- confidentiality and professional boundaries;
- how progress may be reviewed;
- how the relationship may be concluded.

These arrangements may be adapted by mutual agreement.

## Programme Duration and Expected Commitment

The mentoring relationship is expected to continue for **one year** from the date on which the mentor and mentee are formally matched.

During this period:

- mentors and mentees are required to meet at least **six times**;
- meetings may take place online or face to face;
- the timing and format of meetings may be agreed according to both participants' availability;
- mentors and mentees are encouraged to maintain reasonable contact between meetings where appropriate;
- a progress meeting with the Mentorship Programme Coordinator is expected at approximately **six months**.

Participants should inform the Mentorship Programme Coordinator if they are unable to maintain the expected commitment or wish to end or change the mentoring relationship.

## Required Conduct and Professional Boundaries

Mentors and mentees **must**:

- communicate without discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying;
- respect personal, cultural, religious and professional differences;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- avoid misusing a position of trust, influence or experience;
- avoid pressuring another participant into a personal relationship;
- protect confidential information;

report serious safeguarding concerns to the ATAS Alumni Relations Officer.

Mentors and mentees **must not**:

- lend or borrow money within the mentoring relationship;
- complete academic or professional work for another person;
- encourage plagiarism, dishonesty or other misconduct;
- share confidential information unnecessarily;
- ignore signs of abuse, exploitation or serious risk.

## Recommended Communication Practice

Mentors and mentees should:

- use respectful and professional language;
- agree preferred contact times;
- respond within a reasonable agreed timeframe;
- use suitable communication channels;
- meet in safe and appropriate locations or use suitable online platforms;
- inform each other when unavailable for an extended period;
- communicate concerns at an early stage.

Participants may find it helpful to:

- agree preferred contact times;
- use official or professional email accounts;
- avoid unnecessary late-night communication;
- set aside specific times for responding to mentoring messages;
- consider carefully before sharing personal telephone numbers or social-media accounts.

## **Safeguarding, Mutual Respect and Confidentiality**

The mentoring environment must be safe, inclusive and respectful.

Discrimination, bullying, harassment or exclusion based on nationality, regional background, race, religion, gender, language ability, disability or any other protected or personal characteristic will not be tolerated.

Mentoring discussions should normally remain confidential. However, confidentiality may need to be broken where there is a concern involving:

- personal safety;
- harm to another person;
- abuse or exploitation;
- serious distress;
- unlawful activity;
- serious misconduct;
- safeguarding concerns.

Only information necessary to address the concern should be shared with the Mentorship Program Coordinator.

## **Guidance for Effective Mentoring**

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to:

- be welcoming, reliable and open;
- listen carefully;
- treat each other as equals;
- agree realistic goals;
- give and receive constructive feedback;

- recognise differences in experience, culture and perspective;
- review progress periodically;
- ask for support when unsure.

Mentors should avoid telling mentees what decisions they must make. Guidance should support the mentee in making informed and independent choices.

## **Vulnerable Participants and Young People**

Additional care should be taken when supporting vulnerable individuals, including newly arrived students, isolated individuals and people facing social or systemic barriers.

Any indication of serious distress, abuse, exploitation or immediate risk must be reported promptly to Mentorship Program Coordinator.

Where a minor is present, their parent or legal guardian remains responsible for supervision. A mentor or volunteer must never be alone with a minor in a private space.

## **Matters Outside the Mentoring Role**

Mentors should refer mentees to appropriate services where specialist support is required, including:

- mental-health and wellbeing support;
- legal or immigration advice;
- financial advice;
- academic supervision;
- formal careers advice;
- safeguarding procedures;
- complaints or disciplinary procedures.

Mentors should not attempt to manage matters for which they are not trained or authorised.

## **Incident Reporting and Escalation**

Any incident involving discrimination, harassment, bullying, safeguarding or inappropriate conduct should be stopped where it is safe to do so and reported promptly to the Mentorship Program Coordinator.

Privacy should be maintained throughout the reporting process, except where disclosure is necessary to protect an individual or address the concern properly.

## **Ending or Changing the Mentoring Relationship**

Either participant may request to change or end the mentoring relationship.

Where possible, this should be communicated respectfully and reported to the Mentorship Programme Coordinator so that alternative arrangements may be considered.

The relationship may also end when:

- the agreed objectives have been achieved;
- the one-year mentoring period has concluded, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed;
- either participant is unable to continue;
- professional boundaries have been breached;
- the relationship is no longer beneficial or appropriate.

## **Support and Contact**

Questions, concerns or difficulties relating to the Mentorship Programme including safeguarding, discrimination, harassment or formal conduct matters should be directed to:

**Email:** [alumni@atas.org.uk](mailto:alumni@atas.org.uk)

**Yunus Cem DUMAN**

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