

Mentoring in Combined Honours

What did/do you do?

Combined Honours has a student peer mentoring scheme.

Who is involved?

The mentoring is done by students; the scheme is organised by Colin Bryson (Director of Combined Honours Centre) and Grace Cooper (Student Experience Officer).

How do you do it?

About 20 Stage 2 students are mentors, each with a group of 6 Stage 1 students as mentees. These groups are assigned pre- first year arrival, based on subject area links when possible.

The first mentor-mentee contact is often through Facebook groups set up by mentors. During induction week the mentors go to the Halls of Residence to run a session of getting-to-know-you events. Mentor-mentee groups then meet fortnightly.

The Combined Honours Centre provides some training workshops for mentors; where possible, last year's mentors train this year's mentors. About a quarter of mentors enrol on career development modules based on their role as mentors.

Why do you do it?

The mentoring scheme becomes a formal structure for informal contact between students, and between students and the Combined Honours Centre.

1. To support students, based on a peer mentoring model.
2. To foster a Combined Honours group identity, particularly when students are studying in different subject areas. This fosters subject links between CH students when possible but also a group identity as CH students.
3. To give Colin and Grace a structure through which to communicate with as many students as possible. The mentoring scheme works as a triage service for personal tutoring, enabling mentors to identify problems for rapid referral to personal tutors.

Does it work?

The mentor system is oversubscribed: about 40 applicants apply for 20 mentor places. All mentors have to have been mentees, showing that many students who have participated in the scheme as mentees want to become mentors. Some mentors are better than others, but regular debriefing meetings with (and chasing by) Colin quickly identifies problems. The mentor scheme takes a significant amount of Colin's time but generates benefits for the students involved and for the group identity of the Combined Honours Centre.

Teaching and Learning Case Study

HaSS 'communicating with students' project, 2010/11

Colin Bryson,
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Coherent Curriculum theme:

- Student Engagement
- Student Induction

Other keywords:

- pastoral