

# **INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT**

## **Warwick Business School Mentoring Programme**

## Key Information

Assessment Type	Initial Assessment
Investors in People Practitioner Name	Sue Long
Visit Date	12/2 – 22/2 2016
Assessment Enquiry Number	ENQ - 96650 – 3QHLS0

## Conclusion

Following completion of an initial assessment which took place in February 2016, I am able to confirm that WBS Mentoring Programme has met the good practice requirements of the Investors in People Standard, and is therefore accredited as an Investors in People organisation.

Accreditation will continue for a period of 3 years, by which time a further Review must take place. Continued accreditation is also dependant on a mid term review, or if preferred, an annual review.

I would like to congratulate the team at the Mentoring Programme on meeting the high standards required by Investors in People, especially with a significant number of remote based mentors involved in the service provision. Thanks goes to Donna Curtis, who greatly assisted by organising the interview programme so efficiently.

## Milestone Dates

Review of Continuous Improvement Plan	August 2017
Date of Next Full Assessment	February 2019

Sue Long  
Investors in People Practitioner  
29/2/16

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The WBS Mentoring Programme is a service provided to the WBS MBA alumni, which currently involves approximately 150 mentors, who themselves are WBS alumni. It has grown in the number of mentees it supports, and has been focussing on becoming a highly professional service, underscored by comprehensive recruitment and induction of mentors, with a range of cpd provision, both through events and online.

The induction and matching of mentees has also been improved to ensure the best outcome for both mentor and mentee.

The programme is led by a Steering Committee, with 2 Co-Chairs, and membership is regularly refreshed to ensure progression and new ideas. The Steering Committee is responsible for developing a strategy to shape the future of the Programme, informed by input from mentors, who are surveyed annually and consulted within good practice events.

Annual surveys are used to obtain feedback from both mentors and mentees to help develop the programme and identify areas for improvement.

The Programme manager and Steering Committee chose to use the liP Standard to benchmark the programme against recognised good practice as part of their vision to provide a highly professional, structured mentoring service, supported by skilled and engaged mentors.

Following an initial diagnostic exercise in 2015, this initial assessment has been completed and finds that the Mentoring Programme fully meets the liP Standard, with x6 additional evidence requirements around involvement and empowerment (Indicator 7) also met.

The agreed objectives of this assessment were:

- To provide feedback on strengths and areas of good practice
- To provide a continuous improvement plan for ongoing development
- To provide focussed feedback on
  - Extent of the awareness of mentors of the aims of the programme, and how they contribute to their achievement.
  - Sense of recognition and value amongst mentors.
  - Impact of the learning and development, and support provided to mentors.

In order to gather evidence for this assessment, interviews were held with 15 mentors by phone/skype, plus members of the Steering Committee and support staff based at WBS.

## KEY STRENGTHS

Key strengths include:

- Fully engaged and committed cohort of mentors, who are proud to be part of this programme
- Provision of high quality learning and development as cpd
- Comprehensive and effective inductions for new mentors
- Clear and contractual understanding of programme by mentees
- A shared vision and strategy for the programme, aligned to the wider WBS vision
- Positive communications covering strategy, progress, operations and cpd
- Sense of involvement and empowerment by mentors
- Strong sense of value and recognition of the mentors
- Consensual and collaborative leadership by the Steering Committee
- Commitment to evaluation to measure improvement and identify opportunities to improve

## FEEDBACK AGAINST THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE IIP STANDARD, IN LINE WITH THE PRIORITIES OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

### **Aims, strategy, involvement, contribution and empowerment of staff and mentors**

The Steering Committee, led by its co-chairs, has developed a 2 year strategy for the programme, which is aligned to the wider WBS strategy of increased globalisation, and extending the “Warwick family” across cultures and diversity, including the establishing of a Singapore hub. The key focus of the plan is on quality, rather than a significant increase in volume, and is supported by a strong programme of cpd for the mentors.

This strategy is shared with all mentors at formal meetings, and through newsletters and emails. Mentors are invited to volunteer to join the Steering Group, and to contribute with ideas on how the service should be shaped and delivered. Members of the Steering Committee are now given discreet areas of responsibility within different streams – such as cpd, remote mentoring, inductions.

The annual survey of mentors and mentees is a key opportunity for people to contribute with ideas to improve aspects of the mentoring service, and people commented that the programme management team was responsive to these ideas. Mentors have also been involved in the introductory sessions for mentees, and the work to clarify expectations of mentees at the start of the programme.

Mentors are aware of how they contribute to the success of the mentoring service, which they recognise as adding considerable value to the wider WBS offer. It is clearly understood that the mentoring programme helps to optimise what MBA graduates/alumni have learned by helping individuals to contextualise their knowledge in the workplace.

*It's a value added service to people who have graduated from the Business School – it helps them to optimise their learning*

*It helps MBA students to balance the academic teaching with pragmatic support in the real world.*

*It's part of the Business School's desire to provide a lifelong return on investment to alumni.*

*The jewel in the crown of the WBS offer!*

Mentors believe that there is an ongoing drive to communicate more from the Steering Committee and office, and they receive information about strategy, progress, and learning opportunities via emails, newsletters and webinars, as well as face to face meetings.

Once they have completed their initial recruitment and training, mentors are trusted to shape and deliver their support to their mentees under their own self-management. They are also aware that they are welcome to volunteer to join the Steering Committee, and that there is a very clear process surrounding the appointment of leadership roles.

**Meets Indicators 1, 3, 7**

### **Areas for development**

The LinkedIn group is less widely used as a means of sharing information and good practice, possibly due to a reluctance by some mentors to use this channel. Some people may benefit from support or training to make best use of this technology. Remote mentors might welcome increased use of google groups or similar to help build the sense of social community.

Some mentors believe that good practice could be shared more, either via the networking events, through LinkedIn groups, or the refresher events.

There was a suggestion that the regularity of updates could be slightly more predictable.

### **Learning and development, and its effectiveness**

Focus for learning and development is influenced by the feedback in the annual survey, as well as a continued commitment to maintain a professional service with a growing reputation.

There has been a marked improvement in the availability and quality of the training and development available to mentors. Best practice days are now held at both Warwick and at the Shard – the latter is a more convenient venue for many – and prestigious. These sessions are considered to be well structured, contributing to a sense of community, and helping to maintain momentum of the programme. People commented on the high quality of speakers at the Shard evening events and induction days.

For some, the refresher training seemed more targeted at less experienced mentors, but was still a good reminder of techniques for structuring mentoring sessions and setting up mentoring relationships.

Delegates feel that the elements of interactive learning which have been introduced at cpd events are particularly helpful, as are the 3 way coaching circles. A number also felt positive towards the certification provided on completion of the online training. Many find the webinar training of high quality and helpful in their role.

*I didn't expect the (induction) training to be as comprehensive as it was*

*(Webinar training)... you can dip into relevant ones – enjoyable and useful. It influences your thinking and behaviours. For example improved questioning techniques.*

The toolkit and information available on the website is valued and accessed by a number of the mentors.

The recruitment, induction day and training for new mentors is considered to be very effective and professionally implemented. A number of people commented on the quality and effectiveness of the 4 modules on coaching & mentoring, and the 3 way coaching circles.

*A good technical approach to make sure we were capable and competent*

People are aware that they can request topics for learning or refreshing and these will be delivered. Eg Difficult conversations.

Appropriate learning has also been made available to support staff for the programme, with a robust and welcoming induction into WBS and the Mentoring Programme.

### **Meets Indicators 2, 8**

#### **Areas for development**

Would it be possible to provide more range of “refresher” cpd to reflect the differing levels of experience of mentors? Some people suggested that it could be achieved through providing different breakout sessions. There was a view that Bob Thompson, considered an excellent trainer, would be very capable of providing this flex.

A possible cpd topic which would assist many mentors would be about making effective use of the IT and communications technology available to them. This may assist in an increased use of channels such as LinkedIn, and will become more important with the globalisation of the service and increased use of remote mentoring.

Consider a light touch approach to including a minimum level of cpd per annum for mentors, which they would agree to in their contractual agreement. This would not necessarily need to include CPD learning provided by the Programme, and could be reported on an annual basis. Some mentors expressed surprise that this was not required, and felt that it would help to underscore the quality and professionalism of the service being provided – of which they are extremely proud

#### **Leadership and management of the programme and team – style, effectiveness, recognition and value**

The programme is led by the Steering Committee which is seen to operate professionally, with good governance, aligned to the WBS vision. Members of the Steering Committee, including the 2 Co Chairs, are mentors, and a required turnaround of membership every 4 or 5 years ensures a flow of fresh ideas. More experienced members make sure the newer members work alongside them on projects, to ensure continuity and progression.

Leadership style is perceived as collaborative, consensual and supportive.

Mentors believe that the programme is managed well and efficiently. The matching of mentees with mentors works well, and many mentors commented on the good work which has been carried out to improve the mentees' expectations of the programme.

*The matching process and the formal contractual nature is indicative of the professional approach of the whole programme*

*I get all the support I need, and always get a fast response to queries*

*There is some structure and a lot of flexibility for mentors to shape the service they provide. A lot of good steering and leadership to maintain the programme.*

The Programme manager and the Committee are extremely receptive and responsive to mentors when they have queries or concerns, and in particular, effective use is made of support from Careers Development. This latter support is sometimes signposted to mentees, but mentors also make direct enquiries to support their mentoring activities.

*(Careers development)... absolutely marvellous and always receptive*

Mentors feel managed by objectives, which have been set with their mentees. Feedback on their effectiveness as mentors chiefly comes via their own reflective conversations with their mentees. More generic feedback comes through the annual survey, and the Programme Manager provides mentors with the feedback from this survey.

Mentors are divided into sub groups of about 10, led by an individual member of Steering Committee. These groups allow for updates after the quarterly Steering Committee meetings, as well as support and an opportunity for sharing good practice.

For most mentors, no further tailored feedback is required, however, some – and this tends to be the less experienced mentors, would value additional specific feedback if it would help them to improve their techniques, or provide them with greater confidence in their mentor role. A recent approach which can achieve this additional layer of feedback is the introduction of quarterly mentee surveys which will include the opportunity for mentees to provide specific feedback for their mentors.

At an informal level, the Programme Manager will manage any developmental feedback to mentors, or mentees, when a particular need arises, and this is carried out in a supportive and sensitive way.

People feel valued for the (voluntary) work they do. The greatest level of thanks and appreciation comes directly from their mentees and the sense of satisfaction which mentors experience when they see their mentees progress.

Mentors believe that the provision of high quality events and webinars is an indication of the value placed on them and the service they provide. The language in communications from the Programme Manager is always extremely positive, with frequent expressions of thanks.

*Every communication you get is positive and valuing – they are very appreciative of us.*

*At the events, including WBS sessions, leaders of WBS are very visible and grateful.*

A number of mentors recently received letters of thanks from the Dean of the Business School - either to recognise longevity of service or for specific contribution to the Programme. These were extremely well received and made people feel valued and noticed.

*I recently received a letter saying thank you for my continued involvement in the programme. They didn't need to do that, but it was nice to receive it from the Dean.*

Mentors are frequently given “first refusal” for WBS events, which they value. They also see great benefit in being able to access modules from the WBS MBA programme.

Most of all, all mentors who were interviewed confirmed that they were proud to be part of a WBS programme, with a continued relationship with the WBS, and with the opportunity to learn and be stimulated by their mentoring work. A number of mentors confirmed how their cpd learning was also enhancing skills for their roles in their chosen professions.

*It has strengthened my skills – helps me to continue my involvement in the xx coaching pool.*

*I learn a lot from the process – I do it for selfish reasons!*

*For me, it's about a continued relationship with WBS, the learning and development I get out of it, working with mentees from all over the world is hugely stimulating - and I can give something back.*

*It's a bit of a win/win for us – a continued link with a prestigious business school.*

Within the office, there is also a strong sense of recognition and value, with people receiving regular feedback and thanks for the work they do. Where a role is split across different functions, management are careful not to overload an individual with priority requirements from both areas. Office based staff are also able to be involved directly with mentors and mentees at training events in both Warwick and London.

### **Meets Indicators 4, 5, 6**

#### **Areas for development**

The mentor groups are not working consistently well, and there is a sense that some Steering Committee members are more pro-active than others in the way they lead and support their Group. There is also a need for more clarity of purpose of the groups. The general view is that there is a role for these groups – with a quarterly update session, to be informed and to share ideas.

A possible weakness in the programme might be the lack of supervision of mentors, although the nature of their involvement and the ethos of the programme precludes anything other than a “light touch”. Some mentors suggested that more formalised feedback and discussion could take place at the end of each 2 year programme of support.

Although mentors feel valued and recognised, some felt that there could be an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the programme achievements with an event, possibly towards the end of each 2 year mentoring programme.

### **Evaluation of impact of the learning, development and support to drive continuous improvement**

A commitment to continuous improvement is evidenced by a regular survey to mentors and mentees, and an additional quarterly survey to mentees which is planned. Mentees are regular surveyed on whether they would recommend the service to others.

There is ongoing work to obtain more insight into the quality of the mentoring being delivered, and to monitor levels of mentor engagement.

Individuals confirmed how the learning/cpd had impacted on their mentoring skills.

*I have used the training in building the relationship with my mentor*

People confirmed that they had seen improvements made as a result of feedback given in the surveys, and that there seemed to be a greater level of knowledge sharing between mentors. There were also a number of comments confirming improvements in the delivery of refresher training - with better quality presentations and more interaction.

Longer serving mentors observed that over the past 2 years, the mentoring programme had become more professional, with effort and money being put into achieving this - particularly through improved cpd.

The Mentoring Programme has recently achieved Training Journal Bronze award.

### **Meets Indicators 9, 10**

#### **Areas for development**

Whilst people are frequently surveyed for their feedback after learning events, some people were less aware of these checks. Longer term evaluation to measure impact is the next logical step - for example to benchmark improvements in the confidence of mentors when they come into the programme, with the use of baseline measures. With reference to McGregor`s evaluation model, more checks for how learning is being applied (for example after delivery of a webinar) could be sought through the mentor groups, while reporting back on results/impact will come from the cumulative feedback in surveys.

There has been considerable investment in improving the learning and development – provision of cpd etc, which is already being valued by mentors. Mentors are less aware of any discussion or review to improve the technical communications infrastructure (eg virtual rooms) which could help to facilitate remote mentoring.

## Appendix 1 – Continuous Improvement Plan

Business Issue - What	Suggested Actions - How	Potential Benefit - Why	Priority - When	Solutions/Support Available - Who
Use of social media, networking etc to build community and share good practice	<p>Explore how good practice can be shared more via the online channels of communication</p> <p>Consider providing support and training to encourage mentors to make best use of networks such as LinkedIn, particularly to support plans for increased globalisation of the service.</p> <p>Review technical comms infrastructure and new tools to enhance remote mentoring.</p>	<p>Improved sense of social community for mentors</p> <p>Improved service for remote mentoring</p> <p>Increased opportunities for sharing good practice</p>	Mdm	Internal - to be led by members of the Steering Co
Range of cpd	Consider how to flex the provision of cpd/refresher training to cater for both experienced mentors and those who are relatively new to mentoring.	Keeps the cpd relevant and appealing to all mentors	Mdm	Internal – through the Programme manager and your trainer. Possible use of members of the mentor group?
CPD commitment	Consider “light touch” requirement for all mentors on the programme to commit to a minimum amount of cpd which they report on an annual basis.	<p>Supports the continuing professionalism of the programme.</p> <p>Confirms to mentors the Programme’s commitment to quality and continuous learning</p>	Mdm	Internal – Steering Co and Programme manager

		Encourages mentors to access cpd		
Mentor Groups	Review how to make all of the mentor groups work well. Involve the Steering Committee members who lead these groups in sharing their own good practice in running these groups and ensure clarification of the purpose of the groups.	Improved mentor engagement and cascading of information.  Improved opportunities for mentors to exchange ideas, share good practice and feed ideas upwards to Steering Co	High	Internal – working with the Steering Co representatives.
Mentor supervision	Consider the level of supervision and feedback for mentors which would be useful and developmental, without impacting on the current sense of trust and autonomy. Some might be optional and more appropriate to newer mentors.	Supports consistency of quality of the service.  Helps to develop mentors	Mdm	Internal – Steering Co and Programme manager
Celebrating success and achievement	Consider an event to celebrate/mark the end of each 2 year programme. Possibly a “charity” event?	Recognises the contribution made by mentors. Celebrates the programme and its achievement, and could help to promote it to a wider audience	Mdm	Internal – Steering Co and Programme manager
Evaluation to support continuous improvement	Use benchmarking to measure impact of mentor learning and cpd  Check for impact and application of learning within mentoring activities	Helps to shape future learning and cpd provision  Drives improvements to learning and development  Encourages reflection on learning and how it changes behaviours	Mdm	Internal - Steering Co and Programme Manager

## Appendix 2 – Assessment results summary

### The Investors in People Framework

#### The Evidence Requirements

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1	✓	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✓																							
2	✓	✓	✓	✓																									
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																								
4	✓	✓	✓																										
5	✓	✓	✓	✓																									
6	✓	✓	✓																										
7	✓	✓	✓	✓									✓		✓	✓		✓	✓										
8	✓	✓	✓																										
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																								
10	✓	✓	✓																										

The number of evidence requirements met is 43 (37 from the Core Standard and 6 from the Your Choice framework).

Key:



The Core Investors in People Standard



Your Choice from the Investors in People Framework



Not part of the Investors in People Framework