



# UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA ABUJA

*(Office of the Vice-Chancellor)*

**CENTRE FOR SIWES AND STUDENTS EMPLOYMENT (CSSE)**

## **GUIDELINES TO THE STUDENT MENTORING SCHEME (SMS)**

### **Preamble**

The Vice Chancellor- Professor Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah has approved the take-off of the Student Mentoring Scheme (SMS) in the Centre for SIWES and Student Employment (CSSE) in collaboration with a team from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) led by the General Manager -Talent Management in a meeting held on the Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2019 at the Vice Chancellor's Conference room to discuss the proposed framework and related issues and to evaluate the feasibility and possibility of the proposed start off of the scheme in the University of Abuja (U of A N) in the 2019/2020 academic session .

It may be recalled from the Student Employment Scheme Fact Sheet, that mentoring was proposed as an integral aspect of the Student Employment Scheme (SES) currently run by the Centre for SIWES and Student Employment (CSSE), University of Abuja which is aimed at building and raising students for an impactful and excellent service delivery to the University and the Nation at large. The Centre wish to expand the horizon of the Scheme by introducing the Student mentoring Scheme (SMS) having discovered the extremely valuable impact, mentoring can have on the development of the total man especially on youth, children and vulnerable groups. Studies have shown that mentoring at its core guarantees young people that there is someone who cares about them, assures them they are not alone in dealing with day-to-day challenges. Enormous threat and challenges bedevil the growth and training process of youth globally. This is further intensified on a very negative shape by the culture and current trend of vices around Africa and in Nigeria especially.

There must be a way to reorient and to restore degrading values of the society that youth are now exposed to. There is just one major answer to this- it is mentoring the young minds in schools, colleges and especially the tertiary institutions for an impactful living. Researches confirmed that quality mentoring relationships have powerful positive effects on young people in a variety of personal, academic and professional situations. Ultimately mentoring connects young people to personal growth and development, social and economic opportunities. Yet one in three young people will grow up without this critical asset, hence the need to start the mentoring scheme in Universities and tertiary institutions. The impact of this treasured scheme cannot be over emphasized. It has been reported that young adults who were at risk for falling off track but has a mentor are 55% more likely to enroll in higher education, 78% more likely to volunteer regularly, 90% are interested in becoming a mentor, 130% more likely to hold leadership positions.

### **The student mentoring scheme (SMS)**

The student mentoring Scheme is being developed by the University of Abuja in collaboration with a team from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Abuja led by the General Manager, Talent Development. This Scheme is aimed at developing a structured guidance whereby knowledge, skills and experience are shared to assist young people progress in their own lives, careers and be potentially prepared and built up to help in community and National development.

### **Objectives**

The Centre for SIWES and Student Employment (CSSE) works with aim of skilling, developing the mentoring capacities of the students of the University of Abuja with the aim of building them up for an impactful and fulfilled lives and careers that will help boost and sustain the Nation's value system for sustainable development. It is the University's nodal agency for coordinating and facilitating the mentoring scheme. The Centre also promotes, establish and set up tools to monitor and govern the scheme, mentors, mentees and related activities with the following objectives:

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- i. To facilitate the exploration of students' needs, motivations, desires, skills and thought processes to assist mentees in making real lasting change.
  - ii. Promote and devise techniques to facilitate mentees' own thought processes in order to identify solutions and actions that will provide a holistic impact on mentees' lives and careers.
  - iii. Provide support with setting appropriate goals and methods of assessing progress with set goals.
  - iv. Creatively apply tools and techniques to facilitate networking, counseling and training for mentors and mentees.
  - v. Encourage commitment and development of lasting personal growth and change among students.
  - vi. Maintain unconditional positive and non-judgmental support for mentees irrespective of their views, life styles and aspirations.
  - vii. To encourage and enhance the development of personal competencies of mentees.
  - viii. Evaluate the outcome of the mentoring process using the objective measures to ensure that the scheme is successful and that goals of mentees are achieved.
  - ix. Encourage improvement of developed competencies of mentees
  - x. To manage mentor – mentee relationships to ensure that appropriate levels of service is offered to prospective mentees.
- These objectives are tailored to help eliminate or significantly reduce common vices among students e.g. fall in rates of students' involvement in cultism, substance addictions, examination malpractices, academic failures, general misconducts etc. The Student Mentoring Scheme Board shall annually conduct an impact survey pre and post mentoring year to evaluate the impact of the scheme.

### **Student Target Mentors**

Undergraduate students of the University of Abuja from 200 level and above will become eligible to apply to be student mentors. However, recruitment shall be subject to the students' ability to meet the eligibility criteria and training test, and background check of prospective mentors as detailed in the

SMS fact sheet. Prospective and existing student workers already engaged in the Student Employment Scheme shall be eligible to apply, but must pass through the student mentoring Scheme screening test independently of the student Employment Scheme (SES) interview and screening

### **Mode of Application**

The Centre in the 2019/2020 academic year shall call for applications from eligible students as mentors. Applications could be submitted to online to the CSSE website <https://.csse.uniabuja.edu.ng> as it becomes available for receiving applications. The University Community shall be informed when it becomes available to receive students' applications. Call for applications will be sent to all Units/Departments and also made available on students' platforms, Centre's website on the University's official portal. Applications will be processed by the Centre via the Student Mentoring Scheme Board (SMSB) made up of some staff mentors from the University, mentors/coaches from the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Abuja. Applications will be processed using stated eligibility criteria and shortlisted candidates shall be invited for screening/interview with Board members. The Board shall carry out background checks on every candidate with respect to character traits in addition to the scheduled screening/interview. Interested/prospective mentors can email application to [sms.csse@uniabuja.edu.ng](mailto:sms.csse@uniabuja.edu.ng) attaching their most recent results and copies of curriculum vitae. Applicants must provide two referees, one of which must be the applicant's Head of Department. Successful candidates after the initial screening/interview and background check shall be recruited and must compulsorily pass through the pre mentoring induction/training which shall be concluded with a training test that may be oral or written as would be determined by the Board.

### **Job description/Specification for student mentors**

Every mentor is expected to carry out the following obligatory roles:

1. Attend scheduled mentoring trainings
2. Attend scheduled pre-screening and preview meetings

3. Attend not less than a two-hour interactive and/or counselling times with mentees on a weekly basis.
4. Interact with mentees based on the Board set ground rules.
5. Report any issue that could not be handled by mentor to the SMSB
6. Report on a monthly basis mentoring proceedings and progress to the SMSB.
7. Be accessible to mentees in the cases of emergencies and report such to the SMSB, where they cannot handle such cases.
8. Attend and prepare feedbacks to mentees on agreed time frame between both.
9. Be available to pass through prescribed screenings pre and post recruitment as will be determined by the Board.

### **Duration of Mentoring/Target receptors**

Mentoring duration shall be determined at the mentor-mentee first meeting depending on the level of study of the mentee and mentor and shall be reviewed periodically when the need arises. However, the duration of mentoring could be determined too by the target receptors of the mentoring programme, for instance the target receptors in this case are the first-year students (100 level). By the end of their first year, these sets of students are expected to become student mentors themselves. At the end of every mentoring scheme year, a transition event shall be organized by the SMSB to induct and encourage students who have benefitted from the mentoring scheme to become mentors to incoming 100 level students.

### **Determination of Mentee's status**

All target receptors of the SMS programme (i.e. 100 level students) shall compulsorily be requested to complete an online Mentee's questionnaire during registration. Completed questionnaires shall be processed by the SMSB to determine students, who require and/ or are interested in the mentoring scheme and use information provided by prospective mentees to facilitate the matching process where prospective mentees are paired up with prospective student mentors.

**Flexibility of mentoring work hours and mentor's commitment**

Mentoring work hours are flexible bearing in mind students' commitment to their studies. However, recruited mentors should spend not less than two (2) hours weekly for mentoring activities to student mentees, mentors who are already student workers engaged in SES employment will now be able to use two (2) hours of their maximum work hours for mentoring activities and it is compulsory for student workers. They are only exempted if they have failed the pre and post mentoring screenings that will be conducted by the SMSB. Those not qualified for SES employment but are qualified for SMS i.e. are not student workers are also expected to commit two (2) hours of their time weekly for mentoring activities. They are not entitled to remuneration as SES workers but shall be entitled to a certificate of participation at the end of every SMS year as volunteer mentors in addition to awards from the Student Mentoring Reward Scheme.

**The Student Mentoring Reward Scheme**

Those who have participated in the scheme and have excelled by becoming mentoring champions shall be eligible for a certificate of outstanding performance and any other prize that will be determined by the prospective sponsors of the scheme. Prizes ranges from cash prizes to award of scholarship. Prospective sponsors of the SMS reward scheme will include a number of organizations e.g. Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), AGIP, SHELL etc. The SMSB shall use set criteria to evaluate the impact of a mentor-mentee relationship to determine mentors' eligibility as mentor champions.

**SMS Start-up Status**

The scheme is starting as a voluntary scheme with a reward expected at the end of every SMS year. However, when sponsorship capacity is enlarged, a sort of monthly airtime token of #2000 is being proposed, prov subject to Sponsors' approval and budgetary provisions. If the Centre does not have capacities for this remuneration for volunteer mentors, the scheme shall continue as a voluntary arm of the Student Employment Scheme and the rewards stated applies. Note that those who are student

workers must commit to mentoring as part of the Student Employment Scheme and are also eligible for the SMS reward once they qualify as mentor champions.

### **Renewal of appointment**

Appointment as student mentors are renewable after the first year upon a satisfactory/outstanding recommendation from the SMSB.

### **Pre and post Mentoring Screening**

Pre and post mentoring screening shall be carried out and prospective applicants are expected to pass through the screening process. Screening shall include background check of criminal history and other records. Pre and post mentoring screenings are compulsory for prospective applicants and recruited mentors.

### **Roles of the Student Mentoring Scheme Board**

The Student Mentoring Scheme Board (SMSB) shall be responsible for coordinating the mentoring scheme under the Centre for SIWES and Student Employment (CSSE). Staff mentors of this Board from the University shall be appointed by the Vice Chancellor after undergoing screening/interaction with the existing SESB (Student Employment Scheme Board) at inception. The SESB shall nominate names of screened staff mentors who are eligible to the Vice Chancellor for appointment. Subsequently the SMSB once constituted shall conduct this exercise. The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) shall submit to the Vice Chancellor names of prospective coaches and mentors from the NNPC for appointment as SMSB members. A Chairperson shall be appointed by the Vice Chancellor with the Director CSSE as the Executive Secretary. This Board shall direct/coordinate the scheme under the CSSE and report to the Vice Chancellor in like manner as the existing Student Employment Scheme Board (SESB).

The specific roles of this Board include the following:

1. Receive applications from prospective mentors
2. Process applications
3. Conduct pre and post screening.

4. Organize post recruitment training/induction
5. Conduct formal interview and reference checks
6. Interpret results of record checks/screening.
7. Conduct match sessions for mentors – mentees
8. Handle and process disciplinary cases.
9. Develop procedures for addressing grievances
10. Determine ground rules for mentors- mentee relationships.
11. Search for potential source of funding for any mentoring activity and report to the Vice Chancellor.
12. Monitor the use of funding for mentoring activities under the Vice Chancellor's directives and approval.
13. Determine the mentors' obligations/roles
14. Initiate mentoring relationship through organized programmes.
15. Determine mentees obligations/roles.
16. Ensure that mentoring goals are meant.
17. Monitor mentor-mentee relationships to ensure that set goals are met.
18. Carry out risk assessment and determine management policies.
19. Ensure effective closure of mentor-mentee relationship at the end of every SMS year.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

1. Students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.50 with no outstanding or carry over courses where they will double as student workers in SES employment and as mentors in Students mentoring scheme (SMS).
2. However, students who intend to volunteer as mentors alone and have met other eligibility criteria itemized in this fact sheet must have not lower than a second-class lower division (2.2) with a CGPA not be less than 3.00
3. Student must be of good behaviour and character
4. Generally, interested students must in addition to the above criteria possess the following attributes
  - Strong analytical and problem-solving skills



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- Be innovative and must possess ICT skills i.e. must be computer literate or possess basic knowledge of computer operations
  - Must demonstrate willingness to share skills, knowledge and expertise
  - Must show positive attitude and potentials to act as positive role models
  - Must show personal interest in mentoring relationships
  - Exhibit enthusiasm in the field of mentoring, values learning and growth.
  - Must show ability to provide guidance and constructive feedback
  - Must have good customer service relations
  - Good communication skills
  - Must be able to handle social media
  - Show ability to be calm in complex situations
  - Show leadership skills in managing multiple teams and should possess a team spirit
  - Be emotionally and physically strong
  - Be able to prioritize task to give timely deliverable services
  - Show ability to motivate others by setting good example
  - Show ability to value other people's opinions and initiatives
  - Must show approachability, accessibility, availability and ability to listen
  - Must be honest with diplomacy
  - Must be fair and objective
  - Must show compassion, genuineness and be considerate
  - Should have proven track record of success academically and/or otherwise
  - Must be humble, responsive and inspiring.
  - Must be able to treat others with respect.
  - Must show ability to manage information to protect mentees' privacy rights.
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### **SMS Documentation/Match Training**

A training session shall be organized to match mentor's and mentees considering the following criteria:

Similar background/ racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic

Language requirements

Availability/schedule

Shared or compatible interests

Mentees' needs and strengths

Life experience

Shared values

Mentors' skills and strengths

Temperament

Personality traits

Mentors, mentee and parent guardian preferences

Programme goals

Prior to match training, recruited mentors and prospective mentees shall be required to complete an online form for documentation. They shall be expected to provide information on areas listed above to enable the matching process at the training session. This process is compulsory for all recruited mentor and prospective mentees.

### **Provision of Mentoring Materials**

Mentoring materials and packages (pamphlet guides, handbills, video clips, training materials) shall be provided for mentors and mentees. This shall depend on availability of funding for their production. However, the Centre's website shall be used to disseminate information on the scheme to the University Community and the public. This shall be freely accessible to students and staff. Information on the Centre's website shall be protected by a copyright as an intellectual property of the University and shall under no circumstance utilized by the public without the prior permission of the University via the Student Mentoring Scheme Board (SMSB). In the 2020/2021 academic year, the current SIWES/SES handbook shall be revised to include the guidelines to the Student Mentoring Scheme upon start-up of the Scheme.

**Mentoring relationships**

The Board shall also develop policy and process of managing both anticipated and unanticipated closures and use tools such as exit interviews, formal closure agreement and continued contact form to support closure processes. Supervisors (Staff mentors also known as Mentors of mentors) shall report monitoring of mentoring activities to the SMSB.

**Means of Identification**

For the purpose of identification, volunteer mentors shall be issued SMS number and a T-shirt which shall be used at matching, training, induction and preview meetings. However, provision of T-shirt shall be subject to availability of funding from sponsors. The number of volunteer mentors that will be recruited will be subject to availability of funding support from sponsors.

**Terms and Conditions**

- i. The University reserves the right to withdraw any student who has defaulted from the Scheme at anytime
- ii. Students who may wish to withdraw from the scheme for personal reasons, health grounds, academic performance or any other reason reserves the right to do so but upon a month notice of withdrawal to the Student Mentoring Scheme Board through the Director, CSSE.
- iii. In such cases, the Board shall provide a replacement match for the mentee/mentees affected
- iv. Students must provide two referees one of which must be the Head of Department of such student during the application process.
- v. Student mentors are not allowed to abuse mentees or take advantage of them. Same rule is applicable to mentees.
- vi. Any case of abuse by words, actions or otherwise, shall not be treated lightly and those involved shall be made to face appropriate sanctions and eventual withdrawal from the scheme.
- vii. In the case of withdrawal from the scheme, such mentors shall not be eligible for a certificate and the SMS annual reward.
- viii. Students must adhere strictly to mentoring ground rules as would be advised by the Board at trainings/induction.

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- ix. In the case of a breach of ground rules, students shall be warned in the first instance and any subsequent attempt shall be processed through the Board for appropriate disciplinary measure.
  - x. Mentors shall sign the mentor/mentee commitment form and shall adhere strictly to such commitment.
  - xi. Mentors and Mentees shall notify the Board in writing should there be any change in their circumstance/status that affect their abilities to continue with the mentor/mentee relationship.
  - xii. Violence is prohibited and will be punished by expulsion from the scheme and consequently from the University if the Disciplinary Committee deems so. Therefore, grievances should be reported to the centre. The SMS Board shall investigate hitherto and take appropriate actions.
  - xiii. Attendance of pre and post screening, trainings and preview meetings is mandatory for all student mentors.
  - xix. Students who have recorded past history of cultism or criminal tendencies or are currently indulged in such acts shall not be recruited and if recruited already shall be withdrawn from the scheme upon discovery of such records at any point during the mentoring process.

### **Mentoring Help Desk**

The SMSB under the Centre for SIWES and Student Employment (CSSE) shall maintain a dedicated help desk for the Student Mentoring Scheme. This shall enable students to seek mentoring helps in the event of emergencies. Students can also book appointments to see coaches and mentors via this help desk. They can email [help.sms-csse@uniabuja.edu.ng](mailto:help.sms-csse@uniabuja.edu.ng) or call **08146626334**. More contact numbers shall be provided strictly for this purpose shortly.

### **Intended Outcomes**

Mentoring has significant positive effects on two early warning indicators that a student may be falling off-track. For example, (i) high levels of absenteeism and (ii) recurring behaviour problems. It has been reported that students who meet regularly with their mentors are 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day off school and 37% less likely to skip a class. Young adults who have opportunity gaps, but have a mentor are 55% more likely to be enrolled

in higher learning than those who did not have a mentor. In addition to a better school attendance and better chance of going on to higher Education, mentored youth maintain better attitude towards school and societal values. Mentoring relationships share opportunities for learning and growth. Mentoring will help improve self-esteem, achieve personal growth, gain better understanding of other cultures and develop greater appreciation for diversity, increase productivity and better attitude at work, and enhance cordial relationships with students, staff, community and nation at large.

### **Discipline**

The Centre has an existing zero tolerance policy to indiscipline. All misbehaviours and misconducts will be handled following due disciplinary process. Students involved will be meant to face appropriate disciplinary measures as spelt out in the University rules and regulations guiding students' conduct.

### **Training/Pre-view Meeting**

These shall be used to induct prospective and recruited student mentors and also review performance, effectiveness and impact of the scheme and mentor/mentees' relationships. The Centre shall also counsel mentors and mentees should the need arises; thus, providing conducive environment for interactive sessions with student/staff mentors and/or mentees to discuss problems, challenges of mentoring and potential solutions/suggestions for improvement of the scheme. Date and time of meetings shall be communicated to students and those involved. #

### **Mentoring during Examination**

It will not be mandatory for mentors to run mentor/mentee meetings during examination period. However, Mentors are encouraged to give at least 30 minutes of their time weekly for mentees where the need arises. This is to ensure that both mentor/mentees are not unnecessarily distracted from studying for their examinations.

**Quality Control/Mentoring**

Students mentors will be supervised and monitored by designated staff mentors. Mentors/mentees relationships shall be monitored also. Mentoring schedule registers shall be kept for Mentor and Mentee to sign in attendance at mentor-mentee meetings and interactions. These registers shall be submitted on monthly basis to the CSSE. Student workers who are mentors shall submit their records on the current register at the current work register submission deadline for SES. The SMSB shall independently carry out monitoring/supervisory checks. The SMSB in conjunction with the Centre shall plan the first mentor-mentee meeting, make introduction and also periodically review programme details, rules, requirements and risk management policies.

The Board shall also employ techniques/strategies e.g. telephone or in-person communication to check in with mentees and mentors monthly. Mentor match support shall be documented. Members of the mentoring scheme Board shall be trained on cultural competency and supportive communication skills to help navigate across cultures and contexts in the mentoring process.

**Data Protection and Privacy Statement**

Mentors and Mentees' data/ information shall be protected by this policy. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained. Information related to both shall not be shared or passed on to a third party without the prior permission of both.

**SMS Start –off**

The scheme is proposed to start off in the 2019/2020 academic year. This guideline is an initial framework subject to revision as would be advised by the Student Mentoring Scheme Board (SMSB) and as approved by the Vice Chancellor.

**Dr Grace Oyiza Anibasa**

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