

The Big Deal 2014



UniTracks

WARWICK YOUNG ACHIEVERS PROGRAMME

Mentor Guide

Introduction

Thank you for joining the Big Deal e-mentoring programme and welcome to the mentor guide. This guide begins by giving you useful background information to mentoring and the project, and then outlines the specific tasks that students are asked to complete during the ten week competition. Referring to the mentor guide will also help to establish clearly how you can best support your team. The students are at secondary schools across the country and most are in year 10 (aged 14-15).

We hope that you will find the Big Deal Blogs approach to mentoring exciting and rewarding.

The Big Deal is a project running in Spring, beginning on 25 January 2014. The Brightside Trust, Warwick Business School and the UniTracks team at the University of Warwick have collaborated to develop this opportunity specifically to support young people who are gifted and talented but from more disadvantaged backgrounds. For the project, teams of students are tasked with preparing a business plan. The students can choose to set up a social enterprise or a conventional business enterprise. The competition is entitled The Big Deal, and the website that supports the project is called Big Deal Blogs.

Online support from a business mentor (you!) is a central part of the project. The project ends with a celebration event on 10 April 2014, where each team will present their ideas before an invited audience and a panel of judges.

Students' ideas should fit within a budget for set-up funding of between £500 and £5,000. This would enable them to try out the idea over a three-month period to see if it works in practice (but we are not going to that stage here!).

By becoming a Big Deal mentor you will get the opportunity to help young people striving to achieve education and career goals but who may not currently have the knowledge or confidence to get there on their own. We hope that this will be a positive experience for both you and your students, and that you will both learn things about yourselves that you did not know before joining the programme.

As well as being rewarding, mentoring is also good fun; we hope that you enjoy being a Big Deal mentor.

Good luck!

William Rupp

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go.warwick.ac.uk/thebigdeal
go.warwick.ac.uk/unitracks
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Section one

The Big Deal background

UniTracks and The University of Warwick

UniTracks is a unique national programme run by The University of Warwick. It is designed to support gifted and talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds to realise their full potential through a four year programme of academic enrichment, personal development and mentoring opportunities. The programme is based within the Academic Registrar's Office of the University of Warwick.

The aim of the programme is to raise the self confidence, aspirations and achievements of the students and encourage them to enter leading universities after completion of their secondary education. The Big Deal Enterprise Challenge is one of numerous learning and personal development opportunities specifically designed for the gifted and talented students on the programme. It is also the first major project in which newly inducted year 10 students participate.

Brightside

The Brightside Trust was set up in 2000 by successful entrepreneurs working in the pharmaceutical sector. It aims to help disadvantaged individuals by providing them with the skills and confidence they need to overcome social barriers and achieve their potential.

Brightside's first nationwide programme, Bright Journals, focuses on helping underprivileged young people to overcome disadvantage and enter the competitive field of medicine and other healthcare professions. Brightside works with a variety of partners including medical schools, secondary schools, corporations and government bodies. It is part of a range of initiatives which include mentoring schemes and training programmes to help undergraduate students mentor pupils from local schools.

Warwick Business School

Located at the centre of an outstanding university, in just 40 years WBS has become one of the world's elite business schools providing top-class programmes for ambitious students. We are led by innovation, creativity and change and engage with big debates in business and public policy - including tackling social disadvantage through initiatives like the Big Deal project and our partnership with the Design Council using Behavioural Science.

Big Deal Blogs - the e-mentoring website that supports the Big Deal

Big Deal Blogs (www.bigdealblogs.com) is an exciting, sophisticated web-based e-mentoring facility that enables mentors and their students to communicate regularly in a secure environment. It also offers a range of resources and enhanced support for both mentors and students to keep up to date with topical issues and news items related to education and a wide range of business professions. Mentoring is an important component of many schemes that engage young people because it creates alternative role models for younger pupils and offers an effective way to build self-confidence and motivation.

Aims of the Big Deal

The Big Deal aims to help students who are interested in studying business or enterprise by pairing them with mentors from business and taking them through a programme of 10 weekly tasks culminating in the development of a business plan. In addition there are the following aims:

- **To help raise awareness of business and enterprise amongst students who would not traditionally have access to appropriate social networks or opportunities**
- **To raise and support students' educational and career aspirations**
- **To facilitate useful discussion of both general and subject-specific issues**
- **To encourage and motivate students to achieve the best they can in their coursework, examinations and all-round school achievements**
- **To create opportunities for students to achieve their potential, whatever their background, by providing contacts, support, resources, training and encouragement**
- **To facilitate high quality mentoring relationships through training and support.**

What's in it for the students?

Like all education projects there are some opportunities to learn from the project.

With the right motivation, support and encouragement students will be able to:

- **Have some fun and learn from other people in their team**
- **Develop an online relationship with their mentor**
- **Develop an original idea to a point where they can present it before an audience**
- **Compete with other teams from across the country to produce the best enterprise idea.**

Students will have the opportunity to develop their enterprise capability. The enterprise skills they will use and develop include:

- **Creativity – generating interesting or new ideas for their enterprise**
- **Risk taking – making a decision to develop one of their ideas**
- **Risk management – testing out their idea with other people**
- **Can-do attitude – pushing themselves and their team to achieve all the tasks in order to be ready for the final event**
- **The drive to make ideas happen – being positive and motivated to make their idea a success.**

Other skills students will use:

- **Team working – working collaboratively, involving everybody and getting the best from all members of the team**
- **Organisation skills – planning to complete all of the tasks against a tight timescale each week**
- **Communication skills – getting the most benefit from their online business mentor**
- **Presentation skills – making an interesting pitch at the final event.**

What's in it for you as a mentor?

Benefits for mentors include:

- **The opportunity to volunteer in an exciting and innovative educational project**
- **Developing the ability to motivate teams online**
- **Developing online mentoring and coaching skills including understanding and emotional intelligence**
- **The satisfaction of helping young people achieve goals that will support their future success in the world of work.**

Section two

Mentoring and e-mentoring

What is mentoring and e-mentoring?

In 2001, the Home Office Active Community Unit produced the definition of mentoring below, which appears to cover many of the key features of the mentoring approach adopted by Big Deal Blogs mentoring.

“ A one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual mentor voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This relationship is typically developed at a time of transition in the student’s life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.

Home Office, Active Community Unit, 2001

In its most basic form, e-mentoring could be described as a mentoring relationship where the mentor and student communicate by electronic mail. Big Deal Blogs is different as mentors and students keep in touch by writing messages in each other’s online journals. This is often referred to as ‘blogging’ and is derived from web logging. The mentoring relationship is facilitated by a sophisticated web-based environment, that allows mentors and students to post messages, share information, discuss news items and access educational and career resources.

Qualities and skills of a mentor

As a mentor, your role is to build a relationship of mutual trust with your students. This will include communicating regularly with them, listening, informing and advising them and also demonstrating an understanding of the problems and challenges they face.

Please note that being prepared to demonstrate the skills and qualities listed below will ensure that the relationship you develop effectively supports the students in the programme:

- **Non-judgemental**
- **Good listener**
- **Empathic**
- **Enthusiastic**
- **Friendly**
- **Make time for your students**
- **Respectful of confidentiality and other boundaries**
- **Reliable**
- **Trustworthy**
- **Committed**
- **Caring**
- **Motivating.**

A key aspect of your role will be to provide encouragement and motivation. You will be trying to help your students become more aware of their ability to succeed. Along with support and guidance with each of the weekly tasks, they might also need support and guidance in understanding the range of employment or training options and opportunities for further and higher education open to them. It is likely that they will be interested in your role and how you got there!

How to get the best from mentoring

Mentor role description

- **Assist your students with each of the weekly tasks they will be working through as part of this project**
- **Develop a relationship with the students that promotes motivation, confidence and a positive attitude to work and study**
- **Offer practical help when needed, which may include signposting your students for more specialised help and advice**
- **Keep in regular contact with students – responding in good time to the questions regarding the weekly tasks**
- **Be friendly, adopt an enthusiastic and positive tone**
- **Follow up tasks promptly**
- **Introduce the students to interesting topics**
- **Give feedback**
- **Make use of relevant resources on the Big Deal Blogs website, signposting to other sources of information if necessary.**

Section three

Getting Started

Effective questioning checklist

- **Keep your objectives clearly in mind**
- **When a student asks, 'What do you think I should do/say?' turn it round and send it back, 'What do you think you could do/say?', giving them a chance to find the solution before you give one**
- **Establish a pattern of questioning that can be sustained e.g. ask open questions, followed up by probing questions**
- **Limit the number of closed questions**
- **Avoid counter-productive questions**
- **Use plain language**
- **Allow thinking time for responses**
- **Analyse replies**
- **Don't write or talk too much.**

Your first contact with your mentees

The first task that we will ask you to carry out is to create a short, informal video introducing yourself. This can be in any format but should only be around 2 minutes long. You will be provided with a separate crib sheet giving you ideas of what to include. Your team will also be asked to do this so that you can find out more about them before the project gets underway.

Regular contact

1. When you start to contact them regularly why not ask them some questions about what they hope to gain from the mentoring relationship. What would they like to share with you and ask you about their school subjects, general progress, career and education aspirations, employability etc?
2. It is a good opportunity at the outset to say when are the best times for you to send and respond to messages. Specifying a day or time each week usually helps you and your students to focus on exchanging messages regularly. This also means that your students can say which days are convenient for them. Access to the internet in schools is sometimes limited, which means that checking for messages on the website may not always be easy.

3. Try to respond to messages quickly, within two days if possible. If you anticipate being unable to respond within a reasonable time or agreed time scale, send a brief 'holding' message explaining that you will respond later (be specific, i.e. give a date). It's a great way to show that you value your students, even when you are busy.
4. Although emoticons (smiling or sad faces made out of keyboard icons) seek to convey emotions, such as humour or sadness, it is advisable to try to express emotions and tone in plain English where possible. There are likely to be many more benefits in the future for your students if they become more confident in writing clearly about topics that are important to them.
5. Avoid using 'text language'. Encourage your students to write to you in full sentences.
6. Check and re-read your journal postings before sending them. Remember to be 'precise in what you write and forgiving about what you receive'.
7. While this is definitely a business project, we at WBS strongly encourage creativity in business by teaching our students to 'think differently'.

So please do embrace any off-the-wall ideas (within reason!) for a business/social enterprise your students might have, as well as the ways they may go about compiling their business plan or how they choose to present their final pitch to the judges. Innovative ways of getting their ideas across should always be explored to let the students' come to their own conclusions.

Section four

A few dos and don'ts and what to do if things are not going to plan!

Confidentiality in the mentoring relationship

The mentoring relationship with your students is confidential, but with significant exceptions. Should you become aware that your student is or was at risk of being harmed or harming others, you should pass that information onto the Brightside team at support@thebrightsideunaid.org

Correspondence through the website is also monitored by the Big Deal Blogs web editor.

Working within boundaries is a basic commitment of participating in this programme and managing boundaries effectively helps to ensure that students remain safe and that mentors feel secure in their role.

Dos

- **Do be honest and open within the boundaries of the programme**
- **Do acknowledge the limits of your knowledge and expertise, for example about specific careers or school subjects**
- **Do consider carefully any actions that may be misinterpreted**
- **Do encourage your students to accept increasing responsibility for managing the relationship and promote the students' independence**
- **Do make plans and prepare your students for the end of the mentoring relationship. Avoid creating dependency or expectations beyond the ten week period**
- **Do seek advice from Heather Braodbent or the UniTracks Director if a problem arises between you and your students.**

Donts

- **Don't impose your own agenda on your students**
- **Don't probe or interrogate your students about any areas they wish to keep private**
- **Don't try to be a teacher, counsellor or careers adviser – all these roles require special training**
- **Don't engage in criticisms of the student's home situation**

- **Don't be afraid to admit you do not know the answer to something. However working with your student to find the information can be useful too**
- **Don't do your students' homework, coursework or other assignments!**

Boundaries for the mentoring relationship

- **You must not arrange to meet your students independently of Warwick . Whilst we encourage mentors to visit their team this must be organised by UniTracks and the teacher so please contact the UniTracks Director and they will help facilitate this meeting**
- **Students and mentors should not exchange home telephone numbers, email and home addresses**
- **If your students invite you for a casual meeting outside the programme, politely decline. Let them know that this programme revolves around online communication, and that you look forward to continuing to work together via the website. You should notify Brightside where applicable or the UniTracks team**
- **Students and mentors will not exchange gifts with each other**
- **Students and mentors will not give or loan money to each other**
- **The mentoring relationship can be friendly but the student and mentor are not obliged to be friends**
- **Generally students and mentors should avoid discussing anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. If your student asks a personal question, and you don't want to answer, just say so nicely. By the same token, don't push your student in to discussing private matters**
- **If you receive a message from your student on an issue of concern, (e.g. suicide, depression, substance abuse, pregnancy, or harassment) contact Heather Braodbent or the UniTracks Director immediately.**

Section four continued

Big Deal Blogs netiquette guide

All of you will be using email every day to contact friends, family and work colleagues, but perhaps you haven't been in the habit of writing informal messages as a tool for online learning and support. As this type of online relationship is probably different from any others you might have, we thought you might benefit from what we have learned from similar e-mentoring programmes.

Dos

- Before replying to your students, make sure you've read everything in your journal, as a later posting might change your response, e.g. they might have resolved something mentioned in an earlier message
 - Respond promptly to postings from your students
 - Give your message a title that reflects its subject
 - Use your students' first names at the start of each posting. Adding a greeting will make the message seem more personal/friendly
 - Use standard English punctuation and language as much as possible
 - Use mixed upper and lower case letters with standard capitalisation – it's much easier to read than all lower or upper case
 - Put *asterisks* around the word you want to stress (or use capital letters) if you really need to emphasise something. (Bear in mind though that using capitals usually means you're 'SHOUTING' the words!)
 - If you're replying to your students' messages you may want to include short, relevant passages from their original posting, e.g. include their question with your answer. This will give a more conversational flavour to the communication
 - As you cannot rely on the usual cues of face-to-face interactions for e-mentoring, it's important to be clear, precise and polite at all times – follow the axiom 'be precise in what you send, and forgiving in what you receive'
- End your message with your name, which will make the message more personal
 - Before you press the 'send' button, make sure that you've checked the spelling and grammar.

Donts

- Don't use any special keys like tab bars etc, because they may alter the appearance of your message and make it difficult to read
- Avoid using 'text' language in your messages, e.g. 'how r u?' or 'l8r'. Use the whole word
- Don't forget that your student may have very different opinions and feelings from you – so pause for thought before offering your opinions
- Don't post your message without reading it through to make sure it makes sense and that you have said what you intended to say.

At the end of the Big Deal Project

As you approach the formal end of the mentoring relationship, you should be thinking carefully about how to bring the relationship to a close. Think of the ending of a mentoring relationship as a process rather than a singular event. Here are a few tips:

- Remind your students that the Big Deal is coming to an end (e.g. week nine means one week to go)
- Reflect on the things you will remember about your students.
- Review postings you have made in your journals and write a summary of your students' achievements
- Describe how these might help in achieving their educational and career aims
- Explain how being a mentor has helped you

Remember to explore which aspects of mentoring have been enjoyable and things you would like to do in a different way. Also spend some time discussing what the students see as the next steps towards their future goals.

Section four

What to do if things are not going well

'What if?' scenarios

1. Lack of information

Your students send very short messages containing very little information. You're finding it hard to respond.

- Change your style of questioning
- Ask how they are finding e-mentoring, e.g. are they finding it beneficial?
- Make the student aware that you are unable to help without feedback
- Explain to the students that having more information helps the mentoring relationship.

2. My biography

Your students ask lots of personal questions about your history and life. How much information should you give?

- Give as much as you are comfortable with, within the boundaries of the programme and if it seems relevant to the situation
- It's OK to discuss education and work, but bring conversation back to the students' issues
- Discuss boundaries.

3. Too many questions

Your students send you a long list of questions about business. You have a very busy schedule during the week.

- Send a 'holding message' that explains that you have a busy week and will reply as soon as possible (specific date is best – put a reminder in your diary)
- Remind the students of the parameters of the programme
- Refer students to information sources, e.g. Big Deal Blogs resource library

- Ask the students to prioritise... to say what is important for them to know by next week and what can wait

- Say you don't know the answer to all their questions. Perhaps you could direct them to a resource where they could find the relevant knowledge.

4. No response

You have had no response to your previous messages for seven days or longer.

- Don't worry. The lack of response is unlikely to have anything to do with you. Your students may just be having difficulty accessing the internet. Post a follow-up journal entry
- If you get no response to your follow-up message, contact Heather Broadbent or the UniTracks Director.

5. No answers

Your students respond to your journal posting but don't address any of your questions or comment on the points you have made.

- Acknowledge that you have noticed they have not commented on the points you have made
- Mention that you were interested in their response to a particular question and ask them if they need some extra time to respond, e.g. 'Have you had a chance to think about...?'
- Rephrase questions. If it happens consistently, discuss with Heather Broadbent or the UniTracks Director.

6. Confiding

A student confides in you about a personal situation such as that they have been taking drugs or are being bullied.

- Acknowledge to the student what he or she has told you. Ask whether they would like to talk more about it. Seek further guidance from Heather Broadbent or the UniTracks Director.

Section four continued

Who to contact if you need help:

For technical assistance or anything to do with the website please go to the help section on Big Deal Blogs, and send an email to the address given. This will go directly to the people responsible for running and maintaining the site who are in the best position to help with anything of this nature.

For guidance and support

Heather Broadbent, WBS
heather.broadbent@wbs.ac.uk

William Rupp
UniTracks Director
unitracks@warwick.a.cuk

Weekly tasks grid

Week	Student Tasks	Students' preparation for next week	Suggested topics for mentor discussion
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Big Deal introductory video Select team members Choose & submit team name Read Student Guide Understand the Big Deal project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas for introductory video Ensure understanding of how to use Big Deal Blogs 	
1 Introductions (w/c 3 Feb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review team strengths & weaknesses Create 2-minute video introducing the team to the mentor Upload video to Big Deal Blogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet research into ideas for businesses or social enterprises Think of questions to ask mentor and/or University of Warwick representatives at the Big Deal Launch on 14 Feb. SWOT analysis – ready to share at the Big Deal launch. 	
2 Creating Ideas (w/c 10 Feb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on type of enterprise Share enterprise ideas Watch mentor's video message & post response Attend Big Deal Launch at the University of Warwick on Fri 14 Feb 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do they know about business? What project management skills do they plan to use? How are they preparing for the Big Deal launch?
The Big Deal Launch at Warwick (14 Feb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to know mentor Share enterprise ideas Share SWOT analysis & first part of business plan Have fun! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan for completing business plan Set aims & objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are simple ways of doing market research? What marketing is carried out by your business?
3 Testing the market (w/c 17 Feb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review ideas and discussion with mentor at Big Deal Launch Review aims & objectives and agree final version Decide on market research strategy Consider risks and how to reduce them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out market research and testing Contact mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are their aims & objectives clear enough? How is risk managed in your business? What is the language of simple accounts – revenue, gross and net profit?
4 Budget (w/c 24 Feb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review market research findings Review mentor's message Draw up budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete first & second part of business plan Contact mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can market research findings best be presented? What are the strengths and weaknesses of their market research? How robust are the assumptions behind their projected income and gross project predictions?
5 Prototype (w/c 3 Mar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create prototype or marketing materials for product/service Review mentor's message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work on prototype or marketing materials Research different kinds of marketing materials and online tools Contact mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well are they working together as a team to produce a prototype? What are the principles of marketing?
6 Marketing materials (w/c 10 Mar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create web page or other marketing material for product/service Review mentor's message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work on web page or marketing materials Contact mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to review a business plan?
7 Business Plan (w/c 17 Mar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss remaining parts of the business plan Review mentor's message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete third part of business plan Contact mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is learning encouraged in business? What kinds of skills do you think are important in the work place? What skills do you think they have shown through their messages?
8 Learning (w/c 24 Mar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review learning from the project Review mentor's message Prepare for presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare presentation Contact mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your experience of making presentations in business? Do's and don'ts of making presentations
9 Presentation (w/c 31 Mar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehearse 'pitch' or presentation Review mentor's message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check everything is ready for the presentation Send presentation to Unitracks Team 2 April: deadline for submitting business plan 	
10 Big Deal Final at Warwick (10 April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend the Big Deal Final Be prepared Be confident Enjoy the experience! 		

Section five

Your guide to weekly tasks!

This section provides an overview of the ten weekly tasks that your students will be undertaking and the kinds of comments or questions that mentors might ask. This is meant as a guide but you may have other questions you want to ask. Students may also be interested in asking you about careers in the sector or work experience opportunities.

The project culminates in a five-minute presentation before an audience of their peers and invited adults followed by five minutes of questions. Students need to produce a typed version of their completed Business Plan for the judges at the presentation event. The judges will be making their decisions about the pitches made by the different teams on the basis of the quality of the (further information will be provided via the Big Deal Blogs):

- **Enterprise idea and product prototype and/or marketing materials and/or sample web page**
- **Business plan**
- **The content of the presentation**
- **The delivery of the team presentation**
- **Evidence of learning from the experience**
- **Effective use of the mentor and Big Deal Blogs.**



Notes

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