

Female Student Mentorship Program

The University of Bahrain's Female Student Mentorship Program empowers women across all disciplines, with emphasis on technology and STEM. The program pairs female students with experienced academic and industry mentors who provide personalized guidance, networking opportunities, and leadership development. The scheme removes traditional access barriers (e.g., GPA thresholds) to ensure inclusive opportunity for motivated students.

This initiative directly advances Gender Equality, supporting Women's Access Schemes by:

- Expanding equitable access to professional mentorship and career development.
- Increasing female participation and leadership in technology and STEM.
- Providing same-gender role models that foster confidence and career readiness.
- Challenging stereotypes and promoting gender-inclusive leadership in academia and industry.

The program's structured mentoring, evaluation, and recognition strengthen UOB's institutional support for women's empowerment and contribute to national gender equity objectives.



College of Information Technology
Student Career Mentorship Committee

Female Student Mentorship Program Guidelines

Purpose

The Female Student Mentorship Program is designed to empower women across all academic programs by connecting female students with experienced mentors from academia and industry. This program directly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5): Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Grounded in the principles of equity and empowerment, this program provides targeted mentorship, networking opportunities, and career guidance to support women pursuing STEM degrees, professional certificates, and other academic pathways. We aim to address the gender gap in technology and related fields by fostering an inclusive environment where all female students, regardless of their academic performance, can thrive, develop their potential, and lead based on their drive, commitment, and willingness to grow.

This mentorship program embodies SDG 5's core principles of equity and empowerment by:

- Promoting equal access to career development opportunities for all women, regardless of academic background or program of study
- Removing barriers based on academic performance, recognizing that potential and determination are not solely reflected in GPA
- Increasing female representation and leadership across technology, STEM fields, and professional sectors
- Breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes in male-dominated sectors
- Creating a supportive network that empowers women from diverse educational backgrounds to pursue excellence
- Providing opportunities for students who may not have had equal access to resources but demonstrate strong motivation and commitment
- Fostering confidence, skills, and professional development among all female students

Objectives

1. Create an inclusive and supportive community for female students across all programs to explore career paths, set goals, and develop essential technical and leadership skills.
2. Connect female students with successful women leaders and professionals who can provide guidance regardless of the student's academic standing.
3. Provide role models who demonstrate that women from all backgrounds can succeed and lead in their chosen fields.
4. Address unique challenges faced by women in technology and STEM through targeted guidance and support.
5. Build confidence and encourage female students to pursue their aspirations based on their drive and potential, not just academic metrics.
6. Support students who need additional guidance by focusing on their commitment and willingness to grow.
7. Facilitate networking opportunities with women professionals and organizations supporting gender diversity.

1. Mentorship Program Registration

1.1 Mentor

- MS Form designed for online registration of mentors through the designated link. Priority will be given to female mentors to provide same-gender role models, though male allies committed to advancing gender equality are also welcome to participate.

1.2 Mentee

- MS Form designed for online registration of female mentees through the link <https://forms.office.com/r/uQYzWLFEW1>

2. Mentorship Qualifications

2.1 Mentor

Academia Mentor:

- Should be a female faculty member or academic professional with expertise in Information Technology or related fields
- Demonstrated commitment to supporting women in technology
- Male faculty allies with a proven track record of mentoring and advocating for women in IT are also eligible

Industry Mentor:

- Should be a female professional with a minimum of 5 years of experience in the IT industry
- Proven track record in technology leadership, innovation, or specialized technical expertise
- Passionate about empowering women and promoting gender diversity in technology
- Male industry professionals committed to advancing gender equality and experienced in mentoring women are also welcome

2.2 Mentee

In alignment with SDG 5's principles of equity and empowerment, this program welcomes all female students who demonstrate commitment and motivation:

- Must be a female student enrolled in any academic program (including IT, STEM degrees, or other fields)
- Open to students at any stage of their academic journey.
- No GPA requirement: We recognize that academic performance alone does not reflect a student's potential, drive, or capacity for growth
- Successfully complete an interview demonstrating:
 - Motivation and genuine interest in personal and professional development

- Commitment to actively engaging in the mentorship relationship
- Willingness to learn, grow, and embrace challenges
- Clear articulation of goals or areas where support is needed

3. Mentor Responsibilities

Mentors in this program play a crucial role in empowering female students. They should:

1. **Provide Gender-Aware Guidance:** Offer career advice that acknowledges and addresses challenges women face in technology, share strategies for overcoming gender bias, and provide insights into work-life balance and career advancement
2. **Support Goal Setting:** Help mentees set ambitious yet realistic career goals, encourage leadership aspirations, and support personal development objectives
3. **Skill Development:** Identify technical and soft skills essential for success, with special emphasis on negotiation, leadership, public speaking, and confidence-building
4. **Networking Opportunities:** Connect mentees with women's professional networks, introduce them to female leaders in technology, and facilitate access to women-in-tech events and conferences
5. **Role Modeling:** Share personal experiences navigating the technology industry as a woman, demonstrate work-life integration strategies, and inspire confidence through success stories
6. **Regular Check-Ins:** Commit to minimum meeting requirements and be available for additional support during critical career decisions or challenges
7. **Professional Conduct:** Maintain confidentiality, create a safe and supportive environment, and demonstrate respect while challenging mentees to reach their full potential

4. Mentor-Student Matching Criteria

To ensure effective mentorship that addresses the unique needs of female students in technology:

1. **Career Interests and Specialization:** Align mentor expertise with mentee's specific IT interests and career goals
2. **Gender-Specific Support Needs:** Consider the mentee's expressed needs for guidance on navigating gender-related challenges in the field
3. **Experience Level:** Match students with mentors who have relevant experience in desired specializations and career paths
4. **Mentoring Style:** Where possible, pair students with mentors whose communication style and approach match the mentee's preferences and learning style
5. **Representation:** Prioritize matching with female mentors to provide same-gender role models, while ensuring male allies are matched with students seeking diverse perspectives
6. **Availability and Commitment:** Ensure both mentor and mentee can commit to regular meetings and maintain consistent communication

5. Mentorship Phases

Phase 1: Orientation and Relationship Building

- Introduce mentees to their mentors through a welcome event or virtual meeting
- Establish trust and open communication channels
- Set initial expectations, goals, and boundaries
- Discuss career aspirations, challenges faced as women in technology, and desired areas of growth
- Establish preferred communication styles and meeting schedules

Phase 2: Development and Active Mentorship

- Create a personalized mentorship plan with specific milestones addressing both technical and leadership development
- Focus on skill-building activities including technical competencies, leadership development, negotiation skills, and confidence-building
- Address challenges specific to women in technology, such as imposter syndrome, work-life balance, and career advancement strategies
- Facilitate networking opportunities with women in tech communities and professional organizations
- Encourage mentees to actively engage in discussions, seek feedback, and take ownership of their professional development

Phase 3: Evaluation and Reflection

- Conduct end-of-program evaluation to assess progress toward goals and gather feedback
- Encourage mentees to reflect on personal and professional growth, skills developed, and increased confidence
- Assess program impact on gender equality objectives and career readiness
- Collect mentor feedback for continuous program improvement and enhanced support for female students

6. Mentorship Program Policies and Ethics

- **Confidentiality:** All information shared between mentor and mentee remains strictly confidential, creating a safe space for discussing sensitive topics
- **Gender Equality and Inclusion:** The program is committed to promoting gender equality, challenging stereotypes, and creating an inclusive environment that values diversity
- **Professional Boundaries:** Maintain appropriate professional relationships while fostering supportive and empowering connections

- **Non-Discrimination:** Zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or any behaviour that undermines the program's mission of empowering women
- **Conflict Resolution:** The committee provides support for resolving any issues with sensitivity to gender-related concerns

7. Mentorship Program Evaluation

At the end of each semester, the program will be evaluated to ensure it effectively supports female students and advances gender equality:

- Conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups with mentors and mentees to gather comprehensive feedback
- Assess program impact on female student confidence, career readiness, and pursuit of leadership roles
- Track metrics related to SDG 5, including increased female participation in advanced IT courses, research projects, and industry placements
- Review feedback to enhance mentorship matching, program design, and support resources for future cohorts

8. Mentorship Meeting Requirements

To maintain engagement and facilitate productive mentorship:

Meeting Structure

- **Frequency:** Minimum of 2 meetings per academic year, with additional sessions encouraged during critical periods such as internship applications, career decisions, or project milestones
- **Duration:** Between 30 minutes to one hour to allow for meaningful discussion and relationship building
- **Place:** Mentors decide on meeting location, encouraging workplace visits when possible to expose mentees to professional environments

- **Mode:** Flexible format (in-person or virtual) determined by mentor and mentee preferences and circumstances

9. Program Completion and Recognition

At the end of the mentorship program:

- **Certificate of Appreciation:** Both mentors and mentees will receive certificates recognizing their commitment to advancing gender equality in technology
- **Recognition Event:** An end-of-year celebration highlighting the achievements of female mentees and thanking mentors for their dedication
- **Success Stories:** With permission, share inspiring stories of mentee growth and achievements to motivate future participants and demonstrate program impact
- **Alumni Network:** Graduates of the program are invited to join an alumni network, creating lasting connections and opportunities to give back as future mentors

10. Support Resources

The program provides additional resources to support female students:

- Access to women-in-tech communities and professional organizations
- Information about scholarships, grants, and opportunities specifically for women in technology
- Workshops on topics such as negotiation, leadership, public speaking, and overcoming imposter syndrome
- Career counselling and resume review tailored to women entering tech fields
- Connections to companies and organizations with strong commitment to gender diversity