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Handout for the Handbook of Student Services Course

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Table 1.1 Possible members of a basic student service system

<p>Mentor</p>	<p>They can be employed administrators, student coordinators, university teachers or PhD students entrusted with the responsibility of guiding their mentees. They maintain a strong collaboration with the other members of the possible student service system, such as senior students both during and outside university, and they maintain communication with the mentees. Their role involves assisting students in their academic and personal development, as well as promoting the academic and social integration of students, working alongside the senior student. If the mentor identifies that a student's question is better suited for the student coordinator or other faculty member within the institution, the mentor can make the appropriate referrals.</p>
<p>Senior student</p>	<p>These are fellow university students in their second or third year who have already gained firsthand experience of the educational environment within the institution. They are generally excellent students with good grades, and they can serve as examples for the first-year students. They have undergone preparatory training to become senior students and are well-versed in the needs of their peers due to their own experiences. They actively maintain a close collaborative relationship with mentors, both inside and outside the classroom. Their role involves aiding the first-year students in acclimating to campus life and establishing connections with their peers. Their role involves assisting fellow students in getting oriented on campus. Typically, they serve as trustworthy references outside the classroom, and first-year students often rely on them during the initial phases of adaptation to the new environment.</p>
<p>Mentee</p>	<p>A mentee at a university is typically a student who receives guidance, support, and mentorship from more experienced individuals within the academic community, such as senior students, mentors or other faculty members. Mentees are usually in their early stages of their academic journey, often first-year or junior students, and they seek advice, assistance, and knowledge from mentors to navigate the complexities of university life. Mentees may be exploring</p>

academic disciplines, seeking guidance on coursework, or adapting to the university environment. They benefit from the wisdom, experience, and direction offered by their mentors, who assist in their personal and academic development. Mentees often engage in regular meetings or sessions with their mentors, where they can discuss challenges, set goals, and receive advice to enhance their overall university experience and educational journey. The relationship between a mentee and a mentor fosters a supportive environment that encourages the mentee's growth, confidence, and success during their time at the university.

Figure of representing the key members of the student service system:

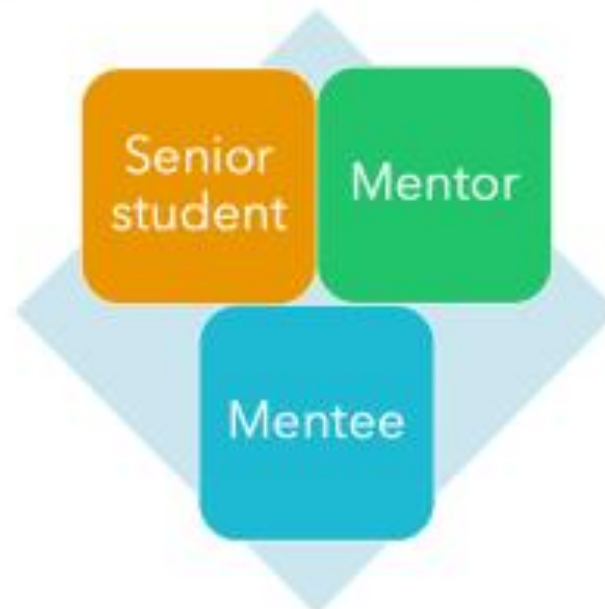


Figure 1.1 Basic members of the student service system

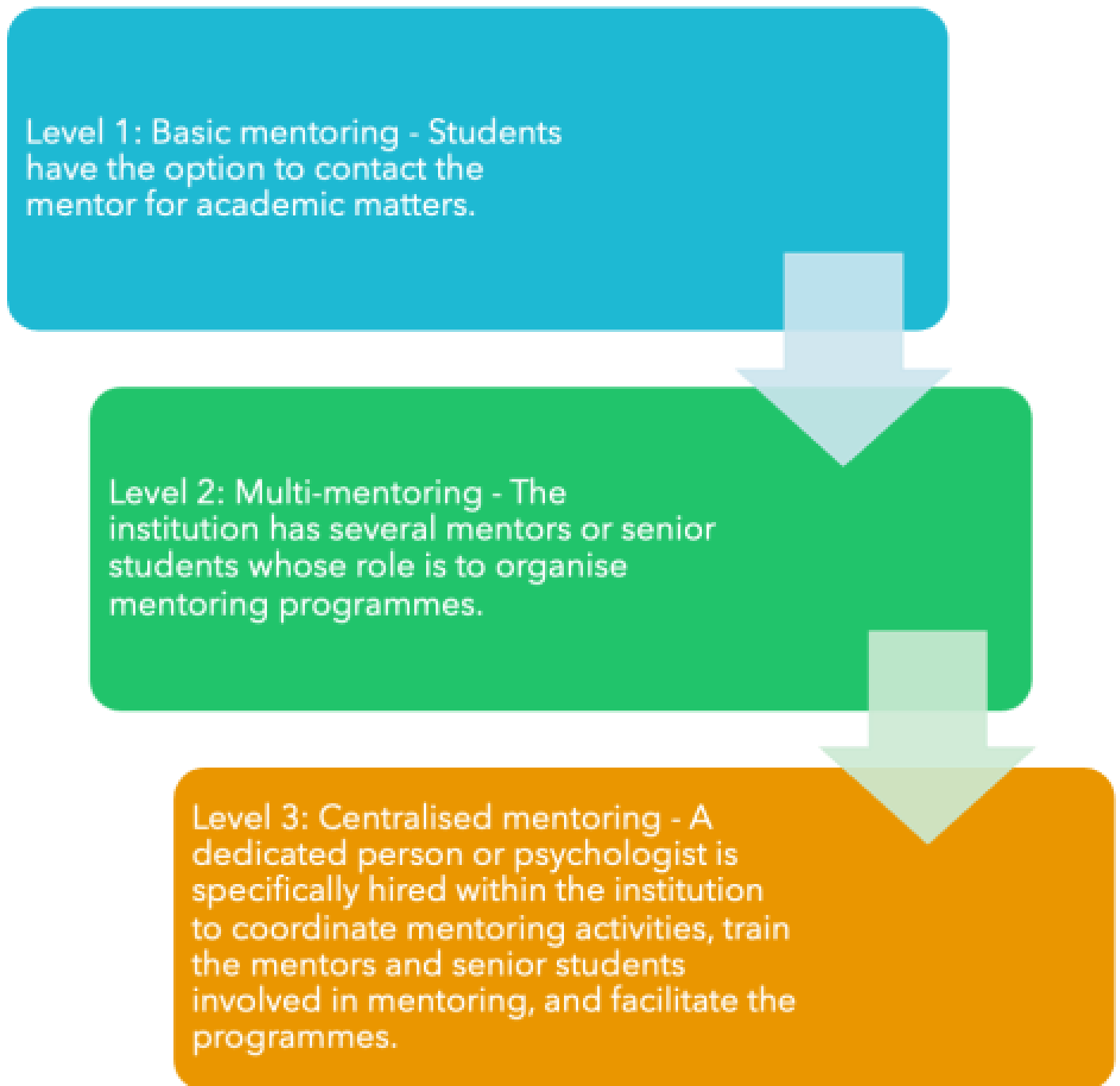


Figure 1.2 The different level of student services

Table 1.4 Mentoring activities based on the level of student support service system

Level of Student Support System	Obligatory Mentoring Activities	Optional Mentoring Activities
Level 1: Basic Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial orientation and academic guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular one-on-one meetings with mentors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic progress monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group study sessions, mentor class or study groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance with course registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops on time management and study skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance on university policies and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career counselling and goal-setting sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance with navigating academic challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in campus clubs and extracurricular activities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutoring sessions for specific subjects

	- Holistic student wellbeing programmes	- Leadership development programmes and workshops
	- Integration of mentoring with academic curricula	- Cross-disciplinary study opportunities

(Please note that the table represents a general overview, and specific activities and obligations may vary by institution and programme. Additionally, the table illustrates how mentoring activities can evolve and become more comprehensive as the level of student support increases.)

1. Mentor Classes:

Weekly (if that's possible) mentor classes, led by trained mentors, focus on social and academic integration, and provide essential guidance. These classes offer a structured platform for students to address academic challenges, practice key skills, and receive personalized advice, creating a mentorship-driven support system. Also a great opportunity for them to get used to a university environment.

Mentors are always asked to be flexible with their classes and to prioritise the needs and requests of the students. This is why each mentoring session starts with what we call an 'opening circle', which gives the opportunity to phrase and ask questions, followed by a discussion. This is repeated at the end of the session if anyone has any questions that may have been raised during the session. If students do not have a topic for a particular session, the following topics are considered useful to discuss during the semester:

1. Introduction to the Course
2. Getting to know each other.
3. University experiences and course discussions
4. Career Guidance
5. Crafting CVs and motivational letters
6. Leadership and Project Management
7. Projects, labs, and scientific opportunities
8. Developing professional communication skills and networking
9. Community Building Outside of the University

These mentor classes act as supportive intervention. Students have the opportunity to ask questions, seek guidance, and receive personalized advice. Mentors, through regular monitoring, can identify potential challenges early on and help students navigate academic and personal hurdles. This structured intervention not only supports academic success but also contributes to the overall well-being and sense of belonging for students within the university community.

2. Trainings:

Training sessions could be organised during the year to develop soft skills to help students integrate and adapt. These opportunities will enable students to assess and develop their own skills and rely on them in their academic and professional careers. It also provides a space to get to know each other and to deepen relationships, which will further support the student's academic journey. The topics can be communication, learning methodology, time management, stress and student identity.

3. Workshops:

Throughout the academic year, covering diverse topics for professional and personal growth. Workshops offer a platform for students to gain insights, share knowledge, and collaboratively explore solutions to challenges, promoting a culture of continuous learning.

4. Team Building Events:

Organising activities like hiking, movie nights, cooking sessions, gaming events, and more promotes a strong sense of community among students. By combining these social connections with activities that promote sustainability, we create a comprehensive approach that not only strengthens bonds among students but also contributes to building a supportive community.

5. Creating Clubs and Societies:

Encouraging the formation of clubs and societies allows students to explore diverse interests and passions. Engaging in group activities through clubs enhances teamwork, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, creating a sense of belonging. At our university we have several sport related, professional and language learning clubs.

Implementing these interventions goes beyond traditional academic support; it creates a vibrant and interconnected community within the university. Weekly mentor classes and training sessions serve as structured platforms for skill development, while workshops provide ongoing opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Team building events and the creation of clubs contribute to a sense of community, promoting connections that extend beyond the academic realm. They not only provide an opportunity for early intervention in their own unique way, but also a supportive environment for students.

These interventions are not merely extracurricular; they are integral components of a comprehensive strategy to prevent dropout. By building a supportive community, universities empower students to share knowledge, collectively address challenges, and foster a collaborative spirit. This, in turn, enhances academic performance, personal growth, and the overall university experience, making it more likely for students to persist and thrive in their academic journey.

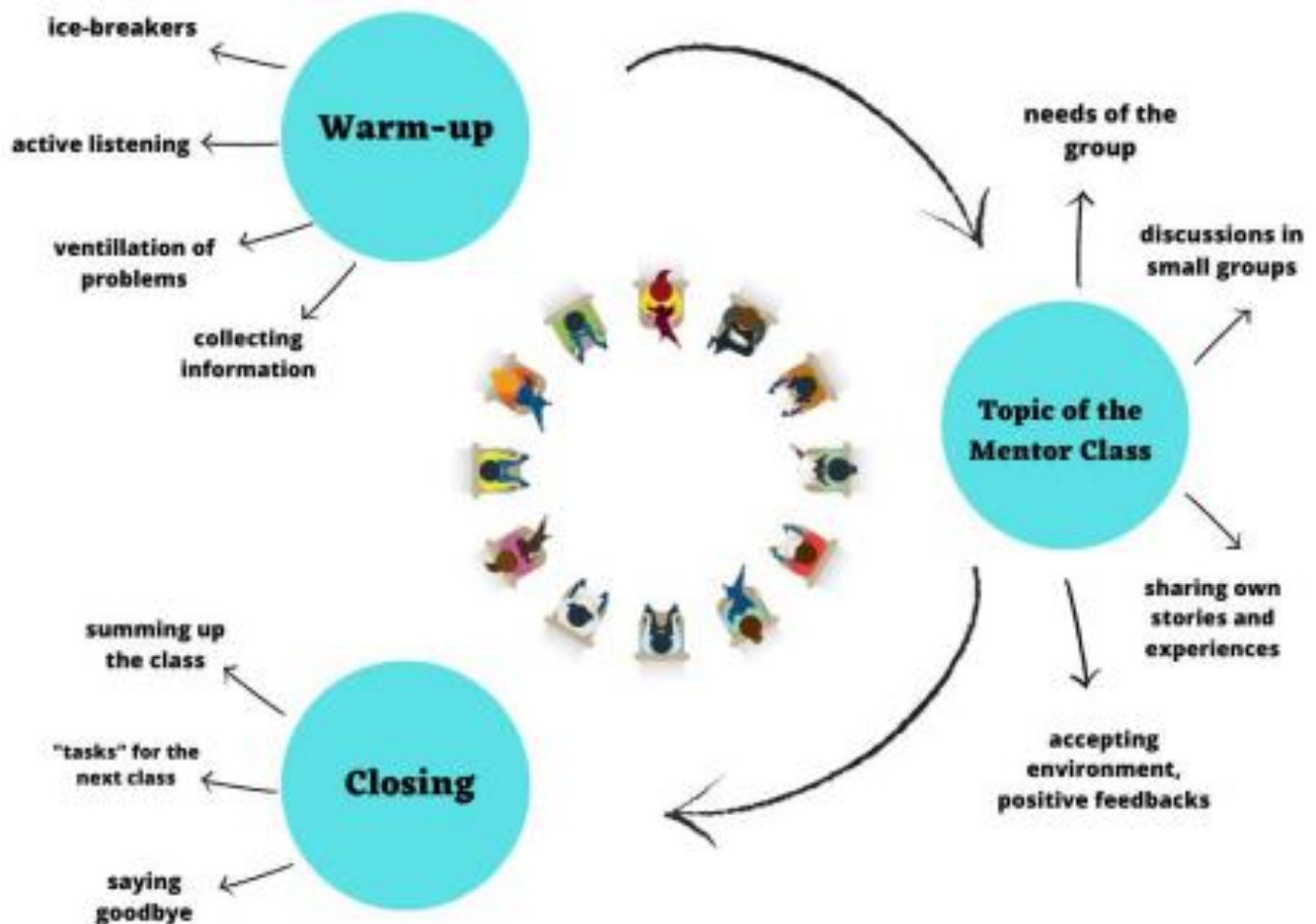


Figure 3.1 How to hold a mentor class