

**Activate Mentoring  
Programme  
2022-23  
Annual Report**

**Laura Lane  
Syeda Razzak  
Caroline Hargreaves**



## Background to Activate

- As part of the College's £5 million commitment to scholarships for minority and underrepresented students from the UK, the **Presidential Scholarship** supports one Master's and one undergraduate student of Black Heritage (Home fee status) from each Faculty.
- The first recipients of the award were selected in the academic year 2022.
- As part of this scholarship mentoring advice and guidance is available through the Activate Mentoring Programme: [Activate Student Mentoring Programme | Imperial students | Imperial College London](#)
- In addition, the College has taken action to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education, through its **Race Equality Charter Action Plan**. Through the action plan, the College has committed to establishing a cross-departmental mentoring scheme, Activate, for PhD students from minority ethnic groups, (but with a focus on students of Black heritage for the 2022-23 pilot year), with any fee status.



# Structure of Activate

---

- Activate mentees and mentors are expected to meet for a minimum of 6 mentoring meetings between November and June each year.
- Dedicated training and resources for both Activate mentors and Activate mentees
- Cohort and community activities, available to both mentees and mentors. The purpose of these is to create a sense of community and allow for networking and peer learning.
- End of year celebration in June each year.

# Activate Mentee / Mentor training

---

For Activate mentors:

- **Workshop One (live online through zoom): What is mentoring?**
  - An introductory workshop setting out the principles of how Activate works, expectations for the partnership, mentoring skills and the “first expectations” meeting (delivered by the Graduate School).
- **Workshop Two (live online through zoom): Safe conversations.**
  - A workshop delivered which introduces mentors to facilitating open discussion about power balances within partnerships, unconscious bias and race (co-delivered by Graduate School, POD and external partners).

For Activate Mentees:

- **Workshop Three (live online through zoom): Meet and Greet**
  - An introductory workshop setting out the principles of how Activate works, expectations for the partnership, mentee skills and the “first expectations” meeting. Mentees then meet with their mentors for their “first expectations” meeting.

# Who are Activate mentors and mentees?

- Mentors can be staff, alumni and PhD students.
- Mentees can be UG and Master's President Scholarship recipients and PhD students of Black heritage (for the 2022-23 pilot year).
- Recruited 31 Activate mentors.
- 19 mentoring partnerships established in 2022-23, mentee led.

## Activate Mentors 2022-23 (31 mentors recruited)

Mentors: Departmental Breakdown	Alumni	Staff	PhD Students
Faculty of Natural Sciences	0	2	1
Faculty of Medicine	0	9	4
Faculty of Engineering	3	0	3
Imperial College Business School	2	0	0
College Administration	n/a	3	n/a
CLCC/CHERS	0	1	1

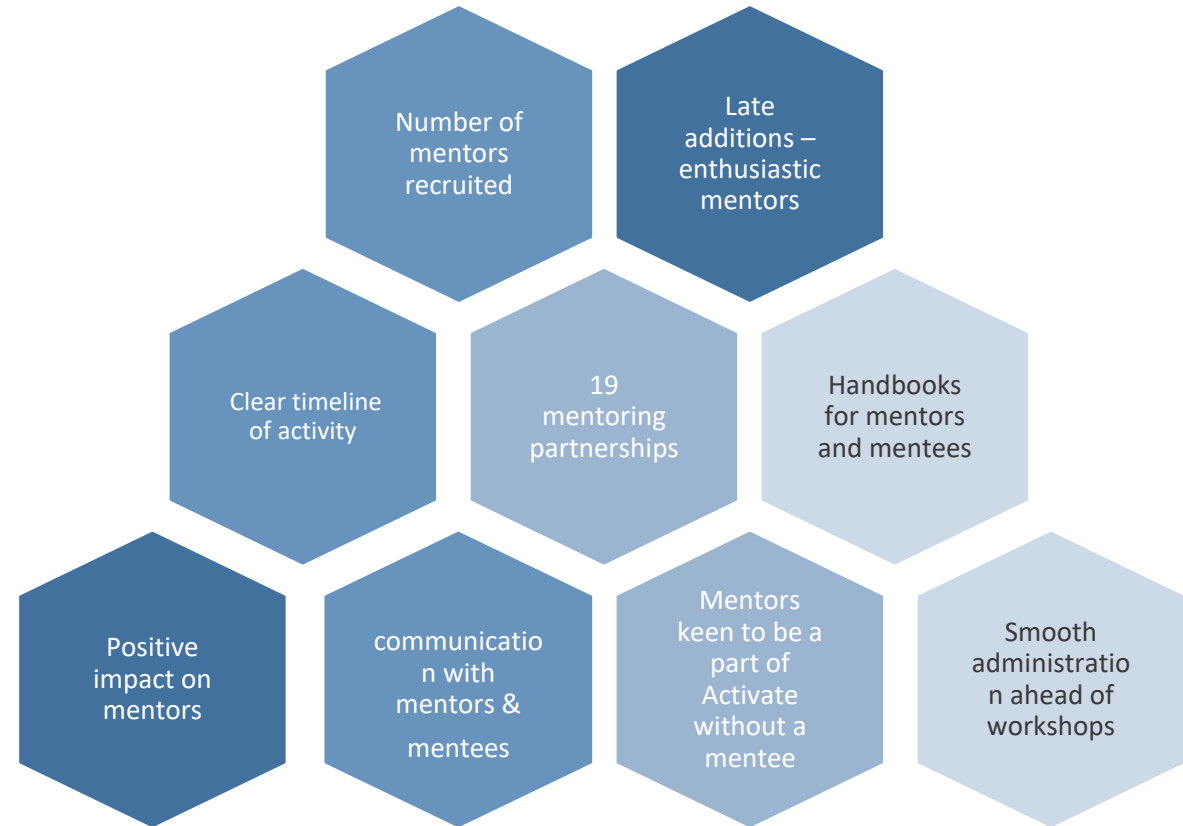
## Activate Mentees 2022-23 (19 in total)

Activate Mentees	Total Number
Presidential Scholars: UG	2
Presidential Scholars: PG (Master's)	3
PhD Students	13

Mentees: Departmental Breakdown	UG	Master's	PhD
Faculty of Natural Sciences	1	1	0
Faculty of Medicine	1	2	5
Faculty of Engineering	0	0	8
Imperial College Business School	0	0	0

We also supported one additional student in the Department of Chemistry

# Operational / Administrative things that went well!





# Operational Action Plan for 2023 - 2024

## Mentors

- Develop a list of questions for mentor biographies
- Consider adding a voice note or short video for each bio

## Recruitment and Promotion of Activate

- Avoiding clashes – share timetable with Faculty Education Managers and Student Financial Support
- PhD Students – Low uptake – introductory drop-in session
- Highlight benefits of Activate on the website
- Publish Activate success story on Imperial news
- For UGs who wish to participate in Activate for a 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year, we will prioritise those yet to be mentored.

## Administration

- Liaise with mentees with their preferred mode of communication – Teams rather than via email
- Manage event/workshop attendance better
- Improve end of year celebration – catering and also speaker

# Activate Mentor/Mentee Workshop Review and Evaluation

Workshop evaluation response rates:

- Workshop one: 50%
- Workshop two: 58%
- Workshop three: 44%

# Workshop one evaluation – What is mentoring? (for mentors)

---

<b>After this course and using the training manual provided, I am/ I feel better able to:</b>	
Outline the role of a mentor and mentee	100 %
Define key stages of mentoring	100 %
Identify skills and practice for effective mentoring	100 %
Explore resources for signposting	93 %
Tailor the Chemistry Meeting Document	100 %
Participants were also asked whether:	
<b>The activities carried out in the course facilitated my learning</b>	100%
<b>The course materials were helpful</b>	100%
<b>If asked about this course, I would recommend it</b>	100%

# Workshop two evaluation – Safe conversations (for mentors)

---

Having completed the self-paced courses, this course and using the training manual provided I am / I feel better able to:

Discuss and manage potential biases	100%
Identify how power dynamics and views on race may influence open discussion	100%
Participants were also asked whether:	
The course matched my expectations?	93%
The activities carried out in the course facilitated my learning	100%
The course materials were helpful	100%
*How confident are you in talking about race and racism with your mentee?	3.9
Do you have a clear understanding of where you can go to find additional resources about race and racism as well as signposting your mentee?	86%
If asked about this course, I would recommend it	100%

# Workshop three evaluation – Meet and greet (for mentees)

---

---

After this training and using the training manual provided, I am/ I feel better able to:

Outline the role of a mentor and mentee 100%

Define key stages of mentoring 100%

Identify the skills that I need to be an effective mentee 100%

Explore resources for signposting 86%

Share and clarify expectations with my mentor 100%

Participants were also asked whether:

The workshop matched my expectations 100%

The activities carried out in the workshop facilitated my learning about being mentored 83%

The workshop materials were helpful 100%

I would recommend this workshop to fellow students 83%

# Training workshop action plan 2023/24

Workshop two: Add a pre course ice breaker to Teams, offer two options for live training at different times during the day, explore role play scenario and reduce longer breakout exercises

Circulate workshop training manual in advance

Create online Teams platform for mentors/mentees to interact to support community development

Workshop one: Fully online to accommodate more mentors but with new in-person/on campus time for networking and discussions

Implement new approach to improve evaluation response rate

Circulate training dates/ calendar invitations asap

Better signposting to sources of support within workshops

Workshop three: Fully online, clearer instruction and guidance around boundaries, new networking for mentees to ask questions

**Were there any challenges you experienced with your mentoring partnership?**

- “No, I could not have asked for a better Mentor!”

**What did you enjoy the most about the mentoring partnership?**

- “My mentor was knowledgeable, easygoing and friendly which facilitated interaction. Overall, it was a great experience.”

**How could we improve the Activate Mentoring Programme in the future?**

- “I think having mentors who come from the same background or field as the mentees would be more effective. This is because such mentors can draw upon their own experiences in the same field, providing valuable insights and guidance.”
- “with more diverse mentee, not only for Black people, but Asian and others”

100% of mentees who responded to the evaluation would recommend Activate

---

# Overall Programme feedback (mentees)

# Overall Programme feedback (mentors)

---

## **Describe any challenges you have experienced with your mentoring partnership.**

- ““Only that I did not have experience with going through a PhD but we quickly overcame that barrier and focused on other aspects of his work, such as communications and building a public profile as a researcher”

## **If applicable, please tell us about how the Activate Mentoring Programme has impacted positively on you?**

- “I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience. On a personal level it was great developing skills related to mentoring, such as communication and listening. It was also great to see the mentee grow through their achievements, and they also benefitted through obtaining a PhD position with guidance from our sessions.”
- “I benefited greatly from the trainings, from the interactions with the Activate Mentoring programme team and the other mentors. I enjoyed my relationship with my mentee who was absolutely delightful.”

## **Are there any improvements which could be made to the programme which would enhance your experience as an Activate Mentor?**

- ““I think the programme was great. Perhaps having a Teams group chat on Teams where mentors can talk to each other on different approaches they can take for mentoring would be beneficial.”
- “While we mainly had enough to talk about being guided by what my mentee wanted to talk about, I wonder if having the option of some materials or more structured aspects/questions could also be helpful to draw from for the sessions.”

100% of mentors who responded to the evaluation rated Activate as excellent



# Moving into 23/24

- The programme team were delighted to receive funding in 2023 from the College's Research England Culture Fund to enable conversion of two training workshops to fully online.
- This has enabled Activate to be extended to PhD students of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups in 2024 and will further support extension of the Programme to recipients of the President's Scholarships for disabled students in 2025.
- We have also invested in Pushfar as a matching platform to support the Activate extension.
- 58 mentoring places will be available to students next academic session (8 scholarship recipients and up to 50 PhD places)

