

Introducing the IR Society's Mentoring Programme

In partnership with
equitory

The IR Society and Equitory are about to launch an exciting new mentoring programme for IROs. **Robert Dann** and **Fiona O’Nolan** share the details.

In our latest initiative to support our members in their career development, we are delighted to be launching our new mentoring programme, which has been developed in partnership with Equitory, the specialist IR consultancy.

This programme will assist in the matching of mentees with suitable mentors, facilitate an introduction and provide a basic framework for the rest of the mentoring relationship. In 2021 we will begin with a virtual-only pilot programme open to all corporate members, which will run from March to September.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is essentially about helping people to develop their careers more effectively. The mentoring relationship is intended to help the mentee to build confidence and enable them to take control of their own personal, professional and career development. The mentor is responsible for encouraging the mentee to work towards their own individual objectives and be a motivating guide for the mentee on their journey.



Rob Gurner, head of investor relations at Plus500 said: “Mentoring is so important, at every stage of your career. For a mentee, you have the opportunity to seek guidance, in this case on IR-related matters, with a view to ensuring that your career is on the right track. For the mentor, you can help to nurture talent and to support others in their career development, by drawing on past experience to offer advice and feedback.

“Many IRO’s, including myself, work in a team of one. Consequently, there’s a very limited pool of people within

our organisations with whom we can discuss IR-related matters. In these circumstances, the opportunity for IR-specific mentoring is difficult to achieve. This initiative therefore offers a unique way of being able to develop IR-specific mentoring relationships, across different organisations and industries.

“I think it is vital to nurture and develop the next generation of IROs and I see this initiative as a great opportunity to be able to help to do that.”

Why is it beneficial for your career development?

Having a mentor enables you to develop skills that you don’t currently have that can benefit your career. You get the benefit of someone else’s experience and skills. Your mentor is able to provide advice and guidance at a distance, with no other

agenda than to help you solve problems in the short term or to develop your career in the long term.

We have been delighted at the level of interest at this early stage, both from potential mentees, but especially from those members keen to contribute and share their knowledge as mentors.

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Robert Dann is head of marketing and operations at The IR Society. robert.dann@irsociety.org.uk



Fiona O’Nolan is investor relations director at Equitory. fiona@equitory.com

‘ A well constructed mentoring programme will provide external support, validation and a ‘listening ear’ ’



Clara Melia, founder at Equitory, speaking about their decision to support and help develop this initiative said: “We believe mentoring is a very important extension to more formal learning, and is particularly valuable to more niche careers such as investor relations. A well constructed mentoring programme will provide external support, validation and a ‘listening ear’ for professionals who often operate in isolated roles and/or in high pressured environments.

“I am passionate about championing mentoring across our industry and am really excited about Equitory’s involvement with The IR Society in this pilot programme.”

Mentoring Programme overview

For the pilot programme we will invite corporate IROs to register their interest in taking part in the programme, either as mentors or as mentees, by completing a simple online application form.

This will allow us to match mentors and mentees based on their answers to the questions in the form and then introduce the two parties. Mentors and mentees will then be able to arrange an introductory meeting to ensure mutual compatibility and to set the mentee’s Individual Development Plan (IDP). If for

any reason they are not compatible, then we will attempt a new match. In the event that we are unable to successfully match an applicant, we will give them priority during the next intake for the programme.

The mentoring relationship will last for six months and will be based on regular meetings between the two parties, which can be held in person (if government regulations allow), by phone or online, with the format to be agreed by both parties.

At the end of the programme the mentee will have completed their IDP

and both parties will provide feedback on their partner, as well as their experience of the mentoring programme. This feedback will be entirely confidential and will only be used to improve the quality of the mentoring programme.

Taking part in the programme

Mentors will need to be willing to share information about their own career path, provide guidance, motivation, emotional support and role modelling. They may help with exploring career opportunities, setting goals, developing contacts and identifying suitable learning resources. They will also help the mentee to establish an IDP.

Mentees will need to be motivated around planning and managing the direction of their own professional life and be open to coaching, feedback and guidance by the mentor. They will meet with the mentor as established by the mentoring programme structure will create an IDP with the support of the mentor.

Choosing a mentor that has the right skills and experience that will benefit you is important so take some time to think about whether you want a mentor that can help with short term challenges or longer-term career development. Or both!

More information

If you would like to take part in the programme, as either a mentor or a mentee, or if you would like to find out more, you can register your interest by sending an email to mentoring@irsociety.org.uk or by completing the online application form at irsociety.org.uk/careers. ■



Angela Catlin, associate director of investor relations at Lloyds Banking Group, who is considering joining the scheme as a mentee said: “Given the challenges we are all facing across all industries, it is more important than ever to have a supportive network, and it would be hugely beneficial to have a mentor with whom you can discuss any concerns, challenges, opportunities and career progression within the world of investor relations.”

Pilot programme key dates

Invitations to participate	18 December 2020
Applications open	18 December 2020
Launch webinar and training event	15 January 2021
Closing date for applications	29 January 2021
Matching process	February 2021
Pilot programme invitations sent	By end February 2021
Pilot programme starts	1st week March 2021
Pilot programme ends	End September 2021