Position Description – LEAP Volunteer Mentor

About the program

The LEAP UP - Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) Program aims to promote purposeful relationships in which mentors work with high school students from refugee backgrounds, to assist them to develop a positive sense of self and knowledge of educational pathways available post high school.

The program runs over 11 weeks and comprises:

- **In-School Mentoring Sessions**
  Mentors will work with two to three mentees simultaneously for an hour each week at an allocated school. Session times will be at a fixed time each week and allocation will be based on mentor availability.
  Please note – mentors must allocate 4 hours per week for in school mentoring sessions which includes the session, pre/post debrief and travel time.

- **University Experience Day**
  This one day event will take place on a Friday in the middle weeks of the program. It brings high school students, teachers and principals from partner schools on campus for a fun and engaging day of activities. For many mentees in the program, this day is a transformative experience and complements the in-school mentoring sessions.
  During this day mentors will be actively involved in running campus tours for mentees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mentee Orientation</td>
<td>Develop a basic understanding of the program</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Developing Rapport</td>
<td>- Getting to know each other</td>
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<td>- Rapport building</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Discover</td>
<td>Finding assets and strengths</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dream</td>
<td>- Discuss aspirations, dreams &amp; hopes</td>
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<td>- Set short-term and long-term goals</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>- Explore pathways – identify multiple routes to achieve goals</td>
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<td>to</td>
<td>- Skill building – research skills, study skills, time management skills</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Week</td>
<td>- Development of realistic educational aspirations</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>- Student mentees are more independent at this stage – they continue to build their skills and research more about the pathways identified in the Design Phase</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Don’t settle</td>
<td>Reflection &amp; future direction</td>
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Who are the mentees?

Mentees from our partner high schools are from refugee backgrounds. They are students in school grades between year 9 and year 11. They are given the choice to self-nominate or are recommended by their teachers. The following mentee demographics are based on participation in the Refugee Mentoring program in Semester 2, 2018.

- **Partner schools:**
  - Blacktown Boys High School
  - Bankstown Senior College
  - Evans High School
  - Fairfield High School
  - Holroyd High School
  - Miller Tech High School
  - Northmead CAPA High School
  - Prairiewood High School

- **139 MENTEES**
  - 46% MALE
  - 54% FEMALE

- **Top 5 countries of birth**
  1. Syria
  2. Iraq
  3. Iran
  4. Afghanistan
  5. Pakistan

- **35 different languages**
  1. Arabic
  2. Dari
  3. Farsi
  4. Assyrian
  5. Burmese
Rationale for the LEAP UP - Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) Program

Many students from refugee backgrounds have experienced significant disruption to their education and have had little or no schooling prior to enrollment in an Australian school. As a result, they face considerable challenges in education and training. Many have little access to, and knowledge of, the range of higher education options available, and possess limited networks, knowledge and confidence to navigate the maze of vocational and educational pathways in Australia. It is within this space that the LEAP UP-Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) Program operates.

The Program seeks to empower and equip these students with the capabilities and information required to access the best outcomes. Mentors help and inspire the high school students to engage in their school life, progress in their studies and plan their transition from high school to further education. They are role models and caring adults, who support the students to unlock their potential.

Program requirements of Mentors

- Complete compulsory online (4-5 hours) and face-to-face training (1 day)
- Be available for 3-4 hours per week for 11 weeks during the semester
- Able to participate in the University Experience Day
- Available to attend focus groups and feedback sessions
- Undertake a satisfactory ‘Working With Children Check’ prior to commencement of program

What we are looking for – desirable skills, qualities and attributes

**Diversity** – experience working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or willing to learn about the refugee experience.

**Communication Skills** – mentors are friendly, engaging able to communicate in a non-judgmental way. They are able to develop active listening and questioning skills.

**Commitment** – mentors are reliable and dedicated to the program.

**Self-Awareness** – mentors have awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and are able to ask for help and support.

**Outlook** – positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn from their mentees. Mentors do not try to ‘save’ or ‘fix’ young people.

**Professional** – ability to maintain boundaries, respect confidentiality and act within the program’s policies and procedures.

**Work Independently** – mentors are able to use initiative, take direction and work with limited supervision.

**Experience** - previous mentoring experience is helpful but not necessary.
Mentor Role

Mentors work with mentees mainly in the following key areas:

- Awareness of personal strengths, talents and skills
- Goal setting
- Time Management
- Study and organisational skills
- Informal interpersonal skills
- Research skills - tertiary education pathways
- School and university culture, expectations, systems and structures in Australia

This is not a tutoring program – mentor's role is to work with high school students in their decision-making process regarding further education based on their skills and interests.

Mentors are not qualified to provide detailed academic advice, but are able to refer specific enquiries from mentees to the coordinating teacher or LEAP program staff as appropriate.

Mentor Responsibilities

- Plan for each mentoring session by using resources provided by the program and your own resources and insights
- Commit to the whole length of the program
- Participate in weekly debrief sessions and any ongoing training as required
- Engage with their mentees through the pursuit of common interests
- Provide non-judgmental, unconditional and open-minded support and friendship to the mentees
- Act as a positive role model and encourage new experiences and opportunities
- Encourage the mentee to reach their potential and help them identify and achieve their goals
- Focus on building and encouraging self esteem of mentees
- Use own personal interests and life experiences as a valuable resource to support the mentoring session
- Maintain confidentiality and set clear boundaries in line with the LEAP Mentor Code of Conduct
- Seek guidance from program staff when needed
- Maintain regular contact with LEAP program staff and the Mentor Leader and provide information about the progress of the mentoring relationship.

Reporting relationship and support

You will be supported in your role by the LEAP Mentoring Team comprising of two Project Officers. Each school will be allocated a Mentor Leader who is usually a volunteer mentor who has participated in the program at least once before. The Mentor Leader has the role of providing guidance and support to the other mentors.

A school coordinating teacher will be present at the high school during each of the sessions and can be an additional source of support for mentors.

Throughout the program you will have access to the online training portal and other resources disseminated by the program staff.

Additional information

For more information please contact the LEAP Office:
leap@mq.edu.au or
02 9850 7394

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