

Terms of Reference for the IFST Mentorship Programme

1. Introduction

The Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) is committed to fostering professional development, knowledge exchange, and career growth within the food sector. This mentorship programme pairs experienced professionals (mentors) with early-career professionals and students (mentees) to provide guidance, support, and inspiration to the next generation of food scientists and technologists.

2. Objectives The mentorship programme aims to:

- Support the professional development of early-career professionals and students.
- Facilitate knowledge transfer and networking opportunities within the food sector.
- Enhance the confidence, skills, and career prospects of mentees.
- Encourage leadership and coaching skills in mentors.
- Strengthen the sense of community within IFST.

3. Programme Structure

- **Duration:** The mentorship programme will run on an ongoing basis from pairing, with an option for mentees and mentors to extend their partnership if mutually agreed.
- **Matching Process:** Mentees and mentors will be matched based on their professional backgrounds, interests, and goals. Participants will complete an application form outlining their expectations and expertise.
- **Engagement:** Mentors and mentees are encouraged to meet (virtually or in person) at least once per quarter. Additional communication can occur as needed. Initial communication will take place via the IFST Community Platform, where mentors and mentees will be added to a network.
- **Programme Kick-off:** Mentors will be selected in Q2 2025, with registration for mentees opening during National Food Science and Technology Week 2025 (w/c 2 June 2025), signifying the activation of the programme.
- **Safeguarding:** Mentors and mentees must abide by the [IFST Mentorship Programme Safeguarding TOR](#) and the [IFST Code of Professional Conduct](#).
- **Reflection and feedback:** The programme will offer reflection sessions twice per year to celebrate achievements and gather insights for future improvements to the IFST Mentorship Programme.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Mentors

- Provide guidance and share knowledge, experience, and industry insights.
- Support mentees in setting and achieving career goals.
- Encourage professional development and skill-building.
- Act as a role model, offering constructive feedback and encouragement.
- Commit to maintaining regular communication with mentees.

4.2 Mentees

- Define clear goals and objectives for the mentorship experience.
- Be proactive in seeking advice and engaging with mentors.
- Show openness to feedback and a willingness to learn.
- Commit to regular communication and participation in the programme.
- Respect the mentor's time and contributions.

4.3 IFST

- Coordinate the recruitment and matching process.
- Provide training and resources to support mentors and mentees.
- Organise programme events and facilitate communication.
- Monitor progress and address any challenges or issues.
- Evaluate the programme's outcomes and implement improvements as needed.

5. Code of Conduct and Safeguarding

All participants are expected to:

- Maintain professionalism, respect, and confidentiality within the mentorship relationship.
- Adhere to the [IFST Mentorship Programme Safeguarding TOR](#)
- Adhere to IFST's values and ethical guidelines, which can be found in the [IFST Code of Professional Conduct](#), which applied to **all** IFST members.
- Report any concerns or breaches of conduct via the [online form](#) and refer to the [Safeguarding TOR](#).

6. Eligibility and Application Process

- **Mentors:** Open to IFST members with at least five years of professional experience in the food sector.
- **Mentees:** Open to IFST student members and early-career professionals (up to five years of experience).
- Applications will be reviewed by the IFST mentorship committee, and successful applicants will be notified.

7. Evaluation and Feedback The programme's success will be assessed through participant feedback collected via surveys and feedback sessions. Feedback will inform future iterations of the programme.

8. Contact Information For queries or support, please contact the Bobby Edge-Partington, IFST mentorship programme coordinator at r.edgepartington@ifst.org.