

IBM's MentorPlace e-mentoring programme

About IBM

IBM is one of the world's largest global business services providers, operating in over 170 countries, employing ca. 400,000 people, who develop and deliver advanced information technology and consulting services to businesses in the private, public and NGO sectors. In the UK IBM employs around 17,500 people and has office locations throughout the UK.

How does IBM support education in the UK through e-mentoring?

IBM MentorPlace is a global e-mentoring programme, partnering IBM employees with students in selected schools and colleges, aiming to raise aspirations of young people, develop their communication skills, and support them with their studies and future career options.

Schools/Colleges and IBM Project Coordinators form an active partnership to ensure that the needs of the young people are understood and met through the design of the project, and that the school is able to support the students with engaging with their mentor on a regular basis.

In 2008-09 the IBM MentorPlace programme engaged with secondary schools, sixth form/FE colleges, and university undergraduates. Approximately 300 students from 11 secondary schools (years 9-11), 3 Sixth Form/FE Colleges and 1 University (2nd year undergraduates) participated in 2008-09 projects across the UK, together with approx. 300 mentors from 15 different IBM locations.

2008-09 MentorPlace projects were delivered across the UK, to schools/colleges/universities in the following locations: Feltham, Shepperton, Bridgewater, Coventry, Southampton, Winchester, Manchester, Portsmouth, London, Birmingham, Stevenage, Swansea, and Walton-on-Thames

How does the e-mentoring programme work with education partners?

Each IBM MentorPlace project is designed to meet the needs of the school and students involved; some projects are closely aligned with GCSE/BTEC Business Studies to support students with their coursework; others enable students to consider their career pathways and post-16 options, raising their awareness and understanding of the opportunities available to them and the steps they need to take next. All IBM MentorPlace projects in the UK aim to empower young people to make informed decisions about their studies and future.

The e-mentoring is supplemented with several face-to-face events with mentors and mentees coming together, both at IBM, and at the school/college, to enable each participant to experience each other's environments. Events at IBM aim to demystify the world of work, with young people meeting a range of staff from across the business, taking part in business simulation activities, whilst building a rapport with

their mentor. A final celebration event commends the young people for the achievements they have made throughout the project.

Student feedback for 2008-09 projects included the following:

- *“It was very good at helping me to know where I can go from where I am now career-wise...”*
- *“It was greatly beneficial to just have somebody to share my decisions with; it helped me confirm that I was making the right decision.”*

The programme benefits the volunteer mentors that participate – mentors have commented on how they had gained insight into young people’s culture and communication styles, learnt more about the current education system and had also developed useful *“coaching skills”* and *“interpersonal and networking skills”* which they could apply to their own roles within IBM.

Where can I find out more?

You can find out more about the MentorPlace programme at <http://ibm.mentorplace.epals.org> or find out more about IBM’s overall commitment to Corporate Citizenship at <http://www.ibm.com/ibm/responsibility>.