By being a mentor and sharing your lived experience and expertise, you can make a real difference to a person’s life and the society in which they live. The aim of The Cowrie Scholarship Foundation’s (the CSF) mentoring programme is to help the students develop their confidence and ability to discuss their chosen subject outside of their current curriculum. We welcome people from all backgrounds, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability or socio-economic background, to apply to be a CSF Mentor; we will select and match mentors and mentees in the best way it can. Please note the following:

- We will provide two mentors for each Cowrie Scholar
- At least one of these mentors will ideally have a similar academic background to the mentee in terms of broader subject area, although this is not essential
- Each academic year we will ask that you volunteer a **minimum of three mentoring meetings or discussions of at least one hour duration** to speak with your mentee. You can of course spend more time talking with your mentee if you like!
- Mentoring sessions can take place over the phone or via video-conferencing (e.g. Zoom, MS Teams), or in-person in a public place (and in a COVID-compliant way if relevant)
- We will provide some guidance on the mentoring sessions, including an ‘on-boarding’ webinar in which we will outline what is expected of the Mentor and Mentee from the mentoring programme
- Basic safeguarding considerations must be followed (e.g., DBS check; see below), noting our guidance regarding bullying and harassment
- Where mutually agreed by mentor and mentee, and where practical, we will continue the mentor/mentee agreement for the following two years of the degree (or longer dependent on degree duration)
- We will provide up to £500 of financial support to assist mentoring sessions (e.g. the initial and any subsequent face-to-face meetings), covering reasonable expenses such as travel, lunch, or coffee, for example.
Cowrie Mentor Scholar Selection – Sign Up

To become a mentor, please follow the link on the following page. Once we have a mentee match, we will contact you to discuss your availability and whether or not we need to conduct a DBS check. Once this check is complete, we will pair you with a Cowrie Scholar.

Why Mentor: By sharing your lived experience and expertise, you can make a real difference to a person’s life and the society in which they live. The CSF is focused on supporting disadvantaged Black British students attending university. We recognise that many non-Black people may have experienced and overcome similar socio-economic barriers or prejudice to those faced by these students, be that inside or outside of Higher Education. Your lived experience may therefore be especially useful and empowering for our scholars, many of whom will be trying to navigate an unfamiliar space associated with unusual and often unwritten rules and cultures.

1. Learn to see things differently - As a mentor you can broaden your own personal and professional horizons and develop your interpersonal skills, i.e., during your career you will likely work with a wide range of people, spanning different racial and ethnic groups, and coming from different socio-economic backgrounds to your own. In order to enable these people to thrive, it is important that you are able to empathise with your mentee and their lived experience.

In some cases, mentoring allows you to engage with someone younger than yourself. Someone with talent and ambition, but who might currently lack the confidence and tools to fully realise their potential. They may see the world differently, and have views and beliefs that differ to your own. In a rapidly changing world, it is essential to understand how other generations think, e.g., how do they view your generation? Sharing your experiences may help you understand them in a different light, through the lens of another person with different experiences. Conversely, a moment that barely made an impact on you may in fact provide crucial insight to another person.

2. Challenge old behaviour - A different point of view can help you understand why you take a certain course of action, or why you think in a certain way. It can also help you decide if your views and actions are appropriate and as supportive of others as you wish. As you pass on your advice and experience, you will have a better idea of how you are living and moderating your own life, and this might help you improve your approach to a range of personal and professional interactions.

3. Practice being a leader - Leadership is a valuable skill in any environment, and mentoring is a key component of being a trusted and successful leader. The ability to help others learn and progress is a key skill in any career. Being a CSF mentor will help you develop your own communication, leadership, and mentorship skills.

4. Change someone’s life - As a mentor you have much to offer, i.e., engaging with someone who has had an entirely different background can be immensely rewarding for both of you and can help create the brighter futures for those talented individuals and the society they live in.
Cowrie Scholarship Foundation – Become a Mentor

Sign up to become a Cowrie Mentor here.

*DBS checks are carried out as part of our safeguarding policy. You can find out more about them here: https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-applicant-criminal-record