

# Peer Mentoring for International Students

**Baljit Gill**

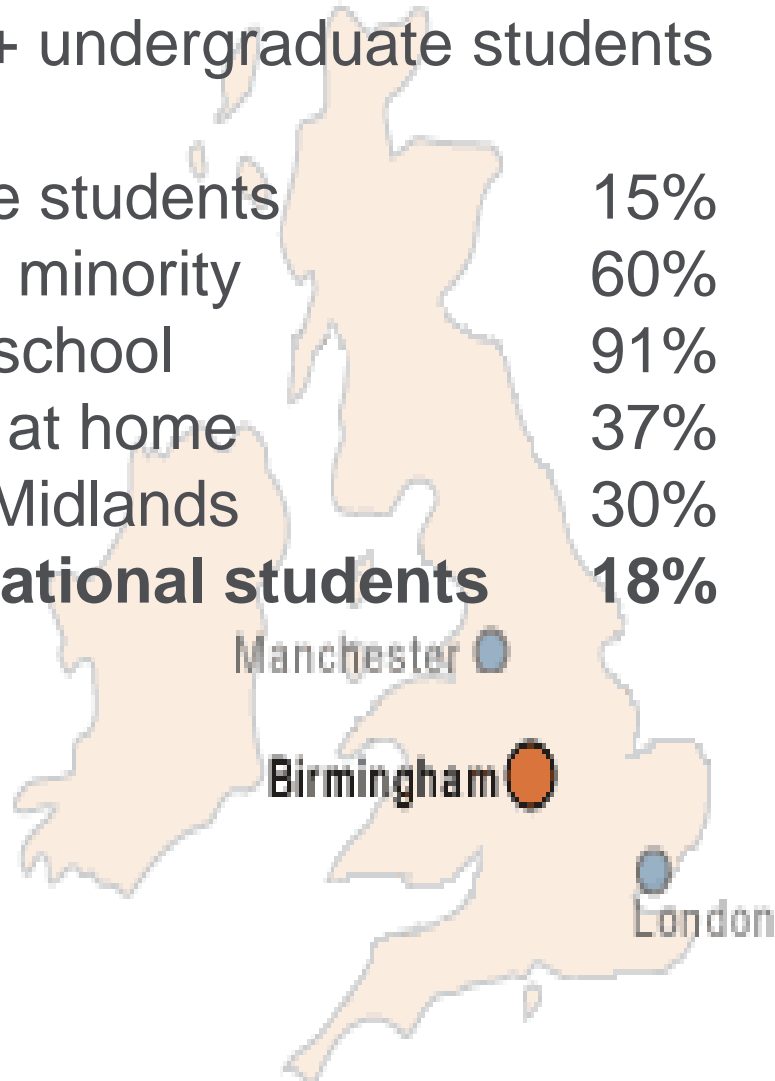
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# Aston University

7,500+ undergraduate students

Mature students	15%
Ethnic minority	60%
State school	91%
Living at home	37%
West Midlands	30%
<b>International students</b>	<b>18%</b>



# What is mentoring?

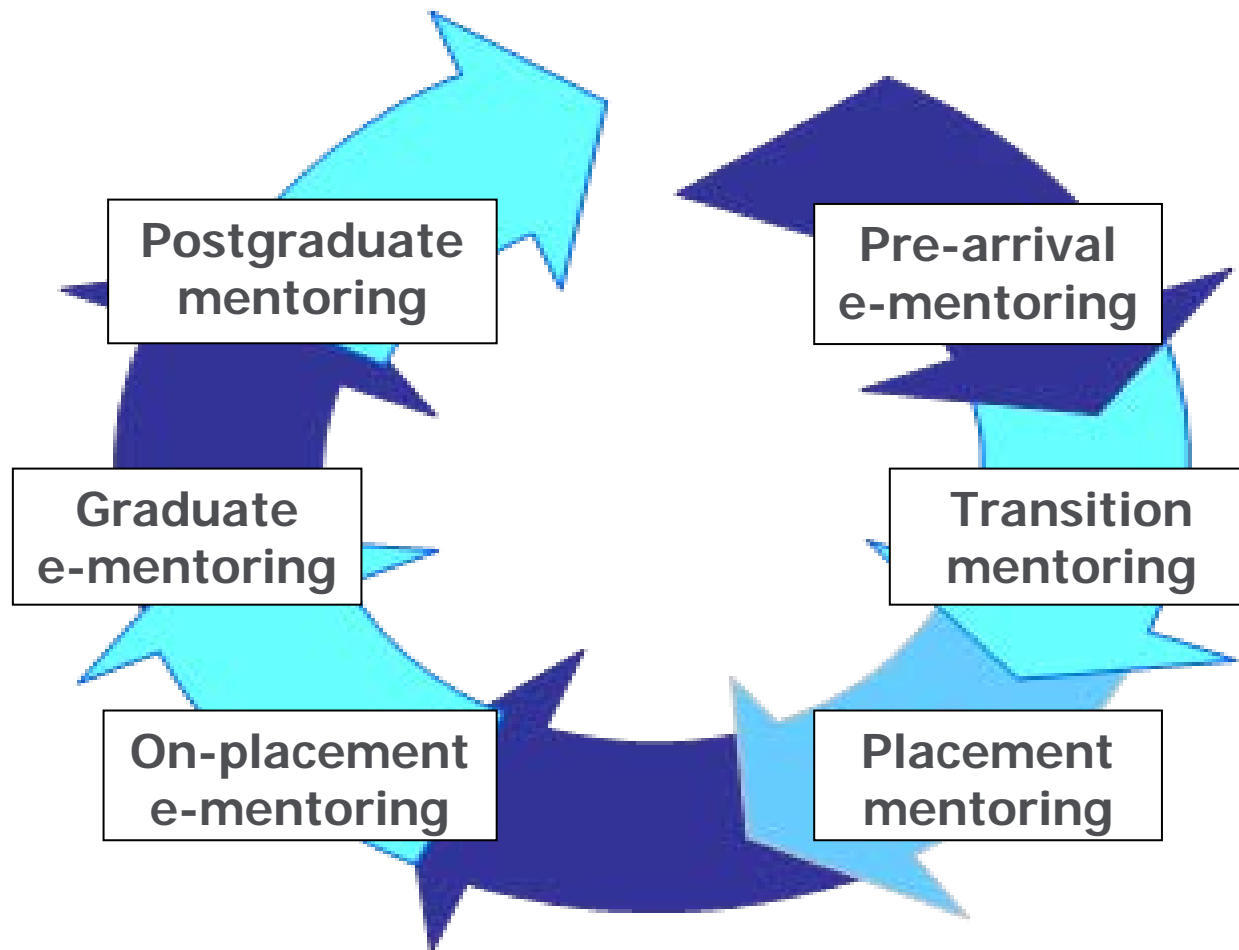
**“A one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual mentor voluntarily gives his/her time to support and encourage another”**

Active Communities Unit, Home Office 2001

**“... empowering people to plan their own future and capitalise on their own potential...”**

European Community

# Peer Mentoring across the student lifecycle



# Pre-arrival E-Mentoring

- ▶ Undergraduates
  - ▶ Home students
    - ▶ Matched by degree programme
    - ▶ Living arrangements
    - ▶ Any other requirements
  - ▶ International (and EU) students
    - ▶ Matched by home country
    - ▶ Living arrangements
    - ▶ Degree programme
    - ▶ Any other requirements

# Type of support

- ▶ Information on...
  - ▶ Birmingham / UK
  - ▶ University life
  - ▶ Accommodation
  - ▶ Course
  - ▶ Societies
  - ▶ Support services
  - ▶ ....almost anything!
- ▶ Not...
  - ▶ Visa/immigration advice
  - ▶ Legal advice
  - ▶ Counselling
  - ▶ Academic tutoring
  - ▶ Sales opportunity
  - ▶ Dating service!

# Timescale

- ▶ Spring term: Recruitment and training current students as mentors
- ▶ July/Aug: Early requests from new international students
- ▶ Post A level results: Contact all new students offering pre-entry support
- ▶ Late Aug/September: E-mentoring starts
- ▶ Freshers' week: E-mentoring ends
- ▶ Freshers' week: Social meeting event
- ▶ Week 1+: Transfer to Peer Mentoring

# Information

- ▶ Nationality/home country
- ▶ On/off campus accommodation
- ▶ School/programme of study
- ▶ Age/gender/ethnicity/disability
- ▶ Feedback and evaluation
  - ▶ **Mentees:** *Pre and post mentoring questionnaire*
    - ▶ Adjusting to life in UK
    - ▶ Settling in to Birmingham
    - ▶ Understanding University processes
    - ▶ Confidence about making new friends
    - ▶ Preparation for course
  - ▶ **Mentors:** *Post mentoring questionnaire*

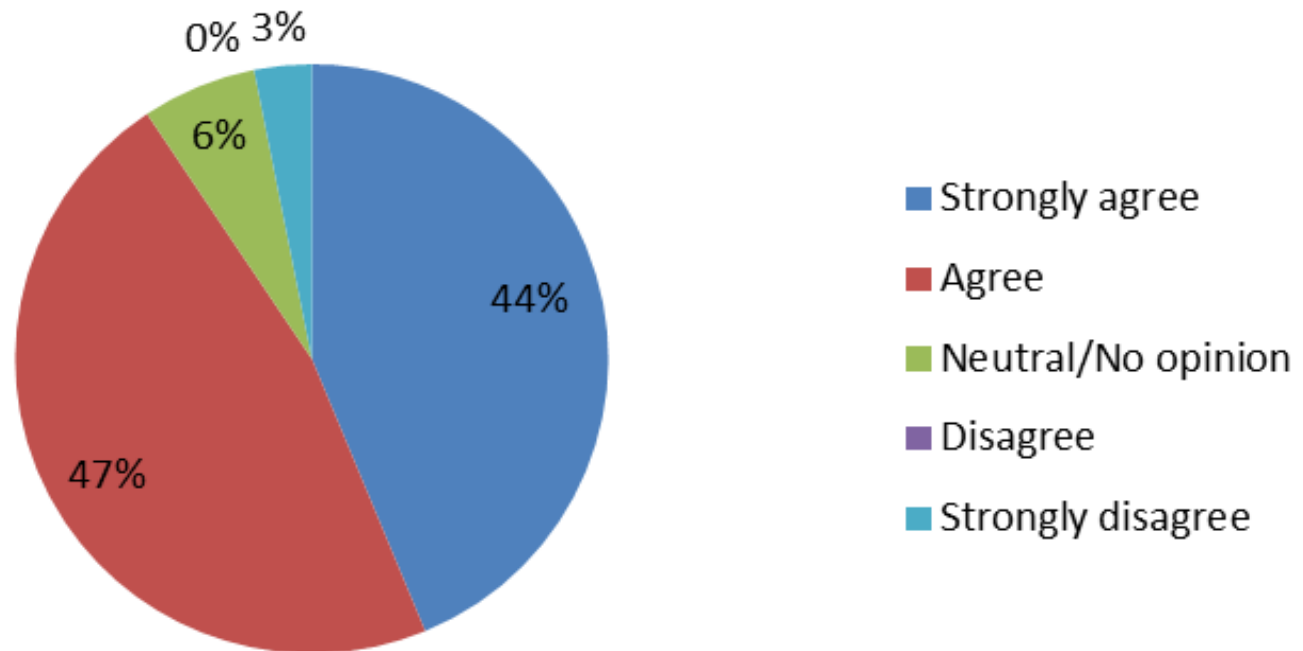


# Nationalities of mentees 2012-13

- ▶ **Chinese**
- ▶ **Indian**
- ▶ **Spanish**
- ▶ **French**
- ▶ **German**
- ▶ Canadian
- ▶ Bulgarian
- ▶ Malaysian
- ▶ Nigerian
- ▶ Pakistani
- ▶ Batswana
- ▶ Romanian
- ▶ South Korean
- ▶ American
- ▶ Irish
- ▶ Kuwaiti
- ▶ Saudi Arabian
- ▶ Singaporean
- ▶ Sri Lankan
- ▶ Swedish
- ▶ Thai
- ▶ Vietnamese
- ▶ Argentine
- ▶ Australian
- ▶ Austrian
- ▶ Danish
- ▶ Egyptian
- ▶ Greek
- ▶ Hong Kong
- ▶ Indonesian
- ▶ Italian
- ▶ Jamaican
- ▶ Kazakhstani
- ▶ Kenyan
- ▶ Latvian
- ▶ Lithuanian
- ▶ Luxembourger
- ▶ Norwegian
- ▶ Palestinian
- ▶ Serbian
- ▶ Slovakian
- ▶ Slovenian
- ▶ Turkish

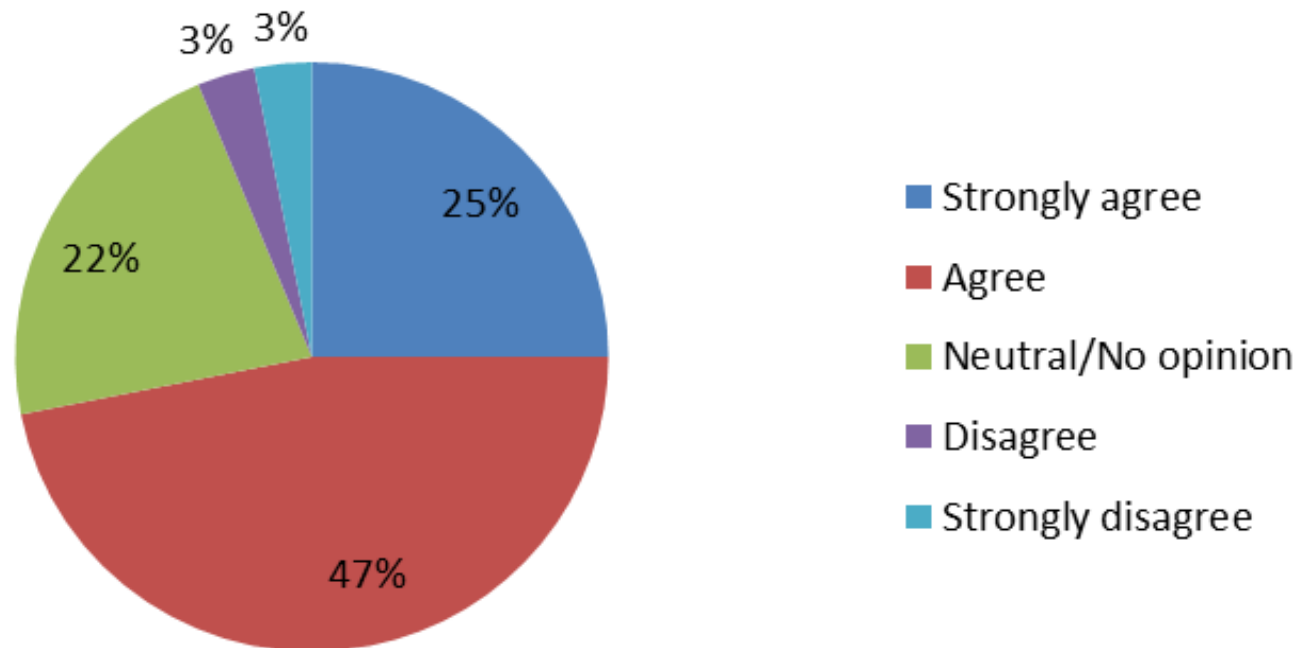
# Feedback and evaluation data – Mentees Prepare for University

**Having contact with my ementor has helped me prepare for starting university**



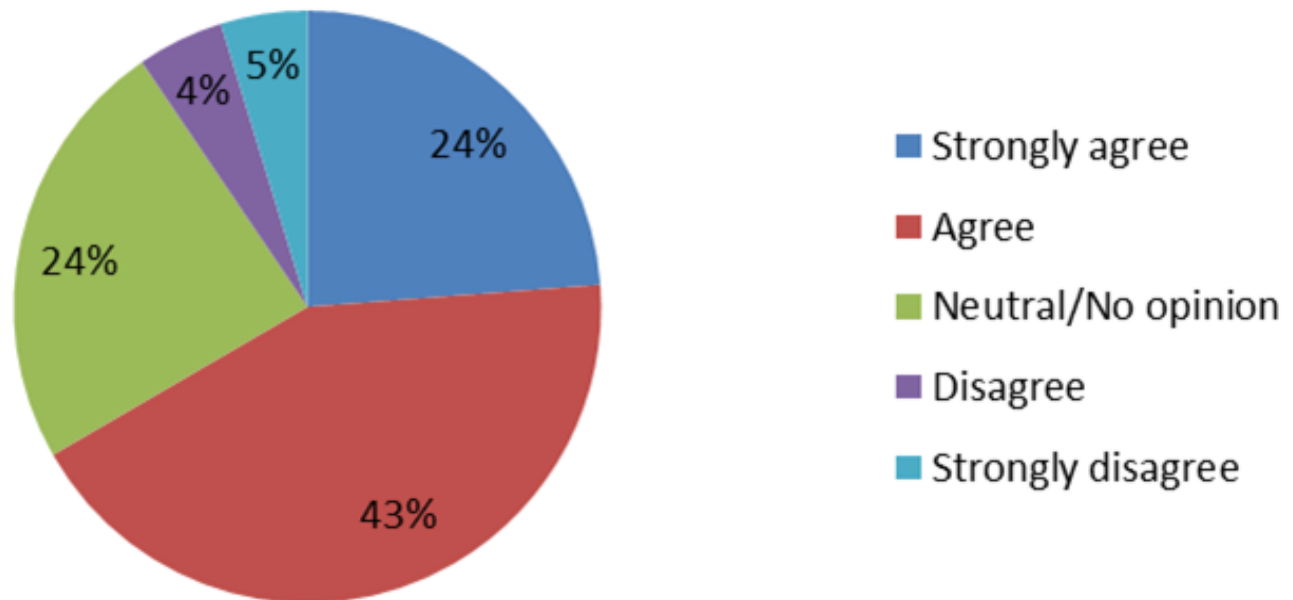
# Confidence making new friends

**Having contact with my ementor has increased my confidence about making new friends at university**



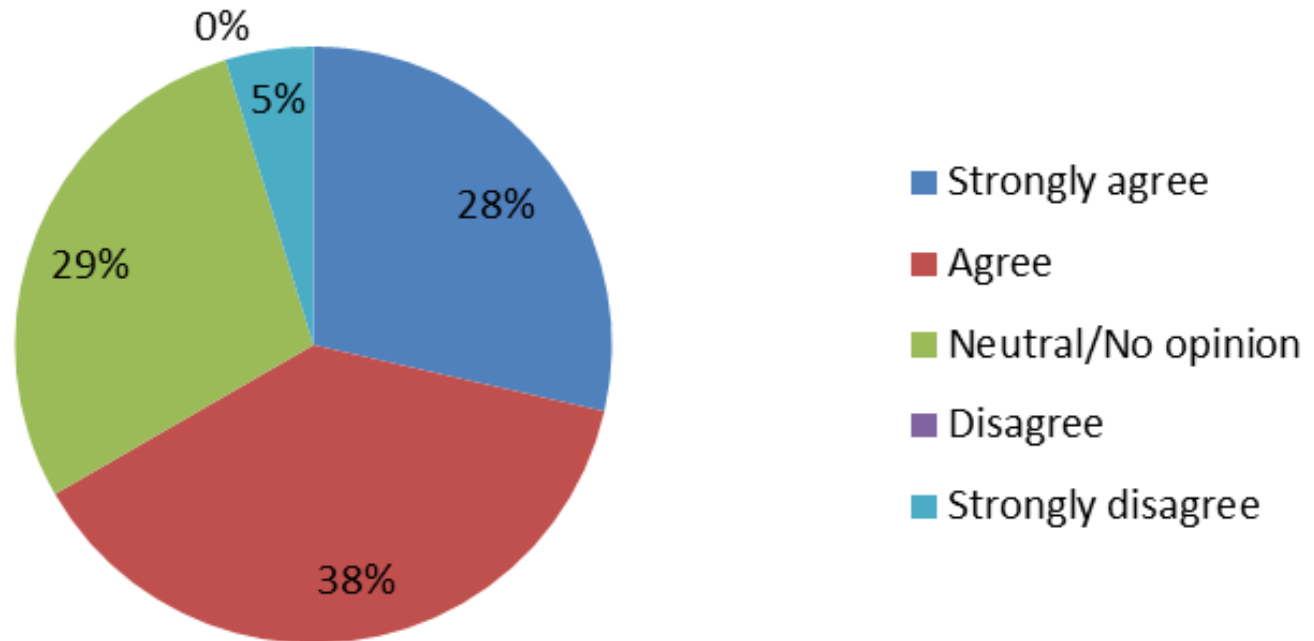
# Settle into life in the city

**Having contact with my ementor has helped me settle into living in Birmingham**



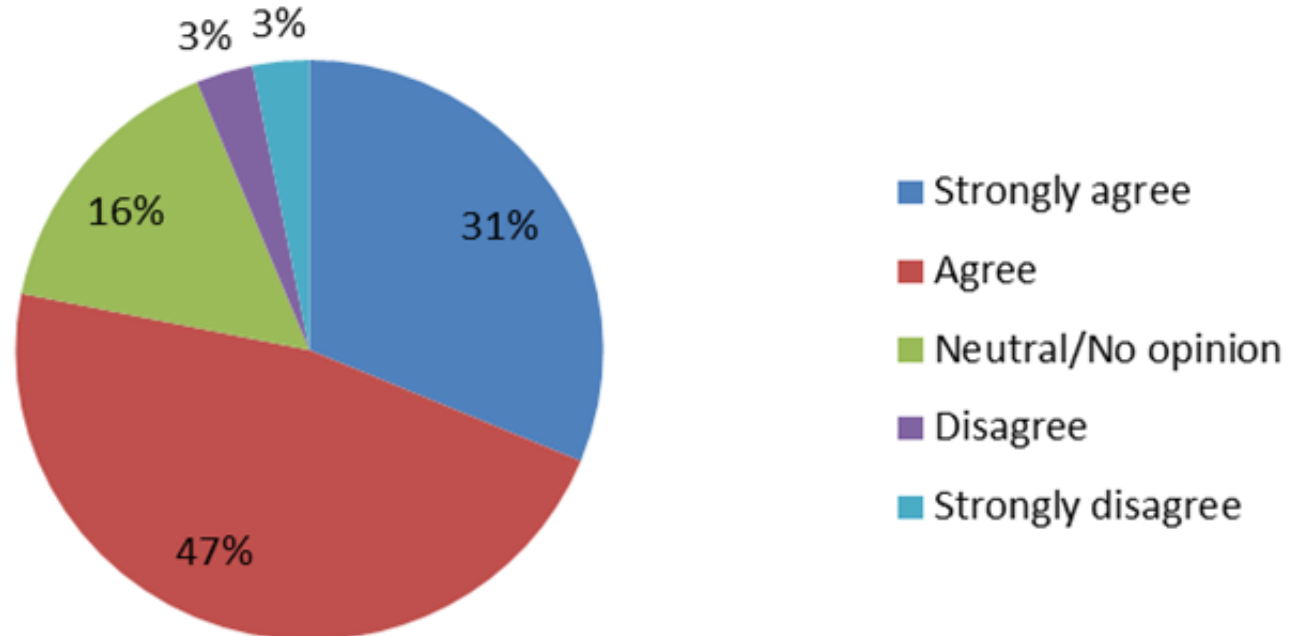
# Adjust to life in the UK

**Having contact with my ementor has helped me adjust to life in the UK**



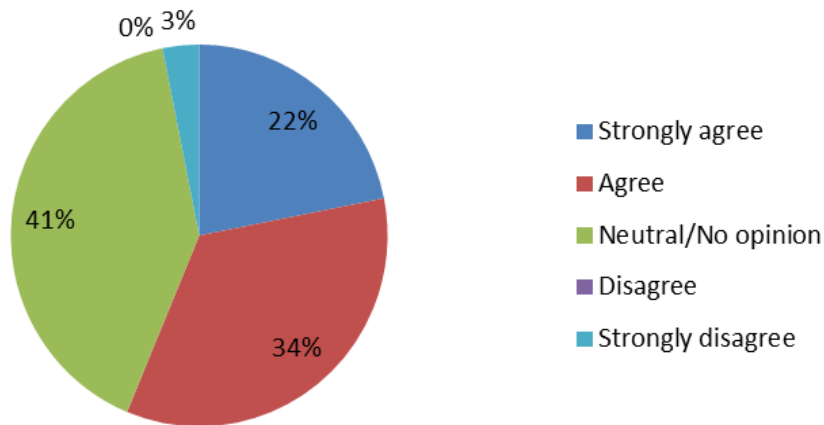
# Understand University processes

**Having contact with my ementor helped me understand university processes**

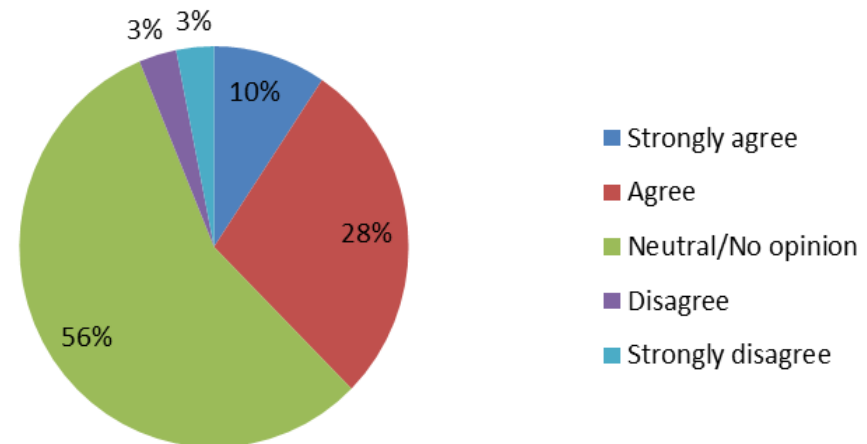


# Feedback and evaluation data - Mentees

Having contact with my ementor has helped me prepare for starting my course



Having contact with my ementor has increased my confidence in my academic skills



# Feedback and evaluation data - Mentors

- ▶ **77%** mentors felt they had been useful to their mentee
- ▶ **63%** mentors felt they had benefitted from being part of the programme

***“ I realized that we all have similar worries and thoughts in our minds before arriving to a new country/university. It was very nice to be helpful and make new friends”***

***“...gaining of independence, things I have learnt and how far I have come”***

***“Not only have I enjoyed being able to help someone else, I have also surprised myself at the information I know about the University. It gave me lots of satisfaction at being able to help somebody else”***



# What last year's mentees thought....

He made me feel comfortable with the big move. He gave me confidence before I left.

I found it really useful to have someone who I could ask 'silly' questions like whether people took their laptops to lectures or not.

He gave me tips about buying food, clothes and other items which was of enormous importance for me. He has given me an overview of the studying process, the first year, the campus accommodation.

# Contact details

**Thank you!**

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