

About the EQUALS-Her Digital Skills e-Mentoring Programme

Dear Mentee,

Welcome to the Her Digital Skills e-mentoring programme! We are thrilled you have enrolled on this programme!

The Her Digital Skills (e-)mentoring programme offers participants in the Her Digital Skills workshops the opportunity to be matched with mentors (professionals from different sectors) who contribute their professional and personal skills to supporting and guiding mentees on their learning and career paths through an innovative 8-week mentoring programme.

The goal of the Her Digital Skills e-mentoring programme is to enable you, the mentee, through the mentee-mentor relationship, to develop valuable soft skills that will boost your employability, and also to familiarize yourself with the world of professional employment. Additionally, the programme aims to help mentees develop their self-confidence and embrace their professional ambitions.

Mentee-mentor exchanges take the form of written correspondence and mentees and mentors follow a “soft skills syllabus”, which consists of a series of topics devoted to the development of crucial soft skills.

You will find the specific weekly topic in the “Weekly topics” tab on your dashboard. At the beginning of the programme, you will only see the topic for week 1. As you progress from week to week, you’ll be able to access each of the weekly topics.

In general, the time commitment required of mentees for the soft skills e-mentoring programme is approximately 1 hour per week maximum (to read and respond to your mentor’s letters).

Mentees and mentors are guided throughout the entire mentoring process by our Her Digital Skills e-mentoring programme coordination team. You can contact our team at any time via your mailbox where you’ll find the email address of your programme coordinator.

As a mentee, you will receive:

- e-Mentoring guidelines;
- The e-Mentoring weekly soft skills topic (for each of the weeks of the 8-week programme) providing guidelines and tips to help you write your weekly letter to your mentor, as well as tips and online resources to facilitate and enrich your exchanges with your mentor and ensure a successful e-mentoring experience;
- An introductory email about your mentor, including (a) photo(s);
- Weekly email support from the e-mentoring programme coordination team;

- Weekly emails from your e-mentor; and
- Upon your successful completion of the full 8-week e-mentoring programme, you will receive your certificate of completion.

Before starting the programme, we invite you to explore the full e-mentoring guidelines, with frequently asked questions outlined below.

Our team will be available to guide you throughout the 8-week program: we will be happy to answer any remaining questions you might have and provide any support you need.

The Her Digital Skills e-mentoring programme is an innovative and rewarding opportunity for Her Digital Skills workshop participants to benefit from the support of professional mentors who contribute their time, expertise, and skills to coaching and guiding mentees on their learning and professional journey.

We sincerely hope you'll enjoy your e-mentoring journey with Her Digital Skills and find it a rich and rewarding learning experience!

The Her Digital Skills E-Mentorship Programme Team

1. Will I be required to attend classes for this program?

There will not be classes for this programme and access to the mentor programme will be virtual through the EQUALS Her Digital Skills platform. Mentees will communicate with their mentors via email: the mentor-mentee exchanges take the form of written weekly exchanges of letters. Mentees will be asked to send their weekly emails for their mentors to the local e-mentoring programme coordinator, who will forward the email to the mentor. This enables the local coordinator to supervise and facilitate mentor-mentee exchanges.

2. How often am I supposed to connect with my mentor? Am I free to decide this with my mentor?

The mentor-mentee exchanges take the form of a written weekly exchange of emails, with each exchange addressing the specific weekly topic indicated in the e-mentoring syllabus. The Her Digital Skills e-mentoring coordination team will provide a timeline at the beginning of the 8-week programme, indicating the dates on which you will receive your mentor's emails and the dates on which you are requested to send your emails for your mentor.

3. When should I send letters to my mentor?

Letters should be sent between Thursday-Sunday each week. The Her Digital Skills e-mentoring coordination team will provide a timeline at the beginning of the 8-week programme, indicating the dates on which you will receive your mentor's emails and the dates on which you are requested to send your emails for your mentor.

4. How do I structure my letters to my mentor?

At the beginning of the programme, you will receive an email from our coordination team introducing your mentor. As indicated in the programme syllabus, Week 1 of the 8-week programme is dedicated to introductions. We recommend you share as much about both your personal and professional aspirations within these emails so your mentor can get to know you better.

The programme syllabus provides tips and suggested questions to help you write your weekly letters to your mentor. These cover the weekly topics, and again we encourage you to thoughtfully explore each week's topics and provide as much information to your mentor as possible so they can provide you with their thoughts and support.

5. How long does the Soft Skills e-Mentoring programme last & what time commitment is required?

The Soft Skills e-Mentoring programme lasts 8 weeks (usually consecutive). The weekly time commitment required of mentees is approximately 1 hour, maximum, per week. The mentee-mentor exchanges take the form of written correspondence, and mentees and mentors follow a programme that covers 8 different, weekly topics. The goal of each topic is to foster specific soft skills.

The time commitment of 1 hour per week includes the time required for mentees to read their mentor's weekly letter and respond to their mentor. You can find the weekly topics on your dashboard in the "Weekly Topics" tab. At the beginning of the programme, you will only see the topic for week 1.

As you progress from week to week in the programme, you will have access to each of the weekly topics.

6. Is certification provided upon completing the Mentorship?

The e-mentorship programme can be a very rewarding learning experience for mentees: it can be an excellent opportunity to develop valuable soft skills that are helpful for one's professional and personal life and, through the mentee-mentor relationship and the expertise and insights of mentors, to learn methods that will help mentees progress towards the achievement of their study and/or employment/career objectives.

Once you have completed the programme you will be invited to complete the post-programme survey to provide feedback on your experience and learning. You will then be issued a certificate for participation in the programme which can be used in your professional CV.

7. Is it advisable to share personal details with my mentor?

For the duration of the e-mentorship programme, mentees and mentors are requested to only communicate with each other via the specific channels provided by the Her Digital Skills e-mentoring programme coordination team.

In the Terms & Conditions of participation in the programme, mentees and mentors are requested to refrain from any direct contact with each other outside the framework of the Her Digital Skills e-mentoring programme and the channels authorized by the Her Digital Skills e-mentoring coordination team.

8. Is Data provided for the duration of the Mentorship?

Yes, data will be provided by the GirlCode team to ensure you complete your work on time. If you need this additional assistance please contact your coordinator at the GirlCode team or Dimakatso Setlhabane (dimakatso.s@girlcode.co.za)

9. What if my Mentor is behind, should I continue writing even if I don't receive any response?

If, for some reason, you do not receive a reply from your mentor within the allotted timeframe (Sunday-Wednesday), our coordination team will immediately contact your mentor to check the reason why and to remedy the problem. In such an instance, our team will send you an update on the situation. Occasionally mentors may be unable to respond to their mentee in a timely manner owing to professional responsibilities (as they are busy professionals) or for personal reasons. If this is the case, our coordination team will immediately contact you to discuss the matter and make every effort to ensure that your mentor responds as soon as possible.

However, if a mentor does not send a letter 2 weeks in a row and does not update the EQUALS team to explain their situation, the participant will be removed from the programme and the mentee will be rematched when possible. The 2-week rule also applies to mentees. These rules are to ensure that all participants can complete the programme.

10. What if I cannot complete my weekly email within the given timeframe?

Of course, unforeseen events may occur that prevent mentees and mentors from writing to each other in a timely manner. In the event that this isn't possible we ask mentees to follow the below guidelines:

- If a mentee is unable to send the weekly letter to their mentor on time, the mentee is requested to inform the e-mentoring programme coordinators as soon as possible.
- The mentee is also requested to write and send the weekly letter to their mentor at the earliest opportunity following the initial due submission date, in order to ensure that you do not miss out on the weekly learning and exchange of correspondence.
- In the event that a mentee is obliged, for whatever reason, to stop participating in the e-mentoring programme before the end of the 8-week programme, the

mentee is asked to immediately inform the e-mentoring programme coordination team.

If we do not receive any update or response for two consecutive weeks we will be obliged to withdraw you from the programme.