

NATIONAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME (NMP)

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW DOCUMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

What is the National Mentorship Programme about?

The PsySSA Student Division (SD) National Mentorship Programme (NMP) is a flagship professional development initiative designed to support the academic, personal, and professional growth of psychology students and early-career professionals in South Africa.

The programme facilitates a structured mentorship relationship in which mentees are paired with experienced mentors who provide guidance, knowledge transfer, career insights, and psychosocial support throughout the duration of the programme.

At its core, the NMP aims to:

- Bridge the gap between academic psychology and professional practice
- Support mentees in navigating complex academic and career pathways
- Promote ethical, reflective, and socially responsive psychological practice
- Foster professional identity development and confidence
- Encourage networking, collaboration, and community engagement

The programme embodies PsySSA Student Division's broader mission of strengthening the psychology discipline by cultivating the next generation of ethical, competent, and socially conscious professionals.

Participation in the mentorship programme is free, provided the mentee is a paid member of the PsySSA Student Division.

History of the Programme

The National Mentorship Programme has been running successfully for nine years, demonstrating consistent growth, strong participation, and sustained impact within the psychology community.

The programme was originally conceptualised and established by Genevieve Burrow and Muhammed Yaesh Cassim who were members of the Student Division Executive Committee at the time. Their vision was to create a national platform that would provide psychology students with structured professional support, mentorship access, and opportunities for holistic development beyond traditional academic settings.

Since its inception, the programme has become a highly regarded PsySSA-endorsed initiative known for its quality, professionalism, and transformative value.



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Mentee Eligibility Requirements

- Must be an undergraduate or honours student in Psychology
- No requirement to belong to a specific higher education institution
- Must be a paid and active member of PsySSA's Student Division (for the year of application)
- Must have a minimum 65% GPA in Psychology
- Must be committed to participating in the full year-long programme

Mentee Application Requirements

Applicants must submit the following:

- PsySSA membership certificate
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Recent head and shoulders photograph
- Most recent academic transcript/record
- Motivational letter

Please note that applications will not be considered if all required documents are not submitted and if the application is late.

Mentor Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a current Psychology Master's student, Master's graduate, or working professional in the field of psychology
- Registration as a psychologist is not required, but would be an advantage
- Preference will be given to PsySSA members, although membership is not a requirement

Mentor Application Requirements

Applicants must submit the following:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Recent head and shoulders photograph
- PsySSA membership certificate (if applicable)

Please note that applications will not be considered if all required documents are not submitted and if the application is late.

The Mentor Pairing Process

The mentor pairing process matches mentees with mentors from various fields in psychology, based on each mentee's goals and interests as outlined in their motivational letter. While we aim to align with the mentee's aspirations, we also consider the expertise and focus areas of mentors to ensure a well-suited, supportive partnership



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2. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Programme Management

The National Mentorship Programme will be managed by the PsySSA Student Division Executive Committee (SD EC).

Responsibilities of the SD EC include:

- Programme coordination and administration
- Mentor–mentee matching
- Monitoring engagement and participation
- Facilitating programme activities and events
- Providing support to both mentors and mentees
- Ensuring programme quality and ethical standards

Programme Duration

The programme will run for 7 months, from March – October.

This timeframe allows for sustained relationship development, meaningful engagement, and completion of structured activities.

Programme Structure

The programme consists of three integrated components:

1. *One-on-One Mentorship*

- Each mentee is paired with a mentor for the full duration.
- Mentors provide personalised academic, professional, and personal guidance.
- Official mentor check-ins will occur at least once per month.

Mentors remain accessible throughout the programme for:

- Career advice
- Academic support
- Professional development guidance
- Emotional support and reflective discussion

Support is not limited to NMP tasks or academic matters.

2. *Structured Development Activities*

Participants complete a series of curated tasks designed to foster:

- Self-reflection
- Professional identity formation
- Critical thinking
- Networking skills
- Career preparedness

3. Community and Professional Engagement

The programme includes group discussions, collaborative activities, and opportunities for mentees to engage with the broader psychology community.

There is also an intention to integrate elements of the NMP into the PsySSA Congress, allowing mentees to:

- Participate in professional networking
- Engage with leaders in the field
- Showcase reflections and programme outcomes
- Strengthen professional visibility

Benefits to Mentees

Participation in the NMP offers extensive developmental benefits.

Academic Benefits:

- Guidance on postgraduate pathways
- Research mentorship
- Academic skill development
- Understanding of psychology specialisations

Professional Benefits:

- Career planning support
- Exposure to professional networks
- Insight into real-world psychology practice
- Development of professional identity

Personal Development Benefits

- Increased confidence and motivation
- Emotional support and encouragement
- Improved reflective capacity
- Enhanced self-awareness

Leadership and Networking Benefits

- Opportunities for collaboration
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Development of professional communication skills

3. PROGRAMME TASKS

Below is the structured overview of all programme activities.

Task 1: Sharing Circle

Description:

Participants engage in a facilitated group session where mentees share their personal journeys, aspirations, challenges, and experiences in studying psychology.



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Outcome / Benefits

- Builds community and belonging
- Encourages vulnerability and peer support
- Develops communication and listening skills
- Promotes identity exploration

Proposed Task Timeline: End March

Task 2: Masters Application Webinar

Description:

A webinar providing guidance on postgraduate applications, including:

- Selecting a specialisation
- Preparing application materials
- Interview preparation
- Understanding selection criteria

Outcome / Benefits

- Reduces uncertainty about postgraduate processes
- Provides practical application strategies
- Enhances career readiness

Proposed Task Timeline: April

Task 3: Podcast Engagement

Description:

Mentees will participate in a podcast activity involving either:

- Listening and reflecting on a curated psychology podcast episode, OR
- Contributing to a PsySSA SD podcast discussion.

Outcome / Benefits

- Exposure to current psychological discourse
- Development of critical listening skills
- Enhancement of reflective thinking
- Engagement with contemporary issues in psychology

Proposed Task Timeline: May

Task 4: Zoom Discussion Series (X3 Sessions)

Description:

Three facilitated virtual group discussions focusing on key professional development themes such as:

- Career pathways in psychology
- Ethics and professional identity
- Challenges in the psychology profession

Outcome / Benefits

- Enhances critical dialogue skills
- Encourages peer learning
- Provides exposure to diverse perspectives
- Strengthens professional awareness

Proposed Task Timeline: June, July, August

Task 5: Reflective Essay on NMP Experience

Description

At the conclusion of the programme, mentees submit a reflective essay discussing their mentorship journey, personal growth, insights gained, and future aspirations.

Outcome / Benefits

- Encourages deep reflection and meaning-making
- Strengthens professional identity development
- Provides evaluative feedback for programme improvement

Proposed Task Timeline: October

4. MENTOR ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

Mentors are required to:

- Conduct at least one official monthly check-in
- Provide ongoing support and guidance
- Offer constructive feedback
- Support mentee goal-setting
- Encourage professional development

Mentorship interactions may include:

- Career discussions
- Academic advice
- Emotional support
- Networking guidance
- Professional skill development



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5. PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

The NMP aims to produce the following long-term outcomes:

- Strengthened pipeline of competent psychology professionals
- Increased postgraduate application success
- Enhanced student engagement within PsySSA
- Greater professional cohesion in the psychology community
- Development of ethical and socially responsive practitioners

6. CONCLUSION

The PsySSA Student Division National Mentorship Programme represents a vital investment in the future of psychology in South Africa. By fostering meaningful mentorship relationships, structured professional development, and reflective engagement, the programme empowers mentees to navigate their academic and professional journeys with confidence, competence, and purpose.